Early Marriage in the New England and Northeastern States, and in Mormon Polygamy: What Was the Norm?

BY TODD M. COMPTON

THE RAID on the FLDS compound in Texas that took place in April 2008 has brought polygamy to national attention again. Since the FLDS church is a break-off from the Mormon church, this has inevitably led the media to look at polygamy in nineteenth-century Mormonism to give context for the modern practice. And because the raid was spurred by reports of marriages involving underage teenage girls, the question of whether this aspect of FLDS polygamy has roots in nineteenth-century Mormon polygamy has arisen.[1]

In April 2008, historian and journalist Timothy Egan wrote a short opinion piece in the on-line *New York Times* that explicitly found the roots of questionable FLDS practices in "orthodox" Mormon polygamy in the 1800s.[2] Many conservative Mormons have strongly denied this, though they do not deny that nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints, including church founder Joseph Smith, often married teenagers as plural wives. However, conservatives have stated that young women marrying very early was an accepted part of the culture at the time. Among them is historian Craig Foster, who published a review-article that dealt with the subject in *FARMS Review of Books*.[3] LDS church historian Marlin K. Jensen wrote a reply to Egan that appeared on the LDS church's official website,[4] and general authority Todd Christofferson has also defended Mormon polygamists of the previous century in an interview.[5]

1. Incidentally, historians of family life call the practice of teenagers marrying "early marriage," a term I will use in this article. I will refer to marriage of girls at ages 14 and 15 as "very early marriage." Some historians refer to girls marrying at the age of 14 and 15 or lower "child marriage." Thomas Patrick Monahan, "One Hundred Years of Marriages in Massachusetts," *The American Journal of Sociology* 56 (May, 1951): 534–545, 540.

2. Timothy Egan, "Faith of Our Fathers," *New York Times*, April 23, 2008, http://egan.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/04/23/faith-of-our-fathers/?scp=13&sq=Timothy%20Egan&st=cse (accessed March 4, 2009). Egan wrote: "It would have been just another Christian faith had not Smith let his libido lead him into trouble. Before he died at the hands of a mob, he married at least 33 women and girls; the youngest was 14, and was told she had to become Smith's bedmate or risk eternal damnation." He quotes Brodie later on, and is in her camp. See also his "The Persistence of Polygamy," *New York Times*, February 28, 1999, http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9507E1DD133DF93BA15751C0A96F958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=1 (accessed March 4, 2009).

3. Craig Foster, "Doing Violence to Journalistic Integrity," *FARMS Review of Books* 16:1 (2004), 149–74, http://farms.byu.edu/publications/review/?vol=16&num=1&id=530 (accessed March 4, 2009.) This is a review of Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (NY: Doubleday, 2003). Other conservative LDS views of the marriage age question can be found at the FAIR site: [David] Keller, "Lawrence O'Donnell's Charges of Rape," January 13, 2008, at http://www.fairblog.org/2008/01/13/lawrence-odonnells-charges-of-rape/; [David] Keller, "19th century nuptiality and anti-Mormon propaganda," November 5, 2009, at http://www.fairblog.org/2009/11/05/nuptiality-and-propagand/; Gregory L. Smith, "Polygamy book/Age of wives," http://en.fairmormon.org/Polygamy_book_chapter.Age_of_wives. These three authors have written an article in this book which I have not seen. Their work as published on the internet is impressive, though I disagree with arguments and focuses at times. Not having a statistical background, I was not able to follow Keller's statistical analysis, in "19th century nuptiality." This may be the blind spot of a document-oriented historian. For a worthwhile discussion of the issue at the middle-of-the-road Mormon blog Times and Seasons, see Kaimi Wenger, "Brides Among the Beehives," June 13, 2007, at http://timesandseasons.org/index.php/2007/06/brides-among-the-beehives/ (accessed March 4, 2009).

4. Marlin K. Jensen, "Polygamy Then and Now," May 5, 2008, in the Newsroom of the official LDS website, http://newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/polygamy-then-and-now (accessed on January 11, 2010).

5. "Q&A with Mormon Elder," an interview with Reuters, June 11, 2007, http://www.reuters.com/article/idUKFLE15338920070611?pageNumber=1&virtualBrandChannel=0 (accessed March 4, 2009).

Conservative Mormons have had the tendency to make statements like the following: "marriages of younger girls were not uncommon in the past," as Foster writes. It seems to me that there were two problems with this kind of statement. First, it is so general that it doesn't help much. In Foster's statement, "Not uncommon" and "the past" are very broad, vague terms. If we say that marriages at an early age were "common," what does common mean? Ten percent of marriages? Five? Two percent? So it would be better to progress from broad generalizations to some kind of specificity, in time and place. (And in different places and times, percentages will vary a great deal.)

Second, often the evidence for such statements comes from cultures very different from nineteenth-century New England and northeastern America (the cultural background for Mormonism).[6] The fact that colonists in *seventeenth-century Quebec* or gypsies in Serbia arranged marriages for their children in their early teens is not the evidence needed to examine nineteenth-century American marriage practice.[7] If one argues that early marriage was common in Joseph Smith's environment, one would need to produce statistical evidence that it was common in the nineteenth-century New England and northeastern states. The data from exotic cultures may be interesting and worth discussing, but they are not directly relevant to nineteenth-century American culture.

Third, conservative Mormons have sometimes argued from a legal basis—for instance, stating that the age of consent for young women was twelve in such and such countries and states at such and such times. If early marriage was legal, yet was extremely rare, the legal data, while interesting, are not directly relevant.

Therefore, I would like to frame the question in this way: Mormon polygamy, from its earliest beginnings,[8] often included "early marriage" or "very early marriage." Were such early marriage ages typical of nine-

6. For the specific states I am considering, see the IPUMS section below.

7. For examples of early marriage outside the European marriage pattern, see Craig Foster, "Doing Violence to Journalistic Integrity."

8. Of Joseph Smith's thirty-three plural marriages that can be reliably documented (in my view), ten were marriages to teen-age girls (including a marriage to fourteen-year-old Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of apostle Heber C. Kimball, and a marriage to Nancy Winchester, who was probably fifteen when she married Joseph). Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: the Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (SLC: Signature Books, 1997); See also Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 644n11, who counts 32 plural marriages, and George

teenth-century New England and northeastern states culture? Was marriage age in plural marriage lower, equal to, or higher than non-Mormon marriage in northeast America?

I should state at the outset that I am not a social historian specializing in the family, but I will refer to the work of respected social historians of America who do answer this question. In addition, social historians' conclusions often are based on statistics derived from vital records, and I am not trained as a statistician. I will try to reflect their conclusions accurately. Readers interested in further analysis of the numbers I give below should refer to demographic historians I cite to examine their methodology and the records they are reflecting.

I will also directly report some census data, from U.S. census database IPUMS, in a limited way.

Statistical evidence can have great value and yet have limitations; it obviously can be difficult to understand, and can be misleading. According to a joke that statisticians tell, a statistician, a historian and an economist went duck hunting. When a duck flew by, the historian shot ten feet above it; the economist shot ten feet below it; and the statistician said, "Got him!"

The American social historians I will cite often use the term "mean" which has been defined as "sum of the observations divided by the number of observations." But often the mean does not reflect important evidence regarding a particular group. For instance, if a polygamist marries plural wives at the ages of 17, 18, 19, 22 and 65, the mean marriage age, 28.2, is skewed by the 65 outlier. Sometimes authors refer to "median," which selects the center age in the data group; this prevents outliers from skewing the results as much. Thus in the example I gave above, the median is 19. If the author provides standard deviation figures for a mean, it helps the reader understand the spread of the data better.

Often the historians I refer to provided only the mean—"mean age at first marriage" is a common phrase. Therefore, on the upper end, ages of women at 65 will be rare, and marriages in the early or mid 20s will be much more common. On the lower end, ages of women before 14 will be much more common. On the lower end, ages of women before 14 will

Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy ...But We Called It Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008), 223–24, who counts 37.

be rare. So when authors refer to mean age at first marriage, we should remember that this is the spread of ages that we are talking about.

I will first give a broad overview of marriage age in history, in order to give a background for marriage age patterns that occur both in nineteenth-century America and in Mormon polygamy. Then I will look at marriage age in colonial America, to give the background for the nineteenth century, and to show that "very early marriage" was not common during that earlier era. After this I will examine marriage age in the nineteenth century in the New England and northeastern states, including data from the IPUMS census project for 1850. This is the heart of my paper and argument. Following this, I will then give a brief overview of marriage age in Utah in the 19th century, citing family historians such as Kathryn Daynes and Larry Logue, in order to compare Utah marriage age with marriage age in the east. The data cited will show that marriage age in Mormon polygamy was lower than in New England and northeastern states, and that polygamy was a cause of early marriage among women. I will also provide evidence that very early marriage—marriage of young women aged 14 and 15—was an accepted part of Mormon culture in the nineteenth century.[9]

Early Marriage in History

Before we focus on marriage age in America, it will be helpful to discuss factors that have affected marriage age throughout history. Economics has always been an important factor affecting marriage age, as young people, especially in relatively modern Western Europe, have often delayed marriage until they achieved some financial stability. A bad economy at a certain time or place could cause marriages that were relatively late. Family historian Maris Vinovskis writes,

In Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, individuals usually did not marry unless they were economically able to create and maintain their own home. Under these circumstances, an early marriage was usually considered desirable as it signified relative independence from others and the start of one's own family (Stone, 1977). The requirement of being able to maintain an independent home

9. Obviously, any one of these sections of my paper could be expanded into a book. A detailed study of marriage age in Utah polygamy would be especially valuable.

forced many individuals to postpone their marriages or to remain single throughout their lives.[10]

This highlights a difference between elite and non-elite marriage, for elites, generally well-to-do, were financially able to marry earlier. In the eighteenth-century Western world, family historian Beatrice Gottlieb concludes, people retreated from early marriage and late marriage. Society was edging toward a "perfect" marriage age—somewhere between 21 and 25, with women usually a year or two younger than men.[11]

Family historians talk about a European pattern of marriage age, which can be summed up succinctly: Europeans married later than non-Europeans.[12] In the European pattern, on the average, men tended to marry in their late twenties (26–30) and women in their early or mid-twenties (24–27).

One specific cause of early marriage was a colonizing or pioneering situation, in which men greatly outnumbered the women or young women in a colony.[13] Competition for wives naturally tends to drive down the marriage age of young women. However, after the imbalance of sexes ends in a colony, marriage age generally rises to normal levels in a generation or two. The classic example of low marriage age in a colony is the famous Filles du Roi in the mid-seventeenth-century colonial Quebec. Some 220 young women, many teens, were shipped to Canada because there was a great preponderance of men in the early colony. However, Gottlieb notes, "Only the first wave of French Canadian wives were so young."[14]

Another specific factor that has caused early marriage was the tendency for marriages to be used to create political or dynastic bonds. One

10. An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy? Some Historical and Policy Considerations (NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 7.
11. Beatrice Gottlieb, The Family in the Western World from the Black Death to the Industrial Age (NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), 60–61.
12. J. Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective," 101–43, in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley, Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company 1965), 121. Hajnal's thesis pertains to Europe after the 16th century; before then, demographic evidence is lacking.
13. Gottlieb, The Family in the Western World, 60–61; Vinovskis, An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy?, 8–9.
14. Gottlieb, The Family in the Western World, 60–61.

family historian, Stephanie Coontz, in her book *Marriage: A History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*, has argued that it was not until the end of the 1700s that "marriage came to be seen as a private relationship between two individuals rather than one link in a larger system of political and economic alliances."[15] Classical Roman history is replete with examples of dynastic marriages. Often political marriages were arranged by parents, and were performed when their children were very young. Young women in elite families would simply expect that they would be married to further their families' best financial and political interests. Coontz entitles one chapter in her book "Playing the Bishop, Capturing the Queen: Aristocratic Marriages in Early Medieval Europe."[16] Marriage was part of the chess game of power politics.

In this, and in other ways, the marriage age among elites and lower classes differed. The lower classes had no need for political marriages, therefore non-elite young women were not married young for dynastic purposes.

When early marriage occurred to promote alliances among aristocrats and "urban patricians," sometimes these marriages were marriages on paper only, according to social historian, Beatrice Gottlieb.[17] They did not turn into actual marriages until the parties were older. Sometimes they never did turn into actual marriages.

So in European history, we have often had situations in which marriage age was high or low due to specific circumstances, a bad economy or a colonizing situation; however, when the abnormal circumstances ended, marriage age generally returned to its previous level.[18]

15. Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage: A History: From Obedience to Intimacy of How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking: 2005), 146.

