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The *Journal of Mormon History* is published annually by the Mormon History Association, P. O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, Utah 84602, and distributed to members upon payment of the annual dues: Student, $5.00; Regular, $7.50; Sustaining, $20.00; Friend of Mormon History, $100.00; Mormon History Association Patron, $500.00 or more. Single copies, $5.00.

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ISSN 0094-7342
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MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION
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Special Citations:

To the late GUSTIVE O. LARSON, for his service to the cause of Mormon history, his scholarly publications in that field, and for his years of service as a teacher and a friend to students.

To the late DR. T. EDGAR LYON, for his service to the Mormon History Association, for his scholarly contributions to the field of Mormon history, and for his years of service as a teacher and a friend to students.

To the late DR. DAVID E. MILLER, for his service to the Mormon History Association, for his scholarly contributions in the field of Mormon history, and for his years of service as a teacher and a friend to students.

To BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY PRESS, for its encouragement of the art of history through publishing four fine works of Mormon history during 1978 — *Utah's History*, *The Mormon Role in the Settlement of the West*, *Anti-Mormonism in Idaho, 1872-1892*, and *Sister Saints* — as well as for its continuing involvement in the publication of *Brigham Young University Studies*.

To GRACELAND COLLEGE and its administration and staff for their generous and gracious offer to host the Fourteenth Annual Mormon History Association meeting and for their outstanding attention to our needs and comfort.
The role of women in Mormonism has always been a paradoxical one, the subject of intense interest and controversy both in the larger culture and within Mormon society itself. During the last half of the nineteenth century, when polygamy became an integral part of Mormon life in the Intermountain West, women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were viewed by the outer world as a benighted and oppressed class, the victims of a system of institutionalized lust perpetrated by a wicked and unscrupulous male Mormon priesthood. In fact, however, despite this negative public image, Mormon women in frontier Utah enjoyed a remarkable degree of real power, influence, and independence. Utah established one of the first coeducational colleges in the country in 1850; Mormon women voted in Utah earlier than women in any other state or territory in the United States, including Wyoming; women of the Mormon church were active in the professions, including medicine and teaching; and leading Mormon women established a distinguished women-managed, -edited, and -written newspaper of their own, the Woman's Exponent, which ranged far and wide over issues of concern to women of the period. Nineteenth-century women's rights and suffrage advocates such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke to large and enthusiastic Mormon audiences, audiences whose participation in such meetings was accepted if not actively encouraged by

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church authorities. Through their powerful women's organization, the Relief Society, and through numerous other ventures, Mormon women became an essential part of the culture and economy of frontier Utah. They also developed significant contacts with women's activities of the larger society.

Nearly a hundred years later in the later half of the twentieth century, the image and the reality of life for women in Mormonism has become roughly reversed from that which prevailed in the nineteenth century. Today the popular image of Mormon women is an essentially favorable one, influenced by the church's emphasis on close-knit, well-run families and idealizing the important role that women play in Mormon family-oriented culture. In fact, however, despite this basically positive image, the activities and range of personal options for women in the Mormon church may never have been so narrowly circumscribed as in the present. During the past twenty years, Mormon women have lost control over the financing of their women's organization, the Relief Society; they have lost their Relief Society Magazine, which provided a forum for women's concerns and self-expression; and they have faced what appears to be an almost monolithic church front that encourages them to stay out of public life and the job market, stressing instead the idea that their primary function and only ultimate importance in life comes from their role as wives and mothers. Far from being in the forefront of woman's rights activities, the present-day Mormon church and its women have come out in vigorous and effective opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, organizing mass meetings to oppose its ratification and giving a cold shoulder to pro-ERA speakers such as Bella Abzug. One moderate, independently edited and produced Mormon women's journal, Exponent II, does judiciously attempt to raise some of the important women's issues which the current male hierarchy has largely ignored, but it falls far short of the vigorous advocacy of its model, the original Woman's Exponent, which reached out not simply to a small audience of intellectual women on the fringe of Mormonism but also to the mainstream of the church in every village and hamlet. Today, although Mormon women continue to play an essential role in the home and in grassroots church activities, their participation in the larger society is discouraged in many ways, both by direct exhortation and by subtle community sanctions against deviance from the church-approved ideal that women should try to become the perfect wife and mother in an almost neo-Victorian sense.

What accounts for this apparent shift from the late nineteenth-century Mormon emphasis on women's active participation in almost all aspects of society (except the formal governance of their church) to the present, more narrow stress on domesticity as almost the sole end of woman's life? Some have suggested that the shift is only illusory; the underlying Mormon stress on authority and obedience to the church, they say, has remained a constant despite shifts in the particular issues to which the church addresses itself. Brigham Young in the nineteenth century told women that the church needed them to get out into the world and work to build up the kingdom, so they did; Joseph Fielding Smith in the twentieth century told women that the church needed them to stay home and eschew work outside that sphere, so they also tried to oblige. The basic Mormon stress on the importance of the family, this argument goes, has remained the same over time, with continuing emphasis on large
families, opposition to birth control, and the conviction that, in the final
analysis, women ideally should remain in the home whenever possible.
Mormonism looks more conservative today only by comparison with the larger
society which has undergone such fundamental transformations during the past
century. Even though circumstances and specific policies to deal with those
circumstances may have undergone some modifications, the Mormon church
itself has remained eternally and immutably the same on first principles.

