

New Religion and How They Were Treated by the FBI

During World War II

Abstract

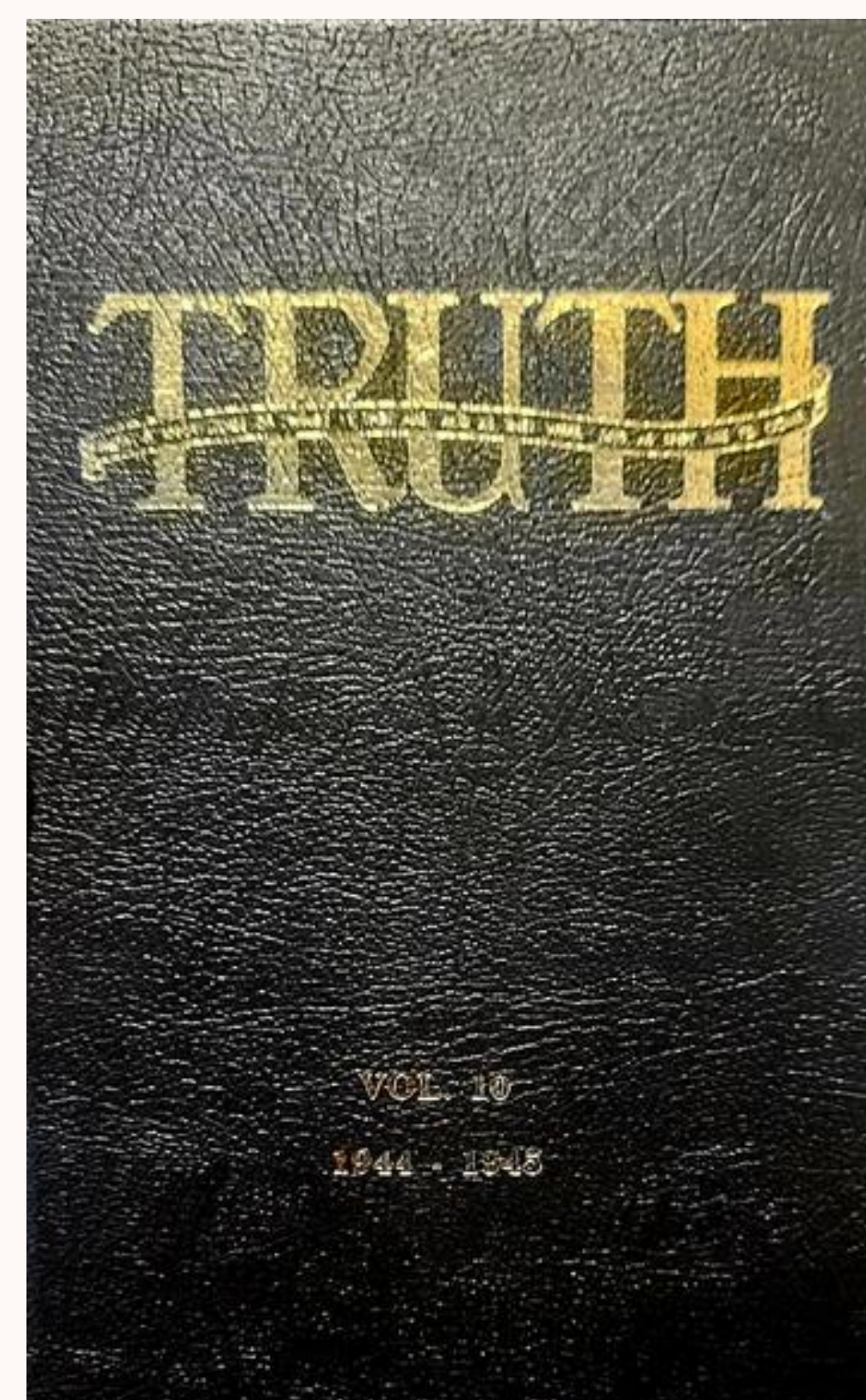
The goal of this research is to gather information about the Federal investigation and trial against the polygamist Mormon group under the White Slavery Act of 1910 (also known as the Mann Act). The research we are conducting is a literature review, however, there are two different types of literature/articles that we are looking at. As a whole, we are looking at the FBI files about the case. Most of the files outline the cases, and everyone named their relationships and their role (victim, defendant, attorney, etc.). The other files contain clippings from different newspapers covering the investigation/trial better to understand the public's view on the case. The research is still ongoing, as many files and articles relate to this case. Through our literature reviews, we are hoping to make more sense of the different relationships, aspects, and viewpoints on the case and potentially find trends and themes in the FBI files.

Introduction and Background Information

- White Slave Traffic Act of 1910 (also known as Mann Act): criminalized the transportation of women for immoral purposes in hopes of combating human trafficking and prostitution. This act made it a felony to transport women and girls across state lines for immoral purposes.
- Fundamentalists: a sect of the Mormon Church who advocated and practiced polygamy. There are over 250 members. Their leader is Joseph W. Musser, the producer of *The Truth*, the Fundamentalists' magazine.
- Fundamentalists were excommunicated from the Latter-day Saints Church due to their practice of polygamy, which the LDS church prohibited in 1890 in the 1980 Manifesto
- Through our research, we are trying to get the bigger picture and find the connections between/within the Fundamentalist group



A photo of Joseph Musser along with other Fundamentalist Sect leaders.



Truth magazine was seen as the Fundamentalists' newspaper and was written by Joseph Musser

Ava Burke and Paul Anthony

Department of Religious Studies, Arts and Sciences



A photo of some of the members of the Fundamentalist Sect. of the Mormon Latter Day Saints Church

Methods

- Two types of literature were reviewed:
 - FBI files/case: This contained information on many members of the polygamist group
 - Newspaper clippings: We looked through FBI files that contain clippings of newspapers that covered the case and trial
- We would organize the findings into an Excel sheet
- FBI files were organized by name, and we would add information each time a subject was mentioned. We would keep track of where they were cited using the File number, page number, and the serial numbers of the FBI file
- The newspaper clippings were organized by date, and we would input the title, newspaper, and the author, and then we would also write a summary about the article as well
- The information is being organized so that at a later date, our research mentor can look back and find information easily, as well as spot any trends/ themes in the files

References

- MIRZA, IMAAN. "The Polygamy Amendments." *Amend Project*, 2023, <https://amendmentsproject.org/story/polygamy-amendments>. Accessed 21 November 2024.
- "Polygamy and the Church: A History | American Experience." *PBS*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/mormons-polygamy/>. Accessed 21 November 2024.
- "Polygamy: Latter-day Saints and the Practice of Plural Marriage." *Church Newsroom*, <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/polygamy-latter-day-saints-and-the-practice-of-plural-marriage>. Accessed 21 November 2024.

Results and Next Steps

- My fellow research mentee and I are still going through and organizing the files
- There are currently no results to share due to the ongoing nature of our research
- However, our efforts are being used to help our mentor create a dissertation
- Some trends that we have seen so far are:
 - The polygamist group was named the Fundamentalists by the press and public
 - Within the group, a lot of the members share the same names in different variations, this shows us how interconnected the group truly was
 - Another theme that we can see through the newspaper clippings is the polygamist group being unapologetic about their practices and owning them in public
 - A lot of wives and husbands are on record defending and explaining the joys of polygamy to the press



Joseph W. Musser(Left) and John Y. Barlow(Right) were two of the most prominent leaders of the Fundamentalist group.



A photo of a family while their home is being searched during the Short Creek Raid of 1953.