16. Coontz, *Marriage: A History*, 88–103.

17. Gottlieb, *The Family in the Western World*, 60–61.

18. It is entirely true that in the ancient world, and in non-Western cultures, you can find many examples of early marriage. In India, in one province at a certain time, the *average* age at marriage was thirteen. Generally, Monahan states, these "very early marriages" were not consummated until the young women was sixteen or in her upper teens. Thomas Patrick Monahan, *The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Printed by Stephenson-Brothers, 1951), 1:44, see also 43–47. Since older men sometimes married literal children, these children were often widowed at an early age. "In one province," writes marriage-age authority Monahan, "10% of the females under 5 years of age [are widows], and over 50% of those under 15 years of age are widows." Since there was a prohibition on widows remarrying, those girls and young women were prohibited from normal marriage in their later lives. "Early marriage" is not just a theoretical

In the New England colonies, we find the same pattern that family historians have noted in colonial situations elsewhere. The early preponderance of men caused the marriage age of women to decrease, but as colonies became less "colonial," marriage age rose.

In addition, we have seen that advantageous economic situations caused marriage ages to lower somewhat. Therefore in America, where land was available, and you could build a log cabin and start a farm fairly easily (compared to England, for example), a young man would not have to put off marriage as long as in Europe. Therefore, logically enough, marriage ages were somewhat lower in America than in Europe. But a key question is, how much lower?

Colonial New England

Early social historians of Colonial America, working from literary references, assumed that Americans married much younger than did the English. For example, Arthur Calhoun wrote, in 1960, "The early Puritans married young...." Girls often married at sixteen or under. Old maids were ridiculed or even despised. A woman became an 'antient maid' at twenty-five."[19] However, such statements have more recently been disputed. While these early social historians based their conclusions on assumption or on scattered literary references, a new generation of historians, John Demos, Philip Greven, and Kenneth Lockridge, used statistical evidence derived from town and church vital records, and produced an entirely different picture. Vinovskis writes, "They discovered (to everyone's surprise) that few New England girls had married as early as age fifteen or sixteen." Instead, the age of first marriage in colonial New England showed that women typically "married in their very early twenties and men married during their late twenties."[20] Monahan also discusses how many of these early social historians erred because they made generalizations not based on statistical evidence.[21]

issue in the world today; it is a common practice in many nations, and often has a negative impact on the lives of the persons involved. For a contrast, to show the modern European pattern, in Great Britain, at the end of the nineteenth century, 73% of women were single at age 20–24 and 42% were single at age 25–29. Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns," 102.

19. Arthur Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family* (New York, Barnes & Noble, 1960), 67.

20. Vinovskis, *An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy?*, 8.

21. Monahan, *Pattern of Age at Marriage*, 1:104–5, 99–102.

Thus, in colonial New England (still long before the mid-nineteenth century, when LDS polygamy began), marriage age was fairly low, compared to the European pattern, but the age of marriage among women gradually increased as the colonies became less "colonial."[22]

In Demos' *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony*, the key evidence is Table IV, "First Marriages in Plymouth Colony," in an appendix.[23] Mean age of women at time of first marriage was: "Born Before 1600": no data; "Born 1600–25": 20.6; "Born 1625–50": 20.2; "Born 1650–75": 21.3; and "Born 1675–1700": 22.3. This is still long before the 1830s and 40s, but it shows the gradual rise in marriage age as Plymouth became less of a colony. Demos writes, "The average age at marriage in this period was, in fact, much higher than has usually been imagined."[24]

Kenneth A. Lockridge studied colonial Dedham, Massachusetts, and commented on the general perception that American marriage age was much lower than in Europe. However, he noted that the average age at marriage in Europe "ranged around twenty-five years for women and twenty-seven years for men," but in Dedham the average age was "twenty-three years for women and twenty-five for men."[25] This was lower, but not drastically lower.

Philip J. Greven studied marriages in four colonial generations in Andover, Massachusetts. In the fourth generation, he found that fourteen was the lowest age of marriage in his data, but unfortunately, he does not tell us how many fourteen-year-olds married. He does say that only "31.9 [percent of women] married before the age of 21."[26] In the first generation at Andover the mean age of marriage for women was 19.0, but in the fourth generation, it was 23.2.[27]

22. Vinovskis, *An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy?*, 8.

23. John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 193.

24. Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 151.

25. Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: the First Hundred Years, Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636–1736* (New York: Norton, 1970), 66.

26. Philip J. Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), 209.

27. Vinovskis, *Fertility in Massachusetts*, Table 3.1, "Comparisons of the Mean Age at First Marriage in Colonial America," 44.

Incidentally, marriage ages in the southern colonies were lower than in the New England colonies,[28] but the focus of this paper is on the New England and northeastern states.

Nineteenth-Century New England and Northeastern States

These are colonial data; our target time period is of course later, in the mid-nineteenth century. However, the colonial research has shown that as time went on, and America became less "colonial," women married later, and early marriage became increasingly rare. This progression would continue into the nineteenth century.

One historian who has dealt with the nineteenth century, Thomas Monahan, has made marriage age his specialty, authoring a two-volume work entitled *The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States*.[29] According to Monahan, the mean age of marriage in 1845 Massachusetts was 26.1 for males and 23.9 for females.[30] Just for comparison, in 1948, the mean age for men was 26.5, while for women it was 24.2.

In Massachusetts, in 1845, only 25.9 percent of women married for the first time were under 20. This figure does not tell us how many were 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, or 19, but it does tell us that about a quarter of the marriages were teen marriages.[31] In 1885, only 18.2 percent of married women were under 20, 72 percent were age 20–30, and 90.2 percent were under 30.[32]

Monahan has data for a number of northeastern states in the general period of Mormon polygamy. In New York State in 1855, 32.1 percent of women married for the first time were below 20[33]; in Rhode Island, in 1860, 28.9 percent of women married for the first time were below 20.[34]

28. Vinovskis, *An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy?*, 8–9; David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 76, 284–85.

29. Monahan, *The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States* (1951), see also his "One Hundred Years of Marriages in Massachusetts."

30. Monahan, "One Hundred Years of Marriages in Massachusetts," Table I, 54f. (The median age was 25 for males and 22.7 for females.)

31. Monahan, *The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States*, 1:160.

32. Ibid, 153. See also Michael R. Haines, "Long-term Marriage Patterns in the United States from Colonial Times to the Present," *History of the Family* 1.1 (1996): 15–39.

33. Monahan, *The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States*, 1:168.

34. Ibid., 173.

In Vermont, in 1858, 38.2 percent of women married for the first time were below 20. Thus women had a mean age at marriage of 22.6, median age 21.4.[35]

In most of these states, we cannot break down the pre-twenty age groups, as I mentioned. However, in New Jersey, Monahan gives detailed statistics on the pre-20 age groups. Figure 6.1 shows the data for 3,055 native-born women in first marriages in 1848–50.[36]

Age	Percent	Age	Percent	Age	Percent
14	.1	22	11.0	30	1.1
15	.4	23	7.8	31	.4
16	1.4	24	5.6	32	.4
17	4.4	25	5.3	33	.2
18	13.4	26	2.8	34	.2
19	13.1	27	2.3	35-39	.8
20	15.1	28	1.9	40-44	.2
21	11.2	29	1.0	45&up	.1

Thus 32.8 percent of women were married in their teenage years, which is relatively high. However, we can see that the great majority of these were from the last two teenage years, 18 and 19. Marriages at age 14 were extremely rare, .1 of one percent. Marriage at age 15 was also less than one percent. Marriage at age 16 was not common; only 1.4 percent married at this age.

Again, as we have generally seen, age of marriage rises through time. For example, in 1947, in New Jersey, Figure 6.2 shows the marriage age percentages for women aged 14–20.[37]

Age	Percent
14	.2
15	1.0
16	1.0
17	2.6
18	7.4
19	10.7
20	12.7

35. Ibid., 175–76.
36. Ibid., 196.
37. Ibid.

Vinovskis observes that solid information on the nineteenth-century marriages is scarce, but does make some generalizations from census records. He states that the "mean age at first marriage in Massachusetts from 1845 to 1860 was about twenty-six for males and twenty-four for females.... Thus, at no time during the colonial or early national period did large numbers of very young adolescents regularly marry in New England."[38]

According to Monahan, very early marriages in nineteenth-century Massachusetts—females at the age of fifteen and under and males at seventeen years and under—"rarely exceeded 0.5 percent of all first marriages and more often amounted to less."[39] In the late eighteen hundreds in Massachusetts, very early marriages of females were at 0.3–0.4 percent.

Thus, Vinovskis writes:

As the eighteenth century progressed and the sexual imbalance corrected itself, male colonists no longer had to take a young wife.... While some Americans had praised the virtues of very early marriages, few of them personally followed that advice. Indeed, in the nineteenth century many women increasingly felt that they should enjoy their youthful independence for as long as possible before settling down to the responsibilities of married life.[40]

Demographic historians Catherine Fitch and Steven Ruggles have estimated marriage age for the United States in 1850: the mean age of marriage for native-born whites was 26.6 for men and 22.9 for women (the median age was slightly lower, for men 25.3 and for women 21.3).[41] However, this includes southern states, so it is lower than it would be if Fitch and Ruggles had limited themselves to New England and northeastern states. According to Fitch and Ruggles, marriage age for women stayed stable until 1870 (though marriage age dropped for men after the

38. Vinovskis, An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy?, 8–9.
39. Monahan, "One Hundred Years of Marriages in Massachusetts," 540.
40. Vinovskis, An "Epidemic" of Adolescent Pregnancy?, 8–9.
41. Catherine Fitch and Steven Ruggles, "Historical Trends in Marriage Formation," in Linda Waite, Christine Bachrach, Michelle Hindin, Elizabeth Thomson, and Arland Thornton, eds., Ties that Bind: Perspectives on Marriage and Cohabitation (Hawthorne, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2000) 59–88, 63. At age 17, 10% of native-born white women were married, while at age 21.3, 50% were married. See Table 4.1, 83. Unfortunately, such a chart as this does not give a breakdown on the ages before 17.

Civil War), and after this, median marriage age rose, until it was at 26 for men and 22 for women in 1890. They conclude that "In the nineteenth century, white Americans married fairly late, only slightly earlier than their counterparts in Western Europe."[42] Since Americans largely came from Western Europe, this is not surprising, unless one has made the assumption that Americans married at significantly lower ages than did Western Europeans.

IPUMS-USA Data on the 1850 and 1880 Censuses

IPUMS, "Integrated Public Use Microdata Series", is a "project dedicated to collecting and distributing United States census data." It states that it "consists of more than fifty high-precision samples of the American population drawn from fifteen federal censuses and from the American Community Surveys of 2000–2008.... These samples, which draw on every surviving census from 1850–2000, and the 2000–2008 ACS samples, collectively constitute our richest source of quantitative information on long-term changes in the American population."

IPUMS allows for online analysis of census data from 1850 to 2008, generally offering a 1% sample, selected at random, of the census data, though the 1880 census has a 10% sample. Such random sampling is a valid way to report and analyze data, and in fact is a basic aspect of modern statistical analysis.

According to the IPUMS User's Guide, for the 1850 census, including about 560,000 census pages, "The sample was drawn systematically from each microfilm reel, ordinarily at intervals of six pages. On each selected census page, one line [an individual] was randomly selected and designated as the sample point. Any valid sample unit [such as dwelling, household, family group] beginning at the sample point or within four subsequent lines was included in the sample, yielding a 1-in-100 sample with equal probabilities of inclusion for all individuals and households."[43]

The 1850 and 1880 censuses had a question asking if the respondent had been married in the previous year (in the 1850 census, "10. Married

42. Ibid., 82.
43. IPUMS USA website, http://usa.ipums.org/usa/, at User's Guide, Chapter 2: Sample Designs, for 1850. (accessed January 10, 2010).

within the year"), which, combined with age, gives us a snapshot of age at marriage for 1849–1850. Since 1850 is fairly close in time to Mormon Nauvoo, the IPUMS 1850 census data—which allows us to look at individual states and regions—will be a valuable tool for comparison with Nauvoo and early Utah polygamy. The 1880 census will show age-range in northeastern America just before the demise of public Mormon polygamy.

While I think it is valid to look at the IPUMS database, there are some limitations to the census data. Michael Haines suggests that the "marriage during the previous year" question was underreported in nineteenth-century censuses.[44] This is obviously not an ideal situation, and it shows how human error enters into the quest for pure scientific data.

Nevertheless, if the "marriage during the previous year" question was underreported, it was presumably underreported for all age groups—which would still give us a valid overview of age-at-marriage distribution. But, someone might object, perhaps the under-16 new brides, or their husbands, were sensitive about their youth, and gave higher ages, which would presumably artificially inflate the 16 or 17 year old age groups. This is certainly possible, and would skew the report, from a strictly scientific point of view. On the other hand, it would be more evidence that marriage at 14 and 15 was not completely acceptable in the respondent's culture.

In addition, since we don't know when a respondent's birthday was, if a fifteen-year-old says he or she was married in the previous year, he or she might have been married either at age fourteen or fifteen. However, since this is entirely impossible to document, for the purposes of the discussion here I will assume that a respondent was married at the age when he or she answered the census question.

In addition, when invalid codes appeared in any of the key variables (age, sex, married within the last year), I did not use that response in its report. Unfortunately, this disallows a substantial amount of data,

44. Haines, "Long-term Marriage Patterns in the United States," 5. Haines thus believes that our records of marriage age are more precise as the century progressed. For the early nineteenth-century," we are forced to rely on estimates and other scattered sources." However, he writes that "for the nineteenth century, censuses constitute the major source" for marriage demographics, "with the federal census being the "main resource," 4.