This argument has much to recommend it, but it needs to be qualified if it is
to help explain the profound changes that do appear to have occurred in the role
of Mormon women during the past century. Even if such changes are only
apparent, they deserve explanation and analysis. The gap between ideal and
practice may well be a most revealing indicator of the underlying dynamics of a
culture. Moreover, one must also remember that church policies and practices
are not produced by the male hierarchy acting in isolation. Mormon women
have never been simply faceless automatons or pretty marionettes operated by
strings, but have had considerable influence on the policies which affect them.
Finally, even if church policy, developed and controlled ultimately by men, has
been the major factor leading to changes in the status of women in Mormonism,
one still must ask why and to what extent the church has changed its policies.
The Mormon church has never acted in a social and intellectual vacuum; it has
always had to take into account both its own internal concerns and those of the
larger society. Thus to understand the changing role of Mormon women, one
must view their experiences within the total gestalt of Mormon culture and
society within which they have lived.

This article is a preliminary attempt to identify and open up some of the
most important issues which must be addressed if one is to understand the varied
experiences of Mormon women during the past century. It focuses, first, on
women’s status in late nineteenth-century Utah, particularly on the ways in
which the frontier and polygamy may have contributed to women’s
independence. This nineteenth-century period is then contrasted with the
present and with some of the factors leading to increasing restrictions on
women’s sphere of influence within Mormonism. Finally, some broader
perspectives on present and future prospects for Mormon women are suggested.

The changing role of Mormon women is clearly an unusually ambitious
topic which can be sketched only in outline. The analysis presented here is
limited by being based primarily on the lives and statements of public figures.
More detailed quantitative and comparative analyses will be necessary before one
can determine whether, in fact, the lives of average Mormon women actually
have changed in the ways suggested here. Nevertheless, impressionistic studies of
the articulate and outstanding may highlight important issues worthy of further
investigation, opening up new perspectives on the problems and prospects for
women within Mormonism.1

1Among the important scholarly treatments of Mormon women’s lives in the nineteenth
of Pioneer Mormon Women,” Western Humanities Review 9 (Spring 1955): 145-64; Leonard J.
Arrington and Jon Haupt, “Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century
American Literature,” Western Humanities Review 22 (Summer 1968): 245-60; Charles A. Cannon,
To understand the role of Mormon women in nineteenth-century Utah, one must first briefly attempt to understand something of the relationship between women and Mormonism as a whole. Mormonism is both a religion and a culture system. Seeing itself as a church not a sect, it attempts to encompass the whole of life. Although Mormonism appears quintessentially American in so many ways, it has, nevertheless, since its founding in 1830 set itself in radical opposition to the prevailing American religious and social pluralism. Latter-day Saints believe that they belong to the one true church, restored through the agency of their prophet-founder Joseph Smith and embodying a synthesis of all previously valid human truth. Facing highly disruptive religious and social conditions in his home in the “burned-over district” of central New York state, Smith sought to set up a totally cohesive new order which in spirit had much in common with the high medieval Roman Catholic synthesis. Selfish individual interests were always to be subordinated to the good of the community as a whole. Hierarchy and control were essential parts of the effort literally to realize the kingdom of heaven on earth.  

In few areas of life were Mormon concerns for social order and control more evident than in their efforts to revitalize the family. Faced with the marital and familial disorders of central New York, Smith dreamed of “turning the hearts of the children to the fathers” prior to the coming of the millennium. As part of his attempt to establish cohesive Mormon community life in the 1830s and 1840s, Smith increasingly took over responsibility for overseeing the marriage and divorce practices of members of his church. Elsewhere a detailed discussion is

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In preparing this paper, the assistance of many fine Mormon scholars has been of inestimable value. As a non-Mormon, I should note that the interpretations presented here are my own responsibility and do not necessarily represent those of any other individuals who may have shared their concerns and reflections with me.

provided of how this increasing autonomy of the Mormon group from the larger society and the intense identification with the Old Testament Hebrew patriarchs as role models helped make possible the introduction of a polygamous marriage system under Joseph Smith’s guidance in the early 1840s. Here it is enough to note that polygamy was envisioned, in part at least, as a means of expanding kinship ties and social solidarity among Mormons. As just one example of how this could occur, by the time that one polygamous Mormon patriarch died, he was related by blood or marriage to over eight hundred people. For a heavily persecuted group such as the Mormons, the possibility of such expanded kinship linkages could prove enormously appealing. According to the elaborate and internally consistent religious ideology developed by Smith, marriage and family ties (including polygamy), were the basis for all social order and development, not only in this life but also throughout eternity, which was envisioned essentially as this life writ large. The Mormons viewed themselves as part of a literal New Israel, restoring the polygamous practices of the Hebrew patriarchs and dedicating themselves to the group with an almost tribal quality of total loyalty.

The role of women within this developing family- and kinship-oriented Mormon culture underwent some expansion during the 1830s and 1840s, although that expansion was always less than, and subordinate to, the expansion in the role of men. For males, Mormonism took literally the concept of the “priesthood of all believers,” setting up a hierarchical structure in which all

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3For the development of polygamy prior to the assassination of Joseph Smith, see my Ph. D. dissertation, “Between Two Worlds: The Origins of Shaker Celibacy, Oneida Community Complex Marriage, and Mormon Polygamy” (University of Chicago, 1976), pp. 189-288. The Mormon sections of this dissertation constitute the first detailed study by a non-Mormon of the origin and development of polygamy based on a full access to the relevant materials in the Library and Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. Danel W. Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith” (M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975) provides a detailed analysis of the early development of polygamy from a Mormon perspective. These two studies, done independently and from different theoretical perspectives, are, nevertheless, essentially complementary in their overall conclusions.


