



**Wife No. 19: The Story of a Life in Bondage, Being
a Complete Exposé of Mormonism, and Revealing
the Sorrows, Sacrifices and Sufferings of Women
in Polygamy (Illustrated)**

Ann Eliza Young

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"I think no more of taking a wife than I do of buying a cow."

In 1863 24-year old Ann Eliza became the 19th wife of the 67-year old head of the Mormon Church Brigham Young. Ten years later, in a landmark case that would rock the nation and lead to the rewriting of laws, Ann divorced her powerful husband alleging neglect and cruel treatment.

In 1876 Ann Eliza published an autobiography entitled Wife No. 19. In it she wrote that she had "a desire to impress upon the world what Mormonism really is; to show the pitiable condition of its women, held in a system of bondage that is more cruel than African slavery ever was, since it claims to hold body and soul alike."

Researchers believe Ann Eliza was in fact Brigham Young's 52nd wife. Her blistering expose is a harrowing document revealing how Brigham Young and other Mormon men lived in households that were essentially harems, using their religion to justify what amounted to sexual slavery. Mormon men were said to be "building their kingdoms" while their wives were forced to share their love and suffer in silence at the degradation.

Upon commencement of her divorce proceedings, Ann Eliza was excommunicated from the LDS Church. The divorce was granted in January 1875 and Brigham Young was ordered to pay a \$500 per month allowance and \$3000 in court fees. When Young initially refused, he was found in contempt of court and sentenced to a day in jail and a \$25 fine. The alimony award was later set aside on the grounds that a polygamous marriage was legally invalid, potentially indicting them both for unlawful cohabitation.

Ann Eliza Young subsequently traveled the United States and spoke out against polygamy, Mormonism, and Brigham Young himself. She testified before the U.S. Congress in 1875; these remarks were credited, by some to have contributed to a passage of the Poland Act (1874) that reorganized the judicial system of Utah Territory and made it easier for the Federal Government to prosecute polygamists.

*Illustrated with Mormon image gallery.

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