1850 ENTIRE USA

Cells contain: —Column percent —Confidence intervals (99 percent) —N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
13:13	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2	24:24	9.28 (6.93–11.63) 94	5.25 (3.44–7.07) 53	7.27 (5.78–8.76) 147
14:14	.00 — 0	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.15 (0.00–0.37) 3	25:25	9.48 (7.10–11.85) 96	4.36 (2.70–6.02) 44	6.92 (5.47–8.38) 140
15:15	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	1.19 (0.31–2.07) 12	.64 (0.18–1.10) 13	26:26	7.60 (5.45–9.75) 77	3.47 (1.98–4.96) 35	5.54 (4.23–6.85) 112
16:16	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	3.07 (1.67–4.48) 31	1.63 (0.91–2.36) 33	27:27	6.42 (4.43–8.40) 65	3.17 (1.75–4.60) 32	4.80 (3.57–6.02) 97
17:17	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	8.03 (5.82–10.24) 81	4.06 (2.92–5.19) 82	28:28	4.54 (2.85–6.23) 46	1.98 (0.85–3.12) 20	3.26 (2.24–4.28) 66
18:18	.59 (0.02–1.36) 7	11.30 (8.73–13.87) 114	5.98 (4.62–7.34) 121	29:29	3.16 (1.74–4.58) 32	.59 (0.00–1.22) 6	1.88 (1.10–2.66) 38
19:19	1.38 (0.43–2.33) 14	11.30 (8.73–13.87) 114	6.33 (4.93–7.73) 128	30:30	4.34 (2.69–6.00) 44	2.18 (0.99–3.37) 22	3.26 (2.24–4.28) 66
20:20	3.55 (2.05–5.06) 36	11.10 (8.55–13.65) 112	7.32 (5.83–8.81) 148	31:31	1.88 (0.78–2.98) 19	.40 (0.00–0.91) 4	1.14 (0.53–1.75) 23
21:21	7.40 (5.28–9.53) 75	8.62 (6.34–10.90) 87	8.01 (6.45–9.57) 162	32:32	2.96 (1.59–4.34) 30	.79 (0.07–1.51) 8	1.88 (1.10–2.66) 38
22:22	10.46 (7.98–12.95) 106	8.33 (6.08–10.57) 84	9.40 (7.72–11.07) 190	33:33	1.78 (0.71–2.85) 18	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	1.04 (0.46–1.62) 21
23:23	10.07 (7.63–12.51) 102	6.84 (4.79–8.89) 69	8.46 (6.86–10.05) 171	34:34	1.28 (0.37–2.20) 13	.40 (0.00–0.91) 4	.84 (0.33–1.36) 17

FIGURE 6.3: IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, the entire U.S.A., showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1850 ENTIRE USA

Cells contain: —Column percent —Confidence intervals (99 percent) —N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
35:35	1.18 (0.31–2.06) 12	.50 (0.00–1.07) 5	.84 (0.32–1.36) 17	46:46	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.20 (0.00–0.45) 4
36:36	1.28 (0.37–2.20) 13	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.79 (0.28–1.30) 16	47:47	.49 (0.00–1.06) 5	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.35 (0.01–0.68) 7
37:37	.79 (0.07–1.51) 8	.59 (0.00–1.22) 6	.69 (0.22–1.17) 14	48:48	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.20 (0.00–0.45) 4
38:38	.49 (0.00–1.06) 5	.50 (0.00–1.07) 5	.49 (0.09–0.90) 10	49:49	.39 (0.00–0.90) 4	.40 (0.00–0.91) 4	.40 (0.04–0.76) 8
39:39	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.30 (0.00–0.61) 6	50:50	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.40 (0.00–0.91) 4	.35 (0.01–0.68) 7
40:40	1.28 (0.37–2.20) 13	.59 (0.00–1.22) 6	.94 (0.39–1.49) 19	51:51	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.40 (0.00–0.91) 4	.30 (0.00–0.61) 6
41:41	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.30 (0.00–0.61) 6	52:52	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.30 (0.00–0.61) 6
42:42	.59 (0.00–1.21) 6	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.45 (0.06–0.83) 9	53:53	.00 — 0	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2
43:43	.39 (0.00–0.90) 4	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.30 (0.00–0.61) 6	54:54	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.20 (0.00–0.45) 4
44:44	.49 (0.00–1.06) 5	.00 — 0	.25 (0.00–0.53) 5	55:55	.49 (0.00–1.06) 5	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.30 (0.00–0.61) 6
45:45	.99 (0.19–1.79) 10	.40 (0.00–0.91) 4	.69 (0.22–1.17) 14	56:56	.00 — 0	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1

FIGURE 6.3 (cont.) IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, the entire U.S.A., showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1850
Entire USA

Cells contain:
- Column percent
- Confidence intervals (99 percent)
- N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
57:57	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.00 — 0	.15 (0.00–0.37) 3	65:65	.39 (0.00–0.90) 4	.00 (0.00–0.45) 0	.20 (0.00–0.45) 4
58:58	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2	66:66	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2
59:59	.39 (0.00–0.90) 4	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.25 (0.00–0.53) 5	69:69	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.15 (0.00–0.37) 3
60:60	.30 (0.00–0.74) 3	.00 — 0	.15 (0.00–0.37) 3	71:71	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1
61:61	.00 — 0	.20 (0.00–0.56) 2	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2	75:75	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1
62:62	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	80:80	.00 — 0	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1
63:63	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	83:83	.10 (0.00–0.35) 1	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1
COL. TOTAL	100.00 — 1,013	100.00 — 1,009	100.00 — 2,022				

FIGURE 6.3 (cont.): IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, the entire U.S.A., showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

but any error in a key variable would make the data useless under all circumstances.

With these caveats, I will look at the IPUMS data in 1850 and 1880 for four groups: the New England region (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont); the Middle Atlantic region (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania), and the East North

Central region (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin); and, just for interest, the totality of America at the time.[45]

I will start with the entire USA chart (see figure 6.3). For each age, we have the percentage from the sample first, then confidence interval, then the number of valid cases beneath it. The confidence intervals mean that, based on the 1% sample, there is a 99 percent certainty that the actual percentage is between the range given.

Thus, in the 1850 IPUMS 1% sample of valid responses, 2,022 people responded yes to the "married within the previous year" question—1,013 male and 1,009 female. In this group, one female was 13, three were 14, and twelve were 15—1.59 percent of the sample. This includes southern, northern and western states, as well as northeastern states—as we have noted previously, the southern and frontier states will have lower marriage rates than the northeastern states. Still, very early marriage, ages 13 to 15, is not a large group. There are substantial jumps up to 16 and from there to 17 (at 3.07 and 8.03 percent); 18, 19 and 20 are the largest groups.

Figure 6.4 shows the 1880 full USA IPUMS (including southern and western states), with a 10 percent sample. There were no marriages reported for girls at age 11 and 12; I deleted rows recording miniscule amounts for ages 0 to 10.

In 1880, marriage at age 13 is .12 percent, at age 14 is .45 percent; at age fifteen it is 1.52 percent; together, very early marriage is 2.09 percent.

New England predictably has a higher marriage age than this; in 1850 the largest groups range from 18 to 22, with 22 as the largest group, see figure 6.5. Thus, for the year 1850, 119 females responded that they had been married in the previous year, in the IPUMS 1% sample of valid cases. Of these, there were no marriages at ages 14 or 15, and only one at age 16. Seventeen was evidently the earliest that women generally were married in New England at this time.

45. See IPUMSUSA website, at http://usa.ipums.org/usa/ (accessed December 23, 2009). To reproduce my results, go to IPUMS-USA Online Data Analysis System, and select 1850. For Row, put age; for Column, sex; for Control, marriyr(2); for Selection Filters, region(11) for New England, region(12) for Middle Atlantic, region(21) for East North Central; for Weight (none); for Decimals, 2; for Confidence level, 99 percent.

1880 ENTIRE USA

Cells contain:
—Column percent
—Confidence intervals (99 percent)
—N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
13:13	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.12 (0.04–0.21) 15	.07 (0.02–0.11) 16
14:14	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.45 (0.30–0.61) 55	.23 (0.15–0.32) 56
15:15	.02 (0.00–0.05) 2	1.52 (1.24–1.81) 185	.78 (0.64–0.93) 187
16:16	.05 (0.00–0.11) 6	3.86 (3.41–4.31) 468	1.99 (1.76–2.22) 474
17:17	.31 (0.18–0.44) 36	6.40 (5.82–6.97) 776	3.41 (3.10–3.71) 812
18:18	1.24 (0.98–1.50) 145	11.64 (10.89–12.39) 1,412	6.53 (6.12–6.95) 1,557
19:19	2.71 (2.32–3.10) 317	10.98 (10.25–11.71) 1,332	6.92 (6.50–7.34) 1,649
20:20	5.05 (4.53–5.57) 591	11.86 (11.10–12.62) 1,439	8.52 (8.05–8.98) 2,030
21:21	8.97 (8.29–9.66) 1,050	8.99 (8.32–9.66) 1,091	8.98 (8.51–9.46) 2,141
22:22	9.88 (9.17–10.59) 1,156	8.60 (7.95–9.26) 1,044	9.23 (8.75–9.71) 2,200
23:23	10.08 (9.36–10.79) 1,179	6.22 (5.66–6.79) 755	8.11 (7.66–8.57) 1,934
24:24	9.19 (8.50–9.88) 1,075	4.97 (4.46–5.48) 603	7.04 (6.61–7.47) 1,678
25:25	8.91 (8.23–9.58) 1,042	3.99 (3.53–4.45) 484	6.40 (5.99–6.81) 1,526
26:26	6.32 (5.74–6.90) 739	3.05 (2.65–3.45) 370	4.65 (4.30–5.00) 1,109
27:27	5.35 (4.81–5.89) 626	1.83 (1.52–2.14) 222	3.56 (3.25–3.87) 848
28:28	5.00 (4.48–5.52) 585	1.90 (1.58–2.22) 231	3.42 (3.13–3.73) 816
29:29	3.19 (2.77–3.61) 373	1.01 (0.77–1.24) 122	2.08 (1.84–2.31) 495
30:30	3.88 (3.42–4.34) 454	1.66 (1.36–1.96) 201	2.75 (2.48–3.02) 655
31:31	1.92 (1.60–2.25) 225	.58 (0.40–0.75) 70	1.24 (1.05–1.42) 295
32:32	2.08 (1.74–2.42) 243	.64 (0.46–0.83) 78	1.35 (1.15–1.54) 321
33:33	1.32 (1.04–1.59) 154	.50 (0.34–0.67) 61	.90 (0.74–1.06) 215
34:34	.96 (0.73–1.19) 112	.41 (0.26–0.56) 50	.68 (0.54–0.82) 162

FIGURE 6.4: IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, the entire U.S.A., showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880 ENTIRE USA

Cells contain:
—Column percent
—Confidence intervals (99 percent)
—N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
35:35	1.60 (1.30–1.90) 187	.90 (0.68–1.12) 109	1.24 (1.06–1.43) 296
36:36	.82 (0.61–1.04) 96	.45 (0.29–0.60) 54	.63 (0.50–0.76) 150
37:37	.88 (0.66–1.10) 103	.35 (0.22–0.49) 43	.61 (0.48–0.74) 146
38:38	.86 (0.64–1.08) 101	.38 (0.24–0.52) 46	.62 (0.49–0.75) 147
39:39	.50 (0.33–0.66) 58	.20 (0.09–0.30) 24	.35 (0.22–0.47) 82
40:40	1.11 (0.86–1.36) 130	.56 (0.39–0.74) 68	.83 (0.68–0.98) 198
41:41	.39 (0.24–0.54) 46	.19 (0.09–0.29) 23	.29 (0.18–0.38) 69
42:42	.55 (0.37–0.72) 64	.33 (0.20–0.46) 40	.44 (0.33–0.55) 104
43:43	.36 (0.22–0.50) 42	.19 (0.09–0.29) 23	.27 (0.17–0.36) 65
44:44	.28 (0.16–0.41) 33	.25 (0.13–0.36) 30	.26 (0.17–0.34) 63
45:45	.63 (0.44–0.82) 74	.35 (0.22–0.49) 43	.49 (0.37–0.61) 117
46:46	.34 (0.20–0.48) 40	.17 (0.08–0.27) 21	.26 (0.17–0.34) 61
47:47	.27 (0.15–0.40) 32	.17 (0.08–0.27) 21	.22 (0.14–0.30) 53
48:48	.30 (0.17–0.43) 35	.21 (0.10–0.31) 25	.25 (0.16–0.35) 60
49:49	.24 (0.12–0.36) 28	.16 (0.07–0.26) 20	.20 (0.12–0.28) 48
50:50	.55 (0.37–0.72) 64	.42 (0.29–0.56) 50	.48 (0.36–0.59) 114
51:51	.14 (0.05–0.22) 16	.12 (0.04–0.19) 14	.13 (0.07–0.19) 30
52:52	.24 (0.12–0.36) 28	.16 (0.07–0.26) 20	.20 (0.13–0.28) 48
53:53	.21 (0.10–0.32) 25	.15 (0.06–0.24) 18	.18 (0.11–0.25) 43
54:54	.24 (0.12–0.36) 28	.08 (0.02–0.15) 10	.16 (0.09–0.23) 38
55:55	.28 (0.16–0.41) 33	.23 (0.12–0.34) 29	.26 (0.18–0.35) 62
56:56	.18 (0.08–0.28) 21	.11 (0.03–0.18) 13	.14 (0.08–0.21) 34