5The revelation on plural and celestial marriage, dictated by Joseph Smith on 12 July 1843, was first printed in the Deseret News Extra for 14 September 1852, and has subsequently been reprinted many times. It now comprises Section 132 of Joseph Smith, Jr., The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971). For a secondary treatment of the intellectual context within which polygamy was introduced, see O’Dea, The Mormons, pp. 53-63. One branch of the Mormon church, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with headquarters in Independence, Mo., has denied Joseph Smith’s responsibility for the revelation on plural marriage and the introduction of polygamy, but this position is historically untenable and has been decisively refuted in Charles E. Shook, The True Origins of Mormon Polygamy (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1914). According to Utah Mormon belief, normal earthly marriage, marriage “for time,” lasts only until death, when it is dissolved. However, Mormons believe that when properly sealed by the authority of the Mormon priesthood on earth, marriages will also continue after death “for eternity.” Such marriages for eternity serve as the basis for eternal progression and development in an afterlife that is conceived as essentially an extension of this life on a higher plane of matter. Since status in this life and in the afterlife is based on kinship ties, including numbers of children, polygamous Mormon men who had large families were viewed in the nineteenth century as occupying a higher status both in this life and in the afterlife.
worthy adult male members had some leadership or direct participatory role within the lay structure of governance of the church. Although women only participated in this structure of church governance indirectly through association with their husbands, they did gain new rights in related areas. In the 1830s and 1840s, women secured the right to participate in the public meetings of the church, to vote on important proposals brought before the group, to conduct their own women’s organization (albeit under the ultimate direction of the male priesthood), and to receive various spiritual gifts and be “ordained” to administer to the sick. Significantly, the greatest liberalism toward women surfaced between 1842 and 1844 during the height of Joseph Smith’s efforts to introduce polygamy into the Mormon church. The temple ceremonies which Smith set up in part to support and validate plural marriage stressed that a reciprocal relationship between men and women was necessary for salvation. No man or woman could ultimately reach the highest exaltation in the afterlife alone, without being sealed in a celestial marriage to a worthy spouse. By emphasizing that the family and related kinship ties were the key to all growth and development, not only in this life but also throughout all eternity, Mormon ideology gave new status and dignity to women’s role in the family.

How was the changing status of women within Mormonism related to the changing status of women in other religious organizations and in antebellum society as a whole? Religiously, early Mormonism fell midway between the most conservative confessional churches such as the Episcopalians, in which women were almost totally excluded from leadership, and the extreme wing of the revivalistic and sectarian movements such as the Shakers, which permitted a high degree of equality for women. If new elements such as polygamy and temple marriage, which were only beginning to be introduced by 1844, were almost totally excluded from leadership, and the extreme wing of the those of many mainstream Protestant groups such as the Methodists and Baptists. Church women’s organizations, benevolent societies, and educational efforts are found not only in Mormonism, but in many other groups as well. Moreover, the idealization of women’s role as wife and mother has much in common with the “cult of true womanhood,” the nascent Victorian concerns for home and family life. Nevertheless, the extraordinary fluidity of Mormon belief and practice immediately preceding Smith’s assassination and the exodus to Utah makes any secure generalizations about women’s status in early

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6A fine study of early Mormon attitudes toward women, on which this paragraph is based, is Ileen Ann Waspe, “The Status of Women in the Philosophy of Mormonism from 1830 to 1845” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1942).

7Ibid., pp. 195-216.

Mormonism impressionistic at best. Only following the Mormon arrival in the Great Basin region in 1847, was the church able to set up and develop its own distinctive way of life to the fullest extent.

In Utah and other Mormon areas of the Intermountain West during the last half of the nineteenth century, at least four factors contributed to the development of a relatively egalitarian role for Mormon women in practice. First in importance undoubtedly was the frontier itself and the challenges that it posed for both men and women. Sheer survival in the arid and inhospitable Great Basin region initially demanded that all available talents and energies of both sexes be mobilized effectively for the good of the group. Brigham Young and his advisers were well aware of the vital role that women could play in the economic, social, and intellectual life of their communities. Women were encouraged to do any work that they could do and were needed to do, and many of the conventional American sex role divisions in economics and other areas of life were temporarily deemphasized. Although the earlier research of Leonard Arrington suggested that Mormon women exhibited an almost unique degree of versatility during the frontier period, more recent comparative investigations by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher find no significant differences in the economic roles and versatility of women in Mormon and non-Mormon areas of the American West. Apparently the demands of the frontier tended to serve as an equalizing factor, quite apart from the specific ideologies that individuals may have adopted.

Closely related to the frontier as a factor contributing to women's independence and equality in the Mormon West was, rather paradoxically, the practice of polygamy itself. Polygamy, of course, has conventionally been viewed as a blight on Mormon women, and certainly it was a difficult system for women, both emotionally and in other respects. Nevertheless, in the frontier environment of early Utah the new marriage system actually tended to encourage greater autonomy of women from men. In the absence of their husbands, who could often be gone for extended periods of time, plural wives ran farms and businesses and became of necessity the acting heads of households, as some early federal census reports so identified them. Plural wives could and often did cooperate with each other in handling childcare and other work or in freeing an ambitious or talented wife to pursue a professional career. Many of the most active and influential women in late nineteenth-century Utah, including the feisty Martha Hughes Cannon, who became the first woman state senator in the United States, were wives of polygamists. Moreover, the intense antipolygamy

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9 For an analysis of Brigham Young's attitudes toward women, see Jill Mulvay Derr, "Woman's Place in Brigham Young's World," Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Spring 1978): 377-95.

10 Leonard J. Arrington's pathbreaking article, "The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women," has been qualified by the comparative analysis which Maureen Ursenbach Beecher presented in "Women's Work on the Mormon Frontier" (paper delivered at the Berkshire Conference on Women's History on 24 August 1978). Much further comparative research needs to be done before it can be determined with any certainty what aspects of nineteenth-century Mormon women's lives were unique to Mormonism and what aspects of their life experiences were similar to those of other American women in the Intermountain West.

11 Martha Hughes Cannon's case is doubly ironic since she gained her state senate seat by indirectly defeating her husband, who was also running for the state senate on the opposing party ticket. Ten candidates were running for five seats; Martha Hughes Cannon was elected while her
persecutions of the 1870s and 1880s caused many women who were unhappy with polygamy to subordinate their personal feelings and pull together in vigorous support of their husbands, their church, and their whole way of life.\textsuperscript{12} With many Mormons in prison, under indictment, or in hiding as a result of the intense harassment of federal officials, women who otherwise probably never would have concerned themselves with public affairs courageously took over the responsibility of running many aspects of Utah life and engaged in well-organized public actions which helped politicize them to a degree that has never been seen in Utah before or since. In short, indirectly and almost in spite of itself, Mormon polygamy in the late nineteenth century contributed to a greater degree of autonomy and political activism among women of the church.\textsuperscript{13}

A third factor besides the frontier and polygamy which contributed to woman’s influence in the Mormon church was the development of both a vigorous and effective woman’s organization, the Relief Society, and a popular woman’s newspaper, the*Woman’s Exponent.* As reorganized under the dynamic direction of Eliza R. Snow, the most powerful woman in the history of the Mormon church, the Relief Society not only participated in and directed many complex economic and cultural projects of its own in Utah, but it also helped set up the educational programs for youth of both sexes which would serve as the foundation for the comprehensive church educational system of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{14} Similarly important was the*Woman’s Exponent*, a largely woman-managed, -supported, and -produced newspaper, the second periodical expressly for women to appear in the trans-Mississippi West. Although not officially sponsored or financed by the church, this lively and well-written paper served as the major voice for Mormon women’s concerns during its publication between
1872 and 1914. Going beyond explicitly Mormon issues and expressing an almost feminist awareness at times, the Exponent devoted much attention to the universally inequitable position of women in politics, education, and the professions. In the Exponent's wide ranging discussion of contemporary concerns, only polygamy, then a key element in Mormon self-definition as a group, failed to receive a critique. Overall, the Relief Society and the Woman's Exponent served important identity-building functions and helped to reinforce a sense of pride and unity among women of the church.

A final factor contributing to the independence of Mormon women and their active participation in many aspects of Utah life in the nineteenth century was the issue of woman suffrage. Although by the latter nineteenth century supporters of this key women's issue in the nation at large were still having relatively little success, in Utah (and in adjacent areas of the West, for a variety of other complex reasons) a different attitude prevailed. In Utah, influential Mormon figures such as George Q. Cannon and Orson F. Whitney did not see the vote for women as a threat that might undermine the social order and family stability. Instead, such men anticipated the later progressive arguments that if women had the vote they could more effectively aid in constructive reform and strengthening the family. Quietly and almost a half century earlier than the rest of the nation, the Utah legislature, with the tacit blessing of the Mormon hierarchy, therefore extended the vote to women in 1870. Confident of the loyalty of both men and women to their movement, Mormon leaders rightly realized that the votes of Mormon women would strengthen the position of the church on key issues. Moreover, the vigorous participation of Mormon women in political life and in the suffrage efforts of American society as a whole provided positive publicity for the women of this group, who were so widely believed to be oppressed and degraded by polygamy. Somewhat ironically, Mormon women not only participated actively in national woman suffrage organizations and rallies but they also organized thousands of church women in mass meetings supporting polygamy against what they perceived as the efforts of the outside world to destroy the Mormon family system. Eventually, anti-polygamy forces, frustrated at the failure of Mormon women to rise up and throw off the chains of polygamy, joined with some supporters of woman suffrage who hated polygamy to stop women from voting in Utah in 1887. This, however, was only a

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17The mass meetings in support of polygamy received thorough coverage in the pages of the Woman's Exponent. For example of the pamphlet accounts of such meetings, see "Mormon Women's Protest: An Appeal for Freedom and Equal Rights [(Salt Lake City:] Deseret News Co., [1886]), which reports on the protest meeting of 6 March 1886.
temporary setback. As soon as Utah statehood was achieved in 1896 (after a strategic retreat from polygamy had partially mollified national public opinion), woman suffrage was once again introduced into the Utah constitution, nearly twenty-five years in advance of most of the rest of the country. Through their activities in local political life and through their advocacy of woman suffrage and other issues at the national level, Mormon women of the late nineteenth century gained a degree of experience in politics that matched or even exceeded that of women elsewhere in the country.

In short, despite their negative public image in the late nineteenth century, Mormon women exercised a remarkable degree of real power and influence in Utah society. The frontier, polygamy, women's organizations and publications, and the woman suffrage movement itself contributed in varied and sometimes contradictory ways to the creation of a considerable degree of freedom and autonomy for women in Mormon society.