FIGURE 6.4 (cont.): IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, the entire U.S.A., showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880 ENTIRE USA

Cells contain: –Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
57:57	.21 (0.10–0.32) 25	.10 (0.03–0.17) 12	.16 (0.09–0.22) 37
58:58	.17 (0.07–0.27) 20	.13 (0.05–0.22) 16	.15 (0.09–0.22) 36
59:59	.10 (0.03–0.18) 12	.08 (0.02–0.15) 10	.09 (0.04–0.14) 22
60:60	.25 (0.13–0.37) 29	.34 (0.20–0.47) 41	.29 (0.20–0.38) 70
61:61	.12 (0.04–0.20) 14	.12 (0.04–0.19) 14	.12 (0.06–0.17) 28
62:62	.15 (0.05–0.24) 17	.07 (0.01–0.14) 9	.11 (0.05–0.16) 26
63:63	.09 (0.02–0.16) 10	.08 (0.02–0.15) 10	.08 (0.04–0.13) 20
64:64	.12 (0.04–0.20) 14	.09 (0.02–0.16) 11	.10 (0.05–0.16) 25
65:65	.18 (0.08–0.28) 21	.21 (0.10–0.31) 25	.19 (0.12–0.27) 46
66:66	.07 (0.01–0.13) 8	.08 (0.02–0.15) 10	.08 (0.03–0.12) 18
67:67	.09 (0.02–0.17) 11	.09 (0.02–0.16) 11	.09 (0.04–0.14) 22
68:68	.13 (0.04–0.21) 15	.12 (0.04–0.19) 14	.12 (0.06–0.18) 29
69:69	.10 (0.03–0.18) 12	.04 (0.00–0.09) 5	.07 (0.03–0.12) 17
70:70	.09 (0.02–0.16) 10	.19 (0.09–0.29) 23	.14 (0.08–0.20) 33
71:71	.03 (0.00–0.08) 4	.02 (0.00–0.05) 2	.02 (0.00–0.05) 6
72:72	.07 (0.00–0.13) 8	.10 (0.03–0.17) 12	.08 (0.04–0.13) 20
73:73	.09 (0.02–0.16) 10	.02 (0.00–0.06) 3	.05 (0.02–0.09) 13
74:74	.06 (0.00–0.12) 7	.07 (0.01–0.13) 8	.07 (0.02–0.10) 15
75:75	.13 (0.04–0.21) 15	.11 (0.03–0.18) 13	.12 (0.06–0.17) 28
76:76	.04 (0.00–0.09) 5	.04 (0.00–0.09) 5	.04 (0.01–0.08) 10
77:77	.03 (0.00–0.08) 4	.02 (0.00–0.06) 3	.03 (0.00–0.06) 7
78:78	.03 (0.00–0.06) 3	.05 (0.00–0.10) 6	.04 (0.01–0.07) 9

FIGURE 6.4 (cont.): *IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, the entire U.S.A., showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.*

1880 ENTIRE USA

Cells contain: –Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
79:79	.05 (0.00–0.11) 6	.04 (0.01–0.08) 5	.05 (0.01–0.08) 11
80:80	.06 (0.00–0.12) 7	.10 (0.03–0.17) 12	.08 (0.03–0.13) 19
81:81	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.02 (0.00–0.05) 2	.01 (0.00–0.03) 3
82:82	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.01 (0.00–0.02) 2
83:83	.00 (0.00–0.03) 0	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.00 (0.00–0.02) 1
84:84	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.02 (0.00–0.05) 2	.01 (0.00–0.03) 3
85:85	— (0.00–0.03) 0	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.00 (0.00–0.02) 1
86:86	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	— (0.00–0.02) 0	.00 (0.00–0.02) 1
87:87	.00 (0.00–0.03) 1	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.01 (0.00–0.02) 1
88:88	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.03 (0.00–0.06) 3	.02 (0.00–0.04) 4
90:90	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.03 (0.00–0.06) 4	.02 (0.00–0.03) 1
94:94	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.00 (0.00–0.03) 0	.00 (0.00–0.02) 1
96:96	.00 (0.00–0.03) 1	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.01 (0.00–0.02) 2
99:99	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	— (0.00–0.03) 0	.00 (0.00–0.02) 1
106:106	— (0.00–0.03) 0	.01 (0.00–0.03) 1	.00 (0.00–0.02) 1
COL. TOTAL	100.00 — 11,700	100.00 — 12,134	100.00 — 23,834

FIGURE 6.4 (cont.): *IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, the entire U.S.A., showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.*

1850
NEW ENGLAND STATES

Cells contain:
— Column percent
— Confidence intervals (99 percent)
— N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
16:16	.86 (0.00–3.12) 1	.84 (0.00–2.41) 1	.85 2
17:17	.86 (0.21–3.12) 1	5.88 (0.21–11.55) 7	3.40 8
18:18	.86 (0.00–3.12) 1	10.08 (2.83–17.34) 12	5.53 13
19:19	1.72 (0.00–4.90) 2	12.61 (4.61–20.60) 15	7.23 17
20:20	1.72 (0.00–4.90) 2	6.72 (0.83–12.76) 8	4.26 10
21:21	3.45 (0.00–7.90) 4	9.24 (2.26–16.22) 11	6.38 15
22:22	12.93 (4.74–21.13) 15	13.45 (5.22–21.67) 16	13.19 31
23:23	10.34 (2.91–17.78) 12	5.88 (0.21–11.55) 7	8.09 19
24:24	10.34 (2.91–17.78) 12	7.56 (1.19–13.94) 9	8.94 21
25:25	11.21 (3.50–18.91) 13	6.72 (0.69–12.76) 8	8.94 21
26:26	7.76 (1.22–14.29) 9	4.20 (0.00–9.04) 5	5.96 14

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
27:27	7.76 (1.22–14.29) 9	4.20 (1.94–9.98) 5	5.96 14
28:28	6.03 (0.22–11.85) 7	4.20 (0.00–9.04) 5	5.11 (1.37–8.84) 12
29:29	4.31 (0.00–9.27) 5	2.52 (0.33–6.48) 3	3.40 8
30:30	5.17 (0.00–10.58) 6	2.52 (0.57–7.09) 3	3.83 9
31:31	2.59 (0.00–6.46) 3	.00 — 0	1.28 (0.00–3.18) 3
32:32	2.59 (0.00–6.46) 3	.84 — 0	1.28 (0.00–3.18) 3
33:33	1.72 (0.00–4.90) 2	.84 (0.00–3.04) 1	1.28 (0.00–3.18) 3
34:34	2.59 (0.00–6.46) 3	.84 (0.00–3.04) 1	1.70 (0.00–3.90) 4
35:35	2.59 (0.00–6.46) 3	.84 (0.00–3.04) 1	1.70 4
36:36	.86 (0.00–3.04) 1	.84 (0.00–3.04) 1	.85 2
37:37	.86 (0.00–3.12) 1	.00 — 0	.43 (0.00–1.53) 1
38:38	.86 (0.00–3.12) 1	.00 — 0	.43 (0.00–1.53) 1

FIGURE 6.5: IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, New England division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1850
NEW ENGLAND STATES

Cells contain:
— Column percent
— Confidence intervals (99 percent)
— N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
40:40	.86 (0.00–3.12) 1	.00 — 0	.43 (0.00–1.53) 1
44:44	.86 (0.00–3.12) 1	.00 — 0	.43 (0.00–1.53) 1
49:49	.86 (0.00–3.12) 1	.00 — 0	.43 (0.00–1.53) 1
51:51	.00 — 0	.84 (0.00–3.04) 1	.43 (0.00–1.53) 1
54:54	.86 (0.00–1.53) 1	.00 — 0	.43 (0.00–1.53) 1
COL. TOTAL	100.00 — 116	100.00 — 119	100.00 — 235

FIGURE 6.5 (cont.): IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, New England division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

The 1880 IPUMS report is slightly higher than the 1850 census, as illustrated in figure 6.6. Thus, in 1880 New England, .26 were married at age 14, and .78 were married at age 15—1.04 percent. Marriages at age 16 are not common, at 1.56 percent.

The 1850 marriage age data for the Middle Atlantic (New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) region are slightly lower than the 1850 marriage age data in New England, see figure 6.7. In the 283 females in this group, there are no examples of a 14-year-old who had been married in the previous year, but there are three 15-year-olds, about 1 percent. The most populous groups are ages 19 to 23.

In the 1880 table (figure 6.8), I removed one row for less than one year old. Thus, in 1880, marriages at age 13–15 account for about .70 percent.

In the East North Central Group (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin) for 1850, the most popular marriage ages, for females, are 17–21, see figure 6.9.

1880
New England States

Cells contain: –Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
14:14	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.26 (0.00–0.73) 2	.20 (0.00–0.49) 3
15:15	.00 — 0	.78 (0.00–1.60) 6	.39 (0.00–0.81) 6
16:16	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	1.56 (0.41–2.71) 12	.86 (0.25–1.46) 13
17:17	.00 — 0	3.64 (1.89–5.38) 28	1.84 (0.95–2.73) 28
18:18	.80 (0.00–1.64) 6	6.10 (3.87–8.33) 47	3.49 (2.27–4.70) 53
19:19	2.13 (0.77–3.50) 16	9.35 (6.64–12.06) 72	5.79 (4.24–7.33) 88
20:20	4.27 (2.36–6.17) 32	11.04 (8.12–13.96) 85	7.70 (5.93–9.46) 117
21:21	4.93 (2.89–6.98) 37	9.48 (6.75–12.21) 73	7.24 (5.52–8.95) 110
22:22	8.80 (6.13–11.47) 66	8.70 (6.08–11.33) 67	8.75 (6.88–10.62) 133
23:23	10.13 (7.29–12.98) 76	6.88 (4.53–9.24) 53	8.49 (6.64–10.33) 129
24:24	8.00 (5.44–10.56) 60	5.97 (3.77–8.18) 46	6.97 (5.29–8.66) 106
25:25	7.87 (5.33–10.41) 59	4.42 (2.50–6.33) 34	6.12 (4.53–7.70) 93
26:26	7.20 (4.76–9.64) 54	4.81 (2.81–6.80) 37	5.99 (4.42–7.56) 91
27:27	5.60 (3.43–7.77) 42	3.64 (1.89–5.38) 28	4.61 (3.22–5.99) 70
28:28	3.87 (2.05–5.69) 29	4.16 (2.30–6.01) 32	4.01 (2.71–5.31) 61
29:29	5.60 (3.43–7.77) 42	2.47 (1.02–3.91) 19	4.01 (2.71–5.31) 61
30:30	4.93 (2.89–6.98) 37	2.08 (0.75–3.41) 16	3.49 (2.27–4.70) 53
31:31	2.67 (1.15–4.19) 20	1.17 (0.17–2.17) 9	1.91 (1.00–2.81) 29
32:32	2.80 (1.24–4.36) 21	.65 (0.00–1.40) 5	1.71 (0.85–2.57) 26
33:33	1.20 (0.17–2.23) 9	.65 (0.00–1.40) 5	.92 (0.29–1.55) 14
34:34	.67 (0.00–1.43) 5	.52 (0.00–1.19) 4	.59 (0.08–1.10) 9
35:35	2.13 (0.77–3.50) 16	1.04 (0.09–1.98) 8	1.58 (0.75–2.40) 24

FIGURE 6.6: IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, New England division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880
New England States