II

The contrast between the late nineteenth century Mormon efforts to encourage women to participate in almost all aspects of society and the present-day stress on domesticity as the only important role for women could hardly be more stark. A non-Mormon entering Utah society today often gets the strange sensation of having stumbled into another era, of having somehow stepped back into a picture from a mid-Victorian advice manual. Almost everywhere, from the visitor's center display lauding family home evening to the exhortation in the Church News section of the Deseret News, the ideal that is held up for women today conveys the gush and cloying sentimentality of a Hallmark gift card. Never, it seems, was the "cult of true womanhood" more pervasive. As in Victorian America, ideals and practice in present-day Mormon society seem in tension at many points.18 Even as more than a third of married Mormon women work at least part time outside the home to help make ends meet, the church can put out a Relief Society lesson manual criticizing women who work and thereby neglect their families.19 Rarely in Utah Mormonism today do effective


19 The comments in question were printed in the Social Relations Lesson No. 7 for April 1978 in Relief Society Courses of Study, 1977-78 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977). Based on conversations with a number of Mormon women, some of whom are essentially conventional in their attitudes, I have concluded that a sense of resentment, deep hurt, and even outrage was produced by this specific lesson. The bluntest expression of the current highly restrictive attitudes toward women's role is found in Rodney Turner, Woman and the Priesthood (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972). Although Turner's book disclaims any standing as an authoritative statement of Mormon policy, it was printed by the Deseret Book Company and is widely accepted by Mormon scholars as representing normative present-day Mormon attitudes.
countervailing forces appear to be present to the prevailing ideology of domesticity as the only legitimate role for women.

What accounts for this shift from the ideal of the sturdy pioneer woman to that of the neo-Victorian wife and mother? Certainly the transition has been a complex one, and both ideals continue, to some extent, to be present in Mormonism today. At least four factors, however, have been particularly influential in bringing about a shift in emphasis. First was the gradual end of frontier conditions in turn-of-the-century Utah, and the corresponding rise to prominence of Victorian notions of culture and refinement. As Edward Geary has suggested in a brilliant interpretive essay on the genteel tradition in Mormondom, Mormons, like other western Americans, often cherish the image of the pioneer wife and mother who triumphed over the adverse conditions of the frontier to transform a rough cabin or musty dugout into a "real home."²⁰ The symbols of civilization in the genteel tradition, so characteristically represented in the sentimental novels of the nineteenth century, have as their object not high culture, not great achievements of the mind or the arts, but rather the little decencies of life such as lacy curtains and vases of flowers. The appearance, not the substance, of culture is sought. Significantly, Brigham Young and other early Mormon leaders frequently inveighed against such tendencies within the church. Young's support of the functional Bloomer-style Deseret costume so unpopular among church women, his criticism of sentimentalized Victorian novels as trash, and his forthrightness in bluntly and directly dealing in public with family and sexual issues that polite Victorian society thought should be kept strictly private, if discussed at all, show his concern that the genteel ideal threatened even within Mormonism to divert attention from the austerities and sacrifices necessary for the building up of the kingdom. As conditions in Utah eased and such superhuman dedication was no longer required for simple survival, suppressed or unexpressed urges for culture and refinement became increasingly prominent among Mormon women.²¹ Yet Mormons carried such concerns even farther than did other western Americans. What accounts for the peculiar intensity of the ideal of gentility among Mormons?

²⁰Edward A. Geary, "The Genteel Tradition in Mormondom: A Speculative Inquiry" (unpublished paper secured through the courtesy of the author). Geary skillfully delineates many of the forces encouraging the development of the genteel tradition in Mormonism. He does not, however, offer an explanation for the question he raises of why that tradition should have been stronger in Mormon than in non-Mormon areas of the American West. This paragraph is based on Geary's paper.

²¹A similar move away from a high degree of practical equality for women can be noted in many other historically marginal situations after a degree of order is restored. Colonial American life, for example, shows a greater degree of equality for women during the rougher frontier period than at the time of the Revolution when ideals of women's fashionable dress and a narrowing of women's role in many areas of life became obvious, at least among the elite. Linda Grant DePauw and Conover Hunt, "Remember the Ladies": Women in America, 1750-1815 (New York: Viking Press, 1976). Likewise, women often play an unusually prominent role in new religious movements. As the new systems become institutionalized, however, there is a tendency to drift back toward more traditional, male-dominated patterns. I. M. Lewis, Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971). Interestingly, even in the Israeli kibbutz experiment, which was ideologically committed to equality of the sexes and to freeing women to participate more fully in all aspects of community life, a pronounced drift back toward more traditional roles has occurred. Lionel Tiger and Joseph Shepher, Women in the Kibbutz (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976).
In addition to the end of the frontier, the effort of Mormons at the turn-of-the-century to transform and improve their relations with the larger American society served as a second factor which strengthened the ideal of gentility and contributed to a far-reaching constriction in the role of women. After persecution so intense that the very existence of the church was called into question, the Mormons in 1890 reluctantly began to put an end to polygamy, the major overt cause of conflict with the outer society. Concurrently, in an even more fundamental change, the church also began to withdraw from political life as a monolithic force and to allow greater pluralism within its areas of influence. This Americanization of Utah for statehood, as Gustive O. Larson has characterized it, is strikingly similar to the acculturation of other ethnic groups in this country. First generation Mormon leaders such as Brigham Young had tenaciously attempted to maintain distinctive ideals and practices which were in conflict with those acceptable in American society. By the turn of the century, however, these original leaders were giving way to a second generation with different priorities. Like so many second generation immigrants, these new Mormon leaders broke with their cultural past at many points. Reacting against the ways of their fathers which had created so many problems for them, they gave up polygamy, overt political control, and other distinctive features of their background and attempted in many respects to become more American than the most American. By the 1930s, the harshest persecution of recalcitrant polygamists came from the Mormon church itself, and upper levels of the hierarchy could seriously consider giving up other practices that set Mormons apart from mainstream Americans. During this period when so many Mormons were attempting to become "two hundred per cent Americans," Mormon society deeply internalized the dominant Victorian ideals of domesticity and women's role, even as the larger society began to give up such ideals. Today, the leaders of the church are men whose formative intellectual and emotional experiences occurred during this transitional pre-World War I era. Because of the strong authority structure of the Mormon church, these men are able to do much to preserve a style of life that many in the rest of America now view as a relic of a bygone age.