Cells contain: –Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
36:36	.80 (0.00–1.64) 6	.65 (0.16–1.28) 5	.72 (0.16–1.28) 11
37:37	1.60 (0.42–2.78) 12	.39 (0.00–0.97) 3	.99 (0.33–1.64) 15
38:38	1.07 (0.10–2.04) 8	.52 (0.00–1.19) 4	.79 (0.20–1.38) 12
39:39	.80 (0.00–1.64) 6	.26 (0.00–0.73) 2	.53 (0.05–1.01) 8
40:40	2.40 (0.96–3.84) 18	1.04 (0.09–1.98) 8	1.71 (0.85–2.57) 26
41:41	.40 (0.00–1.00) 3	.39 (0.00–0.97) 3	.39 (0.00–0.81) 6
42:42	.93 (0.03–1.84) 7	.39 (0.00–0.97) 3	.66 (0.12–1.19) 10
43:43	.67 (0.00–1.43) 5	.26 (0.01–0.91) 2	.46 (0.01–0.91) 7
44:44	.00 — 0	.39 (0.00–0.97) 3	.20 (0.00–0.49) 3
45:45	.67 (0.00–1.43) 5	.26 (0.01–0.91) 2	.46 (0.00–0.60) 7
46:46	.53 (0.00–1.22) 4	.53 (0.00–1.40) 5	.53 (0.00–1.00) 9
47:47	.27 (0.00–0.75) 2	.00 — 0	.13 (0.00–0.37) 2
48:48	.40 (0.00–1.00) 3	.39 (0.00–0.97) 3	.39 (0.00–0.60) 6
49:49	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.13 (0.00–0.48) 3	.13 (0.00–0.97) 3
50:50	.80 (0.00–1.64) 6	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.46 (0.01–0.91) 7
51:51	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.40 (0.00–0.97) 3	.13 (0.00–0.24) 2
52:52	.40 (0.00–1.00) 3	.39 (0.00–0.81) 6	.39 (0.00–0.97) 6
53:53	.00 — 0	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.47) 1
54:54	.27 (0.00–0.75) 2	.13 (0.00–0.49) 1	.20 (0.00–0.49) 3
55:55	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.26 (0.00–0.73) 2	.20 (0.00–0.47) 3
56:56	.53 (0.00–1.22) 4	.00 — 0	.26 (0.00–0.60) 4
57:57	.40 (0.00–1.00) 3	.26 (0.00–0.73) 2	.33 (0.00–0.71) 5

FIGURE 6.6 (cont.): IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, New England division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880
NEW ENGLAND STATES

Cells contain: – Column percent / – Confidence intervals (99 percent) / – N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
58:58	.26 (0.00–0.73) 2	.26 (0.00–0.73) 2	.13 (0.00–0.37) 2
60:60	.27 (0.00–0.75) 2	.26 (0.00–0.60) 4	.26 (0.00–0.60) 4
61:61	.40 (0.00–1.00) 3	.26 (0.00–0.60) 4	.26 (0.00–0.60) 4
62:62	.27 (0.00–0.75) 2	.00 (0.00–0.37) 0	.13 (0.00–0.37) 2
63:63	.00 — 0	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
64:64	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.13 (0.00–0.37) 2
65:65	.00 — 0	.52 (0.00–1.19) 4	.26 (0.00–0.60) 4
68:68	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.37) 2
69:69	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
70:70	.40 (0.00–1.00) 3	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.26 (0.00–0.60) 4
71:71	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.00 — 0	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
72:72	.00 — 0	.00 — 0	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
73:73	.27 (0.00–0.75) 2	.20 (0.00–0.49) 3	.20 (0.00–0.49) 3
75:75	.53 (0.00–1.22) 4	.33 (0.00–0.71) 5	.33 (0.00–0.71) 5
76:76	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.13 (0.00–0.37) 2
77:77	.13 (0.00–0.48) 1	.07 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
79:79	.00 — 0	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.13 (0.00–0.24) 1
80:80	.00 — 0	.26 (0.00–0.73) 2	.13 (0.00–0.37) 2
81:81	.00 — 0	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
82:82	.00 — 0	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
83:83	.00 — 0	.13 (0.00–0.47) 1	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
84:84	.00 — 0	.00 (0.00–0.47) 0	.07 (0.00–0.24) 1
COL. TOTAL	100.00 — 750	100.00 — 770	100.00 — 1,520

1850
MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

Cells contain: – Column percent / – Confidence intervals (99 percent) / – N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
15:15	4.59 (1.36–7.83) 13	11.91 (6.86–16.97) 33	8.21 (5.21–11.22) 46
16:16	1.77 (0.00–3.80) 5	5.78 (2.13–9.42) 16	3.75 (1.67–5.83) 21
17:17	3.89 (0.90–6.87) 11	6.86 (2.91–10.81) 19	5.36 (2.90–7.82) 30
18:18	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	.89 (0.00–1.92) 5
19:19	2.83 (0.27–5.39) 8	5.78 (2.13–9.42) 16	4.29 (2.07–6.50) 24
20:20	4.95 (2.76–7.60) 14	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	3.21 (1.29–5.14) 18
21:21	11.66 (6.70–16.62) 33	2.89 (0.27–5.50) 8	7.32 (4.47–10.17) 41
22:22	13.43 (8.16–18.69) 38	1.81 (0.00–3.88) 5	8.57 (5.51–11.63) 48
23:23	9.54 (5.00–14.08) 27	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	10.00 (6.72–13.28) 56
24:24	9.03 (4.55–13.50) 25	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	9.64 (6.42–12.87) 54
25:25	10.11 (5.40–14.81) 28	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	7.50 (4.62–10.38) 42
26:26	10.47 (5.00–14.93) 27	1.07 (0.00–2.20) 6	9.54 (5.00–14.08) 27
27:27	5.42 (1.88–8.95) 15	.89 (0.00–1.92) 5	9.03 (4.55–13.50) 25
28:28	11.66 (6.70–16.62) 38	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	13.36 (8.05–18.67) 37
29:29	10.25 (5.51–11.63) 33	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	9.11 (5.96–12.25) 51
30:30	6.36 (2.59–10.13) 29	1.44 (0.00–2.00) 6	10.11 (5.40–14.81) 28
31:31	5.18 (2.13–9.42) 29	1.44 (0.00–2.00) 2	4.95 (1.60–8.30) 14
32:32	13.43 (5.51–11.63) 38	2.89 (0.27–5.50) 8	4.95 (1.60–8.30) 14
33:33	6.36 (2.76–7.60) 29	1.81 (0.00–3.88) 5	9.11 (5.96–12.25) 51
34:34	7.32 (4.47–10.17) 29	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	10.00 (6.72–13.28) 56
35:35	1.08 (0.00–2.70) 3	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	7.50 (4.62–10.38) 42
36:36	1.08 (0.00–2.70) 3	1.44 (0.00–3.31) 4	.71 (0.00–1.63) 4

FIGURE 6.7: IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, Middle Atlantic division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1850
MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

Cells contain: —Column percent —Confidence intervals (99 percent) —N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
37:37	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.71 (0.00–2.00) 2	.54 (0.00–1.33) 3	48:48	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1
38:38	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.01) 2	49:49	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.36 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.01) 2
39:39	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.01) 2	50:50	.72 (0.00–2.04) 2	.00 — 0	.36 (0.00–1.30) 2
40:40	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.00 — 0	.18 (0.00–0.64) 1	52:52	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.36 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.01) 2
41:41	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.01) 2	53:53	.00 — 0	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.18 (0.00–0.64) 1
42:42	2.17 (0.00–4.44) 6	.00 — 0	1.07 (0.00–2.20) 6	55:55	.18 (0.00–1.27) 1	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.18 (0.00–0.64) 1
43:43	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.01) 2	59:59	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1
44:44	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.00 — 0	.18 (0.00–0.64) 1	60:60	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.00 — 0	.18 (0.00–0.64) 1
45:45	2.17 (0.00–4.44) 6	1.43 (0.13–2.73) 8	1.43 (0.13–2.73) 8				
46:46	.36 (0.00–1.30) 1	.35 (0.00–1.27) 1	.36 (0.00–1.01) 2				
				COL. TOTAL	100.00 — 277	100.00 — 283	100.00 — 560

FIGURE 6.7 (cont.): IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, Middle Atlantic division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880
MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

Cells contain: —Column percent —Confidence intervals (99 percent) —N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
13:13	.00 — 0	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2	.05 (0.00–0.15) 2	24:24	9.81 (8.04–11.59) 184	5.99 (4.62–7.36) 119	7.85 (6.73–8.96) 303
14:14	.00 — 0	.25 (0.00–0.54) 5	.13 (0.00–0.28) 5	25:25	8.37 (6.72–10.02) 157	5.23 (3.95–6.52) 104	6.76 (5.72–7.80) 261
15:15	.00 — 0	.35 (0.01–0.70) 7	.18 (0.00–0.36) 7	26:26	7.25 (5.71–8.80) 136	3.77 (2.67–4.88) 75	5.46 (4.52–6.41) 211
16:16	.00 — 0	1.56 (0.84–2.28) 31	.80 (0.43–1.17) 31	27:27	6.67 (5.18–8.15) 125	2.11 (1.28–2.95) 42	4.32 (3.48–5.17) 167
17:17	.11 (0.00–0.30) 2	4.63 (3.41–5.85) 92	2.43 (1.79–3.07) 94	28:28	6.08 (4.66–7.50) 114	2.16 (1.32–3.01) 43	4.07 (3.25–4.88) 157
18:18	.64 (0.17–1.11) 12	8.30 (6.71–9.90) 165	4.58 (3.72–5.45) 177	29:29	4.21 (3.02–5.41) 79	.91 (0.36–1.45) 18	2.51 (1.86–3.16) 97
19:19	2.03 (1.19–2.87) 38	9.96 (8.23–11.70) 198	6.11 (5.12–7.10) 236	30:30	4.21 (3.02–5.41) 79	2.32 (1.45–3.19) 46	3.24 (2.50–3.97) 125
20:20	4.69 (3.43–5.95) 88	11.22 (9.40–13.05) 223	8.05 (6.92–9.18) 311	31:31	1.92 (1.10–2.74) 36	.75 (0.25–1.26) 15	1.32 (0.85–1.79) 51
21:21	7.63 (6.05–9.21) 143	10.82 (9.02–12.62) 215	9.27 (8.07–10.47) 358	32:32	2.08 (1.23–2.93) 39	.60 (0.16–1.05) 12	1.32 (0.85–1.79) 51
22:22	9.55 (7.80–11.30) 179	9.71 (8.00–11.43) 193	9.63 (8.41–10.86) 372	33:33	1.44 (0.73–2.15) 27	.65 (0.19–1.12) 13	1.04 (0.62–1.46) 40
23:23	9.81 (8.04–11.59) 184	8.86 (7.21–10.50) 176	9.32 (8.12–10.53) 360	34:34	1.17 (0.53–1.81) 22	.25 (0.00–0.54) 5	.70 (0.35–1.04) 27
				COL. TOTAL	100.00 —	100.00 —	100.00 —

FIGURE 6.8: IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, Middle Atlantic division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880
MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

Cells contain: —Column percent
—Confidence intervals (99 percent)
—N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
35:35	1.23 (0.57–1.88) 23	.91 (0.36–1.45) 18	1.06 (0.64–1.49) 41	46:46	.21 (0.00–0.49) 4	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2	.16 (0.00–0.32) 6
36:36	1.17 (0.53–1.81) 23	.20 (0.00–0.46) 4	.67 (0.33–1.01) 26	47:47	.16 (0.00–0.40) 3	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.16 (0.00–0.32) 6
37:37	.48 (0.07–0.89) 9	.50 (0.09–0.91) 10	.49 (0.20–0.78) 19	48:48	.27 (0.00–0.57) 5	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.21 (0.02–0.40) 8
38:38	.69 (0.20–1.19) 13	.55 (0.12–0.98) 11	.62 (0.30–0.95) 24	49:49	.16 (0.00–0.40) 3	.35 (0.01–0.70) 7	.26 (0.05–0.47) 10
39:39	.48 (0.07–0.89) 9	.60 (0.16–1.05) 12	.54 (0.24–0.85) 21	50:50	.37 (0.00–0.74) 7	.25 (0.00–0.54) 5	.31 (0.08–0.54) 12
40:40	1.01 (0.42–1.61) 19	.40 (0.04–0.77) 8	.70 (0.35–1.04) 27	51:51	.16 (0.00–0.40) 3	.25 (0.02–0.40) 5	.21 (0.02–0.40) 8
41:41	.48 (0.07–0.89) 9	.25 (0.00–0.54) 5	.36 (0.11–0.61) 14	52:52	.21 (0.00–0.49) 4	.20 (0.00–0.46) 4	.21 (0.02–0.40) 8
42:42	.53 (0.10–0.97) 10	.40 (0.04–0.77) 8	.47 (0.18–0.75) 18	53:53	.16 (0.00–0.40) 3	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.10 (0.00–0.24) 4
43:43	.32 (0.00–0.66) 6	.25 (0.00–0.54) 5	.28 (0.06–0.51) 11	54:54	.11 (0.00–0.30) 2	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.08 (0.00–0.19) 3
44:44	.48 (0.07–0.89) 9	.10 (0.00–0.28) 2	.28 (0.06–0.51) 11	55:55	.43 (0.04–0.81) 8	.20 (0.00–0.46) 4	.31 (0.08–0.54) 12
45:45	.64 (0.17–1.11) 12	.40 (0.04–0.77) 8	.52 (0.22–0.82) 20	56:56	.00 — 0	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.08 (0.00–0.19) 3

FIGURE 6.8 (cont.): *IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, Middle Atlantic division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.*