Surprisingly little has yet been done to understand the late-nineteenth-century Mormon movement toward acculturation. The most thorough overview of this entire process is found in Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, and in other works by James B. Allen. For polygamy, the best overall treatment is Larson, The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood. Still useful on the contemporary situation, even though somewhat dated at points, is the discussion in O'Dea, The Mormons, pp. 222-57. The work of Klaus Hansen, Robert Flanders, Jan Shipps, Marvin Hill, Michael Quinn, and others on Mormon political and cultural aspirations, especially as reflected in the political kingdom of God, raises perspectives on Mormon acculturation that demand further investigation. To date no full and satisfactory study of the development of polygamy since the Manifesto of 1890 has been attempted from this perspective.

This line of argument could be considerably elaborated to help explain the swing back toward more "conservative" positions among young Mormons since World War II. Third and fourth generation Mormons, like many individuals from immigrant groups, have attempted increasingly to recapture their roots and heritage. Ironically, the specific ideals which such Mormons try to recapture often have less in common with early Mormonism than with the Victorian ideals against which early Mormons reacted at so many points. See Harold T. Christensen and Kenneth L. Cannon, "The Fundamentalist Emphasis at Brigham Young University: 1935-1973," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 17 (1978): 53-57; and Marvin Rytting, "Struggling With the Paradoxes of Mormon Tradition" (unpublished paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Values in Higher Education, South Bend, Indiana, August 1978; copy secured through the courtesy of the author).
In addition to the end of the frontier and the efforts of Mormons to acculturate, a third factor contributing to the constricting of women's role in the Mormon church has been the effort to establish uniformity among, or correlate, all church programs. Although the effort to establish order and consistency in church programs and educational policies has been an ongoing one since the founding of the Mormon church, only since World War II, and especially since 1960, has correlation become an overriding concern among Mormons. The basic causes of this concern are simply stated: Since World War II, the church has experienced a phenomenal four-fold growth from a little over a million to more than four million members. Even for a group with an effective, centralized leadership and an unusually sophisticated grasp of organizational dynamics, coping with such a staggering increase in membership in little more than thirty years has posed complex new problems. In the process of cutting back on duplication of magazines, establishing a uniform educational curriculum, and reorganizing channels of authority, women's activities have been especially hard hit. Although the most knowledgeable scholars studying this process do not feel that correlation was deliberately intended to restrict women, the net effect of placing almost all women's activities in the church under closer male supervision has nevertheless been extremely constricting. Since 1960, the Relief Society has lost its independent funding and now is forced to justify its budget items to a male hierarchy which may sometimes be unsympathetic to certain programs that women feel are especially important. The Relief Society Magazine has been discontinued, much to the disappointment of many women, and its replacement by women's columns in the Ensign and a single Ensign issue each year devoted to women fails to provide a satisfactory substitute. And the many-faceted involvement that Mormon women once had with organizations such as the Primary Children's Hospital has been lost now that such organizations have been placed under private professional management. While change is inevitable in any group, not all change is necessarily for the better. Some Mormon women, particularly at the upper levels of leadership, have privately expressed deep frustrations with the new policy developments and with women's loss of control over their church organizations and activities.24

A final factor contributing to increasing restrictions in the sphere of women in Mormonism has been the church's reaction to certain developments in recent American life, notably the efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA and the feminist movement as a whole are viewed by most Mormons as being potentially at variance with basic Mormon principles of hierarchy and the maintenance of strong sex role distinctions. Many Mormons, concerned with the family disorders of the larger society and with their own all-too-high divorce rate within the church, see the ERA as only the most obvious factor tending to further

24The relative slowness with which some of these changes in the organization of church women's groups and activities have been made suggests the degree of internal resistance to such changes. Powerful former leaders of some of the major church women's organizations, speaking in candid private interviews, have expressed their dissatisfaction with some of the developments that have taken place. On the other hand, one should note that significant changes in any organization are likely to result in some opposition from old guard leaders who were used to doing things in their own way. Internal opposition to certain aspects of correlation within the Mormon church has always been expressed within a larger context in which loyalty to the church remains paramount.
polarize the sexes and disrupt the family. In addition, the ERA, if passed, could pose the same sorts of legal challenges to twentieth century Mormon social practice that the antipolygamy crusade did for the church in the nineteenth century. Brigham Young University's recent skirmishes with the federal government on affirmative action suggest something of the type of problems that could be envisioned.25 Thus the ERA, unlike woman suffrage, has been vigorously and effectively opposed by the Mormon church. In 1976, the church went so far as to officially condemn the ERA as an inappropriate method of dealing with the legitimate aspirations of women.26 The following year, in an operation that provoked intense controversy in Utah, figures in the church orchestrated the attendance of thousands of Mormon women in International Women's Year meetings throughout the state to block all feminist resolutions and send a "conservative" slate to the national meetings.27 Today, only the most courageous or foolhardy Mormon women come out in direct support of feminism as such. The public front in Utah appears almost monolithic on this topic. Thus, during the past century the role of women in Mormonism appears to have become increasingly narrowly defined. The end of the frontier, the efforts at acculturation, the concern with correlation, and the opposition to the ERA have all combined to produce what may well be a more constricted role for women within the Mormon church than at any other time in its history.

25The major controversies between the federal government and Brigham Young University have revolved around the interpretation of the Title IX regulations of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, which states that a university receiving federal funds may not practice discrimination on the basis of sex. On 16 October 1975 BYU challenged certain regulations that had been put forward by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare under Title IX. The grounds of the challenge were that the regulations exceeded the authority of the department, infringed on religious freedom and other constitutional rights, and undercut efforts to encourage the teaching and practice of "high moral principles" in relations between the sexes. A quiet standoff eventually was reached in this case. A more recent controversy concerning housing discrimination was resolved with the Justice Department in an agreement on 8 June 1978. For the earlier controversy, see Utah newspapers from mid-1975 through early 1976; Brigham Young University press release of 16 October 1975, entitled "Notification of Brigham Young University Policy of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex"; Karen J. Winkle, "Brigham Young University Challenges Part of the Bias Law," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 28 October 1975; and John Walsh, "Brigham Young University: Challenging the Federal Patron," *Science* 191 (16 January 1976): 160-63. The text of the compromise agreement between the Justice Department and Brigham Young University on the housing discrimination controversy was released, along with supporting BYU documentation, on 8 June 1978. Also see Elouise Bell, "The Implications of Feminism for BYU," *Brigham Young University Studies* 16 (Summer 1976): 527-40.

26The statement of the First Presidency against the ERA was printed in the *Church News* section of the *Deseret News* on 30 October 1976, as well as in the *Ensign* 6 (December 1976): 79. The statement makes it difficult, though not entirely impossible, for Mormon women publicly to support the ERA. A further statement in support of the church's position against the ERA is found in Boyd K. Packer, "The Equal Rights Amendment," *Ensign* 7 (March 1977): 6-9. A discussion of the political role which the Mormon church apparently played in defeating the ERA in Nevada is presented in Lisa Cronin Wohl, "A Mormon Connection? The Defeat of the ERA in Nevada," *Ms.*, July 1977, pp. 68-85.

Where do Mormon women go from here? How can women within Mormonism gain the broadest range of options and the opportunities to develop and use their full talents? What are the future possibilities and prospects for women in the Mormon church?

One preliminary point must be made if the future status of Mormon women is to be faced squarely and realistically. Feminism, with its stress on individualism and equality for women, is fundamentally antithetical to the hierarchical ideology underlying Mormonism. Neither now nor in the foreseeable future is ideological feminism likely to be a viable option within the Mormon church. For Mormons, order and hierarchy are fundamental values. All members of the church are viewed as part of a cooperative network of family and kinship ties in which the good of the whole community is always more important than the good of any of the component members in isolation. This does not mean that change in the status of women is impossible, but rather that such change, when it comes, will be part of the broader process of change within the entire organization. The Mormon church, like any successful social organism, is continually in a process of development, of periodic declension and revitalization as it attempts to deal more effectively with the challenges that it confronts. Change is often slow, and it must ultimately come from within the organization, but far-reaching change can and does occur.

The way in which change may take place in the Mormon church is highlighted by one noteworthy recent development not directly connected with women, namely, elimination of the policy denying full participation in the church to blacks of African descent. This policy went back at least a century to the days of Brigham Young, and its elimination proved exceedingly difficult, despite the many compelling arguments that were raised against it in the years since World War II. Even the most concerned and hopeful Mormons had almost given up hope that the policy would be changed in the near future. Yet in June 1978 that policy was, indeed, ended, much to the delight of members who had been distressed by the inconsistency between that policy and the Mormon church’s universalistic ideals. Apparently the immediate reasons for that change were the spiritual sensitivity of the church’s President Spencer W. Kimball and the pragmatic demands of the worldwide missionary program, particularly in Brazil, where limiting membership based on racial antecedents ultimately proved too complex to be practical. Long-range factors influencing the change may also have included the continuing external criticisms of the policy which

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28 The lack of appeal of feminism per se in Mormonism today is clear even to writers such as Warenksi, Patriarchs and Politics, who sought to find signs of a potentially viable feminist movement within Mormonism. Warenksi concluded, based on sixty interviews and on her other observations, that the vast majority of Mormon women appear satisfied with their role in the home and that no effective organizational supports for more militant Mormon women exist. A similar conclusion was reached by Adele Brannon McCollum, who also interviewed numerous Mormon women, as well as some of their husbands. McCollum once proposed the following ideal case to a Mormon leader: If his wife were happier, the children had equal or better care, etc., would he then be willing for her to work outside the home. No, he said. In such a case, he would try to find an occupation for his wife that she could do while still remaining in the home! Conversation with Adele Brannon McCollum, Summer 1978. Also see Alison Craig, “Making Money at Home,” Ensign 7 (March 1977): 51-56.
contributed to a negative public image of the church in American society and the continuing distress which the policy provoked among thoughtful Mormons.29