1880
MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

Cells contain: —Column percent
—Confidence intervals (99 percent)
—N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
57:57	.37 (0.01–0.74) 7	.25 (0.08–0.54) 5	.31 (0.08–0.54) 12	68:68	.11 (0.00–0.30) 2	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.13 (0.00–0.28) 3
58:58	.16 (0.00–0.40) 3	.13 (0.00–0.28) 2	.13 (0.00–0.28) 5	69:69	.05 (0.00–0.30) 2	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.05 (0.00–0.15) 2
59:59	.11 (0.00–0.30) 3	.30 (0.00–0.62) 6	.26 (0.00–0.24) 8	70:70	.11 (0.00–0.30) 2	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.13 (0.00–0.28) 5
60:60	.21 (0.00–0.49) 4	.05 (0.05–0.47) 1	.13 (0.00–0.24) 5	71:71	.05 (0.00–0.19) 1	.00 — 0	.03 (0.00–0.09) 1
61:61	.11 (0.00–0.30) 2	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.08 (0.00–0.19) 3	72:72	.00 — 0	.25 (0.00–0.54) 5	.13 (0.00–0.28) 5
62:62	.05 (0.00–0.30) 2	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.13 (0.00–0.28) 5	73:73	.11 (0.00–0.18) 1	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.08 (0.00–0.19) 3
63:63	.05 (0.00–0.19) 1	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.10 (0.00–0.24) 4	74:74	.16 (0.00–0.18) 1	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.05 (0.00–0.15) 2
64:64	.16 (0.00–0.40) 3	.15 (0.00–0.32) 3	.16 (0.00–0.32) 6	75:75	.16 (0.00–0.40) 3	.20 (0.00–0.46) 4	.18 (0.00–0.36) 7
65:65	.21 (0.00–0.49) 4	.20 (0.02–0.40) 4	.21 (0.00–0.40) 8	76:76	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.03 (0.00–0.09) 1
66:66	.05 (0.00–0.19) 1	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.10 (0.00–0.24) 4	77:77	.05 (0.00–0.19) 1	.00 — 0	.03 (0.00–0.09) 1
67:67	.05 (0.00–0.19) 1	.15 (0.00–0.38) 3	.10 (0.00–0.24) 4	78:78	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.18) 1	.03 (0.00–0.09) 1
				79:79	.11 (0.00–0.30) 2	.00 — 0	.05 (0.00–0.15) 2

FIGURE 6.8 (cont.): *IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, Middle Atlantic division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.*

1880
MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGION

Cells contain:
—Column percent
—Confidence intervals (99 percent)
—N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
80:80	.00 / — / 0	.10 (0.00–0.28) / 2	.05 (0.00–0.15) / 2		.05 (0.00–0.19) / 1	.00 / — / 0	.03 (0.00–0.09) / 1
81:81	.05 (0.00–0.19) / 1	.00 / — / 0	.03 (0.00–0.09) / 1		.00 / — / 1	.05 (0.00–0.18) / 1	.03 (0.00–0.09) / 1
86:86							
88:88							
COL. TOTAL	100.00 / —	100.00 / —	100.00 / —		100.00 / —	100.00 / —	100.00 / —
TOTAL	1,875	1,987	3,862		1,875	1,987	3,862

FIGURE 6.8 (cont.): IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, Middle Atlantic division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

Here there are two examples in the 14–15 year old category, less than one percent.

In 1880, once again, I deleted the row for less than one year old, see figure 6.10. Here, .92 percent are in the age category 13–15. So we come to the conclusion that very early marriages of young women with marriage age 14 or 15, from 1850 to 1880, did take place, but were not very common, in the New England and northeastern states. By the reports of the IPUMS database for the 1850 census, the 13 to 15 age bracket combined: 0% in New England, 1.06% in the Middle Atlantic division, and .88% in the East North Central division. For the 1880 census, with its ten percent sample: the 13–15 age bracket combined accounted for 1.04 percent in the New England states, .70 in the Middle Atlantic division, and .92 in the East North Central division.

Early Marriage in Polygamous Nauvoo and Utah

Joseph Smith practiced polygamy especially in Nauvoo from 1841 to 1844 (when he married 31 of his 33 plural wives, by my counting). He introduced the practice to a number of his followers before his death in 1844, and polygamy began to be widely practiced before Mormons left Illinois for Utah in 1846. Polygamy was openly practiced in Utah starting

1850
EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cells contain:
—Column percent
—Confidence intervals (99 percent)
—N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
14:14	.00 / — / 0	.44 (0.00–1.58) / 1	.22 (0.00–0.78) / 1
15:15	.00 / — / 0	.44 (0.00–0.78) / 1	.22 (0.00–0.78) / 1
16:16	.43 (0.00–1.54) / 1	2.64 (0.00–5.42) / 6	1.52 (0.04–3.00) / 7
17:17	.00 / — / 0	10.57 (5.26–15.89) / 24	5.22 (2.53–7.90) / 24
18:18	.86 (0.00–2.43) / 2	14.54 (8.45–20.65) / 33	7.61 (4.41–10.81) / 35
19:19	.00 / — / 0	6.61 (2.32–10.90) / 15	3.26 (1.12–5.41) / 15
20:20	6.01 (1.96–10.06) / 14	12.33 (6.65–18.02) / 28	9.13 (5.65–12.61) / 42
21:21	9.44 (4.46–14.43) / 22	9.69 (4.58–14.80) / 22	9.57 (6.01–13.12) / 44
22:22	9.01 (4.13–13.90) / 21	6.61 (2.32–10.90) / 15	7.83 (4.58–11.07) / 36
23:23	10.30 (5.12–15.48) / 24	7.49 (2.94–12.04) / 17	8.91 (5.47–12.35) / 41
24:24	10.73 (5.45–16.01) / 25	4.41 (0.86–7.95) / 10	7.61 (4.41–10.81) / 35
25:25	8.15 (3.49–12.82) / 19	3.08 (0.10–6.07) / 7	5.65 (2.86–8.44) / 26
26:26	5.15 (1.38–8.92) / 12	3.08 (0.10–6.07) / 7	4.13 (1.73–6.53) / 19
27:27	3.43 (0.33–6.54) / 8	3.08 (0.10–6.07) / 7	3.26 (1.12–5.41) / 15
28:28	6.01 (1.96–10.06) / 14	2.64 (0.00–5.42) / 6	4.35 (1.89–6.81) / 20
29:29	5.58 (1.67–9.49) / 13	.00 / — / 0	2.83 (0.83–4.83) / 13
30:30	3.00 (0.09–5.92) / 7	.88 (0.00–2.50) / 2	1.96 (0.28–3.63) / 9
31:31	1.29 (0.00–3.21) / 3	.44 (0.00–1.58) / 1	.87 (0.00–1.99) / 4
32:32	2.15 (0.00–4.62) / 5	.00 / — / 0	1.09 (0.00–2.34) / 5
33:33	1.72 (0.00–3.93) / 4	.88 (0.00–2.50) / 2	1.30 (0.00–2.67) / 6
34:34	1.29 (0.00–3.21) / 3	.44 (0.00–1.58) / 1	.88 (0.00–2.50) / 4
35:35	.65 (0.00–1.62) / 3	.00 / — / 0	.65 (0.00–1.62) / 3

FIGURE 6.9: IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1850
EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cells contain:
–Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total		1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
36:36	2.15 (0.00–4.62) 5	.44 (0.00–2.67) 1	1.30 (0.00–1.58) 6	50:50	.43 (0.00–2.43) 1	.88 (0.00–2.50) 2	.65 (0.00–1.62) 3
38:38	.86 (0.00–2.43) 2	.00 – 0	.43 (0.00–1.23) 2	51:51	.43 (0.00–2.43) 1	.88 (0.00–2.50) 2	.43 (0.00–1.23) 2
39:39	.00 – 0	.88 (0.00–2.50) 2	.43 (0.00–1.23) 2	53:53	.00 – 0	.44 (0.00–1.58) 1	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
40:40	1.72 (0.00–3.93) 4	.88 (0.00–2.50) 2	1.30 (0.00–2.67) 6	55:55	.86 (0.00–2.43) 2	.00 – 0	.43 (0.00–1.23) 2
41:41	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.88 (0.00–2.50) 2	.65 (0.00–1.62) 3	56:56	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
43:43	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.44 (0.00–1.58) 1	.43 (0.00–1.23) 2	59:59	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
45:45	.00 – 0	.44 (0.00–1.58) 1	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1	60:60	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
46:46	.00 – 0	.44 (0.00–1.58) 1	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1	61:61	.00 – 0	.44 (0.00–1.58) 1	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
47:47	.86 (0.00–2.43) 2	.44 (0.00–1.58) 1	.43 (0.00–1.23) 2	63:63	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
48:48	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1	66:66	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
49:49	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.88 (0.00–2.50) 2	.65 (0.00–1.62) 3	69:69	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.44 (0.00–1.58) 1	.43 (0.00–1.23) 2

FIGURE 6.9 (cont.): IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1850
EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cells contain:
–Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
75:75	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
83:83	.43 (0.00–1.54) 1	.00 – 0	.22 (0.00–0.78) 1
COL. TOTAL	100.00 – 233	100.00 – 227	100.00 – 460

FIGURE 6.9 (cont.): IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

in 1847, and was publicly announced in 1852. During the "Reformation," in 1856–1858, LDS church leaders visited congregations in Utah trying to renew the Saints' commitment to the Mormon faith, and challenging them to keep all the commandments exactly, including the commandment to enter plural marriage. This caused an uptick in plural marriages during that era.[46]

The history of Mormonism and Mormon polygamy has many examples of early marriage, which became an accepted part of nineteenth-century Mormon culture. Statistics, as well as common sense, have shown that polygamy tended to cause early marriage.

BYU family historian Kathryn M. Daynes, who studied marriage patterns in the small town of Manti, Utah, in the nineteenth century in her excellent book *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System 1840–1910*, provides statistical evidence indicating that the mean age of marriage in Utah was much lower than in New England.[47] She divides her data sample into three groups, or cohorts: born

---

46. Paul H. Peterson, "The Mormon Reformation of 1856–1857: The Rhetoric and the Reality," *Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989):59—88. For polygamy encouraged during the Reformation, see pages 71–72, 80. (There was a rash of divorces after the Reformation, because some had entered plural marriages in haste).

47. Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 94–96. I disagree with some of Daynes' arguments, but this is nevertheless an superb book.

FIGURE 6.9 (cont.): IPUMS 1% census sample for 1850, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880 EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cells contain:
– Column percent
– Confidence intervals (99 percent)
– N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
13:13	.00 — 0	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.04 (0.00–0.11) 2
14:14	.00 — 0	.23 (0.00–0.47) 6	.12 (0.00–0.24) 6
15:15	.00 — 0	.61 (0.22–1.00) 16	.31 (0.11–0.51) 16
16:16	.00 — 0	2.51 (1.73–3.30) 66	1.27 (0.87–1.67) 66
17:17	.20 (0.00–0.42) 5	5.56 (4.41–6.71) 146	2.91 (2.31–3.51) 151
18:18	.47 (0.12–0.82) 12	10.02 (8.50–11.53) 263	5.30 (4.50–6.10) 275
19:19	1.99 (1.28–2.70) 51	11.31 (9.72–12.90) 297	6.71 (5.81–7.60) 348
20:20	2.85 (2.00–3.70) 73	12.15 (10.50–13.79) 319	7.55 (6.61–8.50) 392
21:21	7.57 (6.22–8.92) 194	10.47 (8.93–12.01) 275	9.04 (8.01–10.06) 469
22:22	9.36 (7.88–10.85) 240	10.24 (8.75–11.77) 269	9.81 (8.75–10.87) 509
23:23	10.73 (9.15–12.31) 275	6.66 (5.41–7.92) 175	8.67 (7.67–9.68) 450
24:24	9.95 (8.42–11.47) 255	5.86 (4.68–7.05) 154	7.88 (6.92–8.85) 409
25:25	10.81 (9.23–12.39) 277	4.30 (3.28–5.33) 113	7.52 (6.57–8.46) 390
26:26	6.71 (5.44–7.99) 172	3.39 (2.48–4.30) 89	5.03 (4.25–5.81) 261
27:27	6.28 (5.05–7.52) 161	1.94 (1.25–2.64) 51	4.09 (3.38–4.79) 212
28:28	5.74 (4.55–6.92) 147	2.06 (1.34–2.77) 54	3.87 (3.18–4.56) 201
29:29	3.63 (2.68–4.58) 93	1.29 (0.73–1.86) 34	2.45 (1.89–3.00) 127
30:30	3.39 (2.47–4.32) 87	1.29 (0.73–1.86) 34	2.33 (1.79–2.87) 121
31:31	2.30 (1.54–3.07) 59	.65 (0.24–1.05) 17	1.46 (1.03–1.89) 76
32:32	2.38 (1.60–3.16) 61	.69 (0.27–1.10) 18	1.52 (1.08–1.96) 79
33:33	1.17 (0.62–1.72) 30	.23 (0.00–0.47) 6	.69 (0.40–0.99) 36
34:34	1.17 (0.62–1.72) 30	.46 (0.12–0.80) 12	.81 (0.49–1.13) 42

FIGURE 6.10: IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880 EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cells contain:
– Column percent
– Confidence intervals (99 percent)
– N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
35:35	1.83 (1.15–2.52) 47	.53 (0.17–0.90) 14	1.18 (0.79–1.56) 61
36:36	.59 (0.20–0.97) 15	.53 (0.17–0.90) 14	.56 (0.29–0.83) 29
37:37	.74 (0.30–1.18) 19	.42 (0.09–0.74) 11	.58 (0.31–0.85) 30
38:38	.78 (0.33–1.23) 20	.53 (0.17–0.90) 14	.66 (0.37–0.94) 34
39:39	.55 (0.17–0.92) 14	.19 (0.00–0.41) 5	.37 (0.15–0.58) 19
40:40	.78 (0.33–1.23) 20	.30 (0.03–0.58) 8	.54 (0.28–0.80) 28
41:41	.35 (0.05–0.65) 9	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.21 (0.05–0.38) 11
42:42	.59 (0.20–0.97) 15	.34 (0.05–0.64) 9	.46 (0.22–0.71) 24
43:43	.43 (0.10–0.76) 11	.19 (0.00–0.41) 5	.31 (0.11–0.51) 16
44:44	.43 (0.10–0.76) 11	.38 (0.07–0.69) 10	.40 (0.18–0.63) 21
45:45	.39 (0.07–0.71) 10	.27 (0.01–0.53) 7	.33 (0.12–0.53) 17
46:46	.39 (0.07–0.71) 10	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.23 (0.06–0.40) 12
47:47	.31 (0.03–0.60) 8	.11 (0.00–0.28) 3	.21 (0.05–0.38) 11
48:48	.55 (0.17–0.92) 14	.19 (0.00–0.41) 5	.37 (0.15–0.58) 19
49:49	.20 (0.00–0.41) 5	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.15 (0.00–0.35) 7
50:50	.47 (0.12–0.82) 12	.34 (0.05–0.64) 9	.42 (0.18–0.65) 21
51:51	.20 (0.00–0.42) 5	.15 (0.00–0.35) 4	.17 (0.02–0.32) 9
52:52	.39 (0.07–0.71) 10	.15 (0.00–0.35) 4	.27 (0.08–0.46) 14
53:53	.27 (0.01–0.54) 7	.42 (0.09–0.74) 11	.35 (0.14–0.56) 18
54:54	.27 (0.00–0.54) 7	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.17 (0.02–0.32) 9
55:55	.35 (0.05–0.65) 9	.15 (0.00–0.35) 4	.25 (0.07–0.43) 13
56:56	.27 (0.01–0.54) 7	.11 (0.00–0.28) 3	.19 (0.04–0.35) 10

FIGURE 6.10 (cont.): IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880
EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cells contain: –Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
57:57	.16 (0.00–0.36) 4	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.12 (0.00–0.24) 6
58:58	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.11 (0.00–0.28) 3	.08 (0.00–0.18) 4
59:59	.00 — 0	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.04 (0.00–0.11) 2
60:60	.08 (0.00–0.22) 2	.23 (0.01–0.49) 6	.15 (0.00–0.29) 8
61:61	.12 (0.00–0.29) 3	.15 (0.00–0.35) 4	.13 (0.00–0.27) 7
62:62	.08 (0.00–0.22) 2	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.08 (0.00–0.18) 4
63:63	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.00 — 0	.02 (0.00–0.07) 1
64:64	.12 (0.00–0.29) 3	.11 (0.00–0.28) 3	.12 (0.00–0.24) 6
65:65	.23 (0.00–0.48) 6	.15 (0.04–0.35) 4	.19 (0.04–0.35) 10
66:66	.12 (0.00–0.29) 3	.15 (0.00–0.35) 4	.13 (0.00–0.27) 7
67:67	.08 (0.00–0.22) 2	.19 (0.00–0.41) 5	.13 (0.00–0.27) 7

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
68:68	.23 (0.00–0.48) 6	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.13 (0.00–0.27) 7
69:69	.12 (0.00–0.29) 3	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.08 (0.00–0.18) 4
70:70	.00 — 0	.23 (0.00–0.47) 6	.12 (0.00–0.24) 6
71:71	.00 (0.00–0.14) 0	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.02 (0.00–0.07) 1
72:72	.08 (0.00–0.22) 2	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.06 (0.00–0.14) 3
73:73	.08 (0.00–0.22) 2	.00 — 0	.04 (0.00–0.11) 2
74:74	.12 (0.00–0.29) 3	.11 (0.00–0.28) 3	.12 (0.00–0.24) 6
75:75	.12 (0.00–0.29) 3	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.08 (0.00–0.18) 4
76:76	.12 (0.00–0.29) 3	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.10 (0.00–0.21) 5
77:77	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.04 (0.00–0.11) 2
78:78	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.04 (0.00–0.11) 2

FIGURE 6.10 (cont.): IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

1880
EAST NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Cells contain: –Column percent
–Confidence intervals (99 percent)
–N of cases

Age	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
79:79	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.08 (0.00–0.21) 2	.06 (0.00–0.14) 3
80:80	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.11 (0.00–0.28) 3	.08 (0.00–0.18) 4
82:82	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.00 — 0	.02 (0.00–0.07) 1
84:84	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.00 — 0	.02 (0.00–0.07) 1
96:96	.00 — 0	.04 (0.00–0.14) 1	.02 (0.00–0.07) 1
99:99	.00 — 0	.04 (0.00–0.07) 1	.02 (0.00–0.07) 1
COL. TOTAL	100.00 — 2,563	100.00 — 2,626	100.00 — 5,189

FIGURE 6.10 (cont.): IPUMS 10% census sample for 1880, valid cases, East North Central division, showing age range for persons married within the previous year, with confidence intervals set at 99 percent.

before 1852 (many of these people entered polygamy during the Reformation), born between 1852 and 1869, and born between 1870 and 1890.

The overall mean age of marriage for non-immigrants, people born in Utah, in the first cohort in Manti, was 18.07. One would assume, since men generally married women a year or two younger than they were, that the mean age for non-immigrant women was 16 to 17. (Immigrants married on the average at age 25.12.) In the second cohort the mean age at first marriage for non-immigrants was 20.46, so the mean for non-immigrant women was probably about 18 or 19.[48] In the third period immigrants were not a significant factor.

Daynes states that this mean age for entering marriage, which she derived from Manti records, was typical of Utah, and she cites studies by Mineau, Bean and Skolnick; Mineau, Bean and Anderton; and by Larry Logue (for St. George), to support this generalization.[49]

48. Daynes, More Wives Than One, 96, table 1.
49. Daynes, More Wives Than One, 96. Geraldine P. Mineau, L. L. Bean and M. Skolnick, "Mormon Demographic History II: The Family Life Cycle and Natural Fertility," Population

For example, Geraldine P. Mineau, L. L. Bean and M. Skolnick write, "In our first (1800–1809) birth cohort, fewer than one-third had married by age 20 (31 percent), but more than half of the 1850s birth cohort (55.8 percent) were married before the age of 20."[50] (Mineau, Bean and Skolnick deliberately exclude polygamous families "to eliminate the confounding effect of polygyny,"[51] yet the polygynous effect will nevertheless be there, because polygamy will always cause increased competition for women, which will drive down the marriage age in both monogamous and polygamous LDS marriages.[52])

Larry Logue, in his book A Sermon in the Deseret: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, shows that the median age of women at first marriage in nineteenth-century St. George was 18.9; in Philadelphia at the same time, the median age was 25.[53] One might ask: was this age at marriage simply typical of frontier culture? Logue says no: while frontier marriage ages were younger than eastern ages, the marriages of the residents of St. George "were even younger than among the [analogous] western couples... without the circumstances that apparently encouraged youthful marriages on the frontier."[54]

To return to Daynes. In her first cohort, at age sixteen, a remarkable 27 percent of the women were married. This undoubtedly included a number of young women married at ages 14 and 15. At age 20, 83 percent were married, and at age 24, only 3 percent were single. This apparently includes immigrants.[55]

In the second cohort, this percentage has decreased; 6 percent of women were married by age 16, and 57 percent had married by age 20. For a contrast, in 1880 in the IPUMS report of the Middle Atlantic

Studies 33 (November 1979): 429–46, 439; Geraldine P. Mineau, L. L. Bean and Douglas L. Anderton, "Migration and Fertility: Behavioral Change on the American Frontier," Journal of Family History 14 (January 1989): 43–61; Larry M. Logue, A Sermon in the Deseret: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, Utah (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 56.
50. Mineau, Bean and Skolnick, "Mormon Demographic History II," 438.
51. Ibid, 431.
52. To me, this appears to be a flaw in their argument.
53. Logue, Table 6, in A Sermon in the Deseret, 56.
54. Logue, A Sermon in the Deseret, 62, see also 63–64. The circumstances that would encourage early marriage on the frontier, as I understand Logue's argument, were economic opportunities (plentiful land, good jobs), and a significant shortage of women who had migrated to the frontier.
55. Daynes, More Wives Than One, 95.

(New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) region, 2.26 percent of young women had married by age 16, and 36.37 percent of young women had married by age 20.

Thus, in nineteenth-century Utah, early marriage, including very early marriage, marriage at age 14 or 15, was common. There were fewer early marriages in Utah as time went on, but they were always more frequent than in the eastern American states.[56]

Causes of Early Marriage in Polygamous Utah

The analyses of Vinovskis and Gottleib offer one important possible factor for early marriages in Utah—there tends to be an imbalance of more men than women in pioneering situations, on the frontier, in colonies in their early stages. Much of nineteenth-century Utah settlement might qualify as a frontier situation—and as Mormons settled in southern Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Mexico, Wyoming, Colorado, and Canada, the frontier environment continued while central Utah became more settled.

In spite of this, there was not as much imbalance of men and women in pioneering situations among Mormons as in other cultures.[57] We do not have the severe imbalance of men found in the kinds of colonizing Gottleib and Vinovskis discuss.

However, polygyny—in which men marry multiple women—by definition causes an imbalance of the sexes. If a small group of men marry multiple wives in a certain community, there are obviously fewer women available as a result, and the competition for marriageable women or young women will be all the more intense. This would serve to drive down the age of marriage for girls and women. Daynes writes, "The scarcity of marriageable women resulting from so many polygamous marriages in the 1850s meant that men then sought wives among increasingly younger women."[58] In 1857, during the Reformation, apostle Wilford Woodruff wrote to apostle George A. Smith, "nearly all are try-

56. Daynes, More Wives Than One, 97.
57. See Logue, Sermon in the Deseret, 64. In some colonizing situations throughout history, men formed the great majority of early settlers. This was not the case in Utah. Though the very first company to reach Salt Lake was all male (with the exception of three or four wives of the highest leaders), after that women formed an important part of pioneer companies.
58. Daynes, More Wives Than One, 114.

ing to get wives, until there is hardly a girl fourteen years old in Utah, but what is married, or just going to be."[59] Daynes' statistics show that Woodruff was not exaggerating.

She writes, "The demand for plural wives continued to create a scarcity of marriageable women until the 1880s, thus depressing the age at marriage for Utah women."[60] It was specifically polygyny that was an important factor causing early marriage. Thus, in Manti, in 1860, just after the Reformation in the 1850s, when a number of polygamous marriages were entered into, a remarkable 55% of the women between 14 and 20 were married, and of these, about 41% married into polygamy. In the decades before and after the 1850s, the numbers were not as high, but still about 29% of women between 14 and 20 were married in those decades (but with a much lower percentage of women entering into polygyny; about 3 or 4 percent).[61]

One example from church history shows the impact of polygamy on marriage age. Charles Rich, later a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, married fourteen-year-old Harriet Sargent on March 28, 1847. Rich's biographer wrote that she was "a beautiful young woman, fully matured" and that she was "much sought after, both by married and by single men."[62] This shows a culture in which there was intense competi-

59. Woodruff to George A. Smith, April 1, 1857, in Journal History on that date; discussion in Thomas G. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet* (SLC: Signature Books, 1991), 187.

60. Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 110.

61. Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 109, Figure 6. In 1880, only about 13 percent of women were married between 14 and 20. Daynes concludes her discussion of marriage age in polygamy: "That women were scarce worked to improve women's position in Mormon society," *More Wives Than One*, 115. Since polygamy by definition caused marriage age to decrease, especially among young women, Daynes apparently sees no adverse effects from early marriage. Many family historians, however, have identified significant problems in early marriage: younger wives often have more limited educational opportunities; having children at an early age presents significant health risks; there is increased chance of divorce; in addition, young women in early marriage relationships are often brought into marriages that they did not choose. R. Jenson and R. Thornton, "Early Female Marriage in the Developing World," *Gender and Development* 11:2 (July 2003): 9–19; Susheela Singh and Renee Samara, "Early Marriage Among Women in Developing Countries," *International Family Planning Perspectives* 22:4 (December, 1996): 148–175.

62. John Henry Evans, *Charles Coulson Rich: Pioneer Builder of the West* (New York: MacMillan, 1936), 96–97; Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy*, 377. Rich's five plural wives were aged 33, 15, 20, 14 and 14, and he was aged 35–37 when he married them. This is clearly not the pattern of the bishop taking care of older widows by marrying them that some Latter-day Saint historians have emphasized. This sometimes happened, but it is just one of several motivations for plural marriage.

tion for marriageable women, which lowered the typical marriage age for young women.

If these principles apply to the culture of the FLDS church, it would indicate that one of the reasons for the young women marrying so early is the probable intense competition for women in a "closed" isolated society in which there are no obvious biological imbalances of male and female, but in which polygyny would create the artificial imbalance of more men than women available for marriage. Apparently, this has caused competition for marriage partners, and thus has driven down the marriage age among young women. Arranged very early marriage as a cultural institution—despite its legal dangers—has resulted.

Altman and Ginat, in their book on modern polygamists in two communities, *Polygamist Families in Contemporary Society*, state that 54.9 percent of the 51 women in the demographic group they studied married at age 15–19.[63] This is a remarkably high figure for early marriage, compared to non-Mormon family patterns, in the European family pattern and in the New England and the northeastern states.

One of the dysfunctional aspects of such a culture is it would leave many single young men without wives, if many of the fifteen or sixteen-year-old girls are marrying older men who already have plural families. In 1860 Manti, there were three unmarried males for every unmarried female.[64] In nineteenth-century Mormonism, the mission field served as a place where men could find wives, including plural wives. FLDS young men would not have this option in the same way, and we find the phenomenon of "lost boys" in the FLDS enclave of Colorado City/Hildale, in which young men are reportedly pressured to leave the community,[65]

63. Irwin Altman and Joseph Ginat, *Polygamist Families in Contemporary Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 468, tables 6 and 7. Of the 51 wives, 0 were age 14, 3 were age 15 (5.88%), 2 were age 16 (3.92%), 7 were 17 (13.93%), 8 were 18 (15.69%), and 8 were 19 (15.69%).

64. Haynes, *More Wives Than One*, 110.

65. Angie Wagner, "Boys Seek Salvation Outside Church," *Los Angeles Times*, September 5, 2004, http://articles.latimes.com/2004/sep/05/news/adm-lostboy55 (accessed January 11, 2010); Erik Eckholm, "Boys Cast Out by Polygamists Find Help," *New York Times*, September 9, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/09/us/09polygamy.html?_r=1. (accessed on January 13, 2010). See also Altman and Ginat, *Polygamist Families in Contemporary Society*, 463, who conclude that in a polygamist community, nearly all women become plural wives, but only a limited percentage of men are able to become polygamists.

Another example of early marriage (for the wife) comes from southern Utah. James Bleak, author of the irreplaceable history of Dixie, "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission," was called to help settle St. George in late 1861, when he was thirty-two. In addition to this call, according to a recent article on Bleak, Brigham Young "instructed Bleak to marry fifteen-year-old Jane Thompson" as Bleak's third wife. Both Jane and James were reluctant to marry, but Jane talked with Brigham, "and learned from him the wisdom of his advice." They were sealed on October 26, 1861.[66]

Dynastic alliance was also an important cause of early marriage in Mormon culture. We have seen Joseph Smith marrying teen-age Helen Mar Kimball in a dynastic marriage.[67] Marriages of alliance for church leaders continued in Utah, and they would also contribute to early marriage. Because polygamy was especially encouraged among Mormonism's elite—the higher a man rose in the hierarchy, the more he was expected to live the law of plurality—there would be a natural tendency for the elite to marry among each other by means of plural marriages.[68]

For example, apostle Wilford Woodruff offered his fourteen-year-old daughter to president Brigham Young in 1857, during the Reformation, but Young said he was not marrying younger women at the time.[69] On March 4, 1859, Phebe Amelia, a seventeen-year-old daughter of Woodruff, married another apostle, Lorenzo Snow.[70]

When men married very young wives, sometimes they delayed consummation until years later. For example, on November 11, 1843, Woodruff, forty-six at the time, married fifteen-year-old Emma Smith. However, she had no children until seven months after she turned nineteen. Woodruff's biographer, Thomas Alexander, reasonably concludes, "He probably refrained from sexual relations with Emma until she became older."[71]

66. Brandon J. Metcalf, "James G. Bleak: From London to Dixie," Journal of Mormon History 35.1 (Winter 2009): 117–56, 151–52. This is an example of a high church leader prescribing marriage partners for church members. For another example, see Kimball, Heber C. Kimball, 95.

67. I do not use the term "dynastic marriage" to mean that Joseph Smith was literally trying to create a dynasty; I simply mean that elite Mormons were seeking to create a bond—sometimes a spiritual bond, with eschatological dimensions—through marriage.

68. Many non-elite men and women also entered into plural marriage.

69. Alexander, Things in Heaven and Earth, 187.

70. Ibid, 213; Wilford Woodruff diary, April 4, 1859 (Kenney, 5:323; cf. 5:22, 5:278).

71. Alexander, Things in Heaven and Earth, 167–68.

Another well-known example is John D. Lee's marriage to twelve- or fourteen-year-old Mary Ann Williams during the Reformation in 1856, with the understanding that he would not have sexual relations with her until she was older. As it turned out, she put off having relations with him, and she and one of Lee's sons fell in love, and Lee released her from the marriage to him and allowed her to marry his son.[72]

As we have seen, in world history, often early marriages in dynastic situations were not consummated at first.

Thus, we can conclude that marriage age in polygamous Mormon culture was lower than marriage age in the New England and northeastern states. Early marriage and very early marriage were an accepted part of Mormon culture, and polygamy was an important factor that contributed to marriage at lower ages. Dynastic marriage was also a factor causing early marriage in Mormon polygamy.

Conclusions

We have seen that marriage age in history fluctuates depending on a number of factors: economic, geographic, religious, and social. Economic downturns can cause marriage age to go up (because young people often delay marriage until they have the prospect of economic security or owning land), and wars can cause marriage age to drop as couples marry before the man leaves for military service. In addition, dynastic marriage often required arranged marriages of boys and girls at young ages, though these often did not turn into real marriages until much later. Male-female imbalances due to historical circumstances can cause marriage age to dip—for example, in colonies, in which there is a preponderance of men, marriage age of women generally lowers, due to intense competition for fewer women. In American history, marriage age of women on the frontier has been generally lower than in the east, for this reason.

72. Juanita Brooks, John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1992), 233, 239–40; Emma Lee (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1978), 8, 11; Smith, Nauvoo Polygamy, 604. See also chapter 17 of Lorraine (Richardson) Manderscheid, cp, Some Descendants of John Doyle Lee, at http://wadhome.org/lee/chapter_17.html (accessed December 24, 2009). The twelve year age is dependent on genealogical records; a census record would make her fourteen at the date of marriage. However, age in census records is often imprecise, so I believe the genealogical evidence is more reliable.

Mormon communities did have imbalances in which there were more males than marriageable females, but this did not occur simply because they were on the frontier, as Mormon men and women tended to migrate together. Instead, it is well documented that polygamy caused more males than marriageable female in Mormon communities. This is certainly logical—if a number of men have plural wives in a community, this would limit the availability of women for other men, both polygamists and monogamists. A competition for marriageable women resulted, which caused the marriage age to lower, and early marriage (young women marrying in their teens) and very early marriage (young women marrying at ages 14 and 15) became an acceptable part of Mormon polygamous culture.

In addition, as polygamy was emphasized and often required among the Mormon elite, dynastic marriage sometimes took place, and this often involved early marriage for young women.

Thus, I do not find the arguments of some Mormon historians that very early marriage was common in the past convincing, as they seem too general and imprecise. There are many exotic examples of early marriage in various cultures and countries, but the society we should be looking at is the New England and northeastern states culture that was the background for early Mormonism. The work of social historians allows us to conclude, with some precision, that very early marriage was rare in that environment. In mid-nineteenth century New Jersey, for example, only 1.9 percent of young women were married at age 14–16, and most of that group, 1.4 percent, were married at the age 16. The percentage married at age 14 (.1) was almost negligible. The incidence of very early marriage in Joseph Smith's plural family, and in later Mormonism, was much higher than that. The IPUMS data I cite show that in the New England and Northeastern states, both in 1850 and 1880, marriage age at 13 to 15 was usually less than or about one percent.

Mormon cultural acceptance of very early marriage presents a contrast to the New England and northeastern states' patterns of marriage in the nineteenth century, in which very early marriage was rare. The New England and northeastern states' typical statistics for mean age at marriage were much higher than Utah's in the nineteenth century.

A much more convincing path for Mormon historians to follow, when they are trying to put Joseph Smith's marriage to fourteen-year-old Helen Mar Kimball into context, would be to emphasize that it was a dynastic marriage, a marriage arranged by elite Mormon leaders, Joseph Smith and an apostle, Heber C. Kimball. Joseph Smith's plural marriages sometimes represented dynastic marriages that linked him to other Mormon leaders, such as apostles Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball or Willard Richards and prominent Mormons such as Newel K. Whitney and Cornelius Lott. Since historical reality and the human soul are complex, this doesn't rule out parallel motivations for marriage—one may want to marry someone for five or six good reasons. But the dynastic motivation was present in a number of LDS elite plural marriages. This dynasticism would be heightened by LDS theological perspectives—for instance, you may have wanted to be linked to Joseph Smith, not just because he was the most elite marriage partner in your culture, per se, but because the marriage link would have eschatological significance both for you and your family, would increase your chances for the highest exaltation.[73]

As I have written elsewhere, there is no explicit evidence for or against sexuality in the Joseph Smith-Helen Mar Kimball marriage; despite this lack of explicit evidence, my judgment is that it is unlikely that the marriage was consummated.[74] We can draw the valid parallel from American and European history of elite early marriages that were not consummated until the marriage participants were much older. This pattern, as we have seen, can also be found in Utah Mormonism.
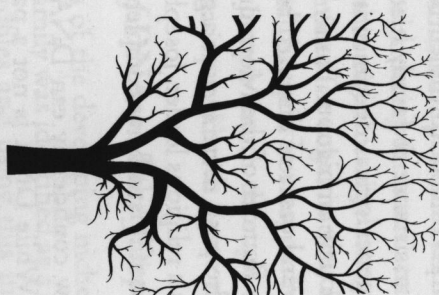
In conclusion, the cultural legacy of early and very early marriage in nineteenth-century Mormon polygamy is a troubling one. One conservative historian of LDS polygamy, Gregory Smith, has justifiably criticized historical "presentism" in looking at Nauvoo and Utah polygamy—expecting people in the past to adhere to our modern culture

73. See Helen Mar Whitney's memoir of her marriage to Joseph Smith, Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman's View: Helen Mar Whitney's Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1997), 481–88.

74. Thus I disagree with Timothy Egan, see above, and others who take it as certain that Helen Mar and Joseph Smith consummated their marriage; it is not just not certain, it is unlikely, in my judgment. I also agree with Craig Foster that Jon Krakauer is wrong on this issue, see Foster, "Doing Violence to Journalistic Integrity," at n. 78. However, I find dynastic marriages of teenage girls problematic, even if sexual consummation is delayed.

in unreasonable ways.[75] And journalists such as Jon Krakauer, Timothy Egan and Lawrence O'Donnell have undoubtedly gone to extremes in their rhetoric and arguments dealing with early Mormon polygamy.[76] However, Gregory Smith, after arguing that we must make allowances for culturally accepted racist attitudes held by early U.S. political leaders, also states, "A caution against presentism is not to claim that no moral judgments are possible about historical events, or that it does not matter whether we are racists or not." Finding the correct balance here is difficult. If we bend over backwards to justify racist attitudes held by George Washington, for example, we run the risk of appearing to justify racism.

Therefore, when early Mormon leaders such as Joseph Smith or Brigham Young participated in marriage with very young women, or authorized very young women to be married, finding the correct balance in avoiding presentism, yet not condoning very early marriage for young women, may be difficult. Gregory Smith gives a political example; but in a religious situation, this difficulty might be heightened, as Joseph Smith and Brigham Young are viewed as prophets in direct contact with God, and many modern Latter-day Saints try to follow their examples as thoroughly as possible. These historical examples from nineteenth-century Mormonism undoubtedly have had an impact on modern polygamists.

75. Gregory L. Smith, "Polygamy book/Age of wives."
76. See nn. 2–3 above.

Joseph Smith Jr., the Question of Polygamous Offspring and DNA Analysis

BY UGO A. PEREGO

Introduction

DURING THE LAST decade, DNA testing has contributed to the improvement of a broad range of disciplines. It transformed paternity testing from rudimentary eye color and blood type assessments to precise and accurate affirmations of biological relationship, to the resolution of 99.99%. It created a new niche within the fields of archaeology and anthropology (termed archaeogenetics)[1] where the histories, identities, migrations, and relationships of ancient people and civilizations can now be studied from a molecular point of view.[2] Other areas which have greatly benefited from the introduction of genetic analysis are forensic

1. Antonio Amorim, "Archaeogenetics," *Journal of Iberian Archaeology* 1 (1999): 15–25.
2. See for example Alessandro Achilli and others, "Mitochondrial DNA variation of modern Tuscans supports the near eastern origin of Etruscans," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 80 (2007): 759–768.