In much the same way, despite a seemingly static and constricted role for women within the Mormon church today, a longer-range perspective suggests deep-running currents at work which ultimately may once again increase the range of options for women. Among the straws in the wind is the widespread interest in issues of the family and women's role in Utah today. Even though the general tone of discussions tends to be muted by comparison with more militant statements of the larger society, many of the same types of concerns are raised, and conferences on women such as the ones held at Brigham Young University are well-attended.30 Some Mormon sociologists and family counselors warn of the dangers of the heavy Mormon emphasis on early marriage and too-large families — factors which have contributed to a disturbingly high divorce rate among Mormons and to other family problems that at times approach in intensity those of the outer society.31 Faced with a sizeable number of young, single Mormon women, many of whom will not be able to find desirable husbands within the Mormon church, books are put out under church auspices pointing out that there are also rewarding opportunities for women outside marriage and that remaining single should not be considered the end of the world.32 And some bright young Mormon women have begun to point to research studies showing that married women who work at least part-time

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29For the best brief historical treatment of the changing Mormon policy on blacks in the church, see Lester Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 8 (Spring 1973): 11-68. An analysis of the recent change of policy, made public on 9 June 1978 by the First Presidency of the church, is found in the epilogue to Newell G. Bringhurst's book manuscript on Mormon policy toward blacks. (Read through the courtesy of the author.)

30Present-day Mormon writings on women and their potential role outside the home often appear to be at the stage described in Betty Friedan's early writings. There is a vague sense that being simply a wife and mother may not be entirely fulfilling, but as yet there is no clearly articulated alternative that appears satisfactory within Mormon culture. Reflections on some of these issues are found in the special issue of Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 6 (Summer 1971) on Mormon women, edited by Claudia Lauper Bushman and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich; articles, notes, and observations in Exponent II; and the often surprisingly frank discussions on the difficulties of the mother-homemaker role in the special women's issues of the Ensign for March 1976 and March 1977. Particularly noteworthy is Lavina Fielding, "Problems, Solutions: Being a Latter-day Saint Woman Today," Ensign 6 (March 1976): 16-22.


32During the past five years, Deseret Book Company, the church's publishing house, has put out at least four books directed at the woman who is temporarily or permanently without a husband. One of the best of this genre is Wayne J. Anderson, Alone But Not Lonely: Thoughts for the Single, Widowed, or Divorced Woman (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973). Articles in the Ensign also have discussed the role of single women in the church.
outside the home generally have a better self-image and make more effective, rather than less effective, wives and mothers.33

Although such ideas are still outside the Mormon mainstream and are sharply criticized by some Mormon leaders, the church as a whole has generally crafted its policy statements skillfully so as to not totally cut off any potentially fruitful options for its members. As one example, the official policy statement on birth control is a masterpiece of diplomacy. On its face, the statement appears to be a vigorous condemnation of the use of artificial means of birth control, and certainly this is the way in which most church members would read it. Yet the statement significantly does allow birth control in cases where the woman’s health or feelings make it desirable.34 Similarly, another policy pronouncement sharply attacking abortion nevertheless does allow it in certain exceptional cases such as rape.35 Thus, church policy declarations that appear unequivocal to the casual reader are usually stated so that they can be open to various interpretations depending on an individual’s circumstances and inclinations. Basic principles are clearly enunciated, but variation is allowed within those broad limits.

Partly as a result of such flexibility, the Mormon church has been remarkably successful in adapting itself to changes in the outside world without losing touch with its underlying goals. The insights and concerns of the larger society are characteristically filtered through a unique Mormon perspective. Birth control, for example, is practiced by many Mormons, and the Mormon birth rate during this century has followed the general rises and dips of American society as a whole, though always at a somewhat higher level.36 Evidence from past policy development suggests that so long as Mormon women remain generally satisfied with a position that is essentially limited to the home, church policies toward their role are likely to remain restrictive; but as conditions in society change and as tensions develop within the Mormon home which clearly reflect the dysfunctional nature of certain church policies, those policies may well be gradually and significantly modified so that the organization may operate with maximum effectiveness.37 The decision at the October 1978 Conference to allow women to pray in Sacrament meetings, and the message of President Spencer W. Kimball at the October 1978 fireside inviting women to expand and

33As one written example of such a positive approach to working mothers, see Francine Bennion, “LDS Working Mothers,” Sunstone 2 (Spring 1977): 6-15.

34The First Presidency statement on birth control, dated 14 April 1969, is quoted in its entirety in David H. Coombs, “The LDS Church: Birth Control and Family Planning” (research paper presented to the Educational Psychology Department at Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the Degree of Doctor of Education, August 1974). Coombs’s paper, brought to my attention courtesy of David J. Whittaker, provides a convenient source for most of the important documents put out by the church in this area. Numerous other articles on Mormon birth control attitudes and practices have been published. As a starting point, see Lester E. Bush, Jr., “Birth Control among the Mormons: Introduction to an Insistent Question,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 10 (Autumn 1976): 12-44.


36For graphic representation of the relationship between Mormon and non-Mormon birthrates, see Lester E. Bush, Jr., “Birth Control among the Mormons,” p. 23.

37One example of such modifications was the decision to introduce optional Relief Society lessons to encourage participation of younger, unmarried women who had ceased active participation in the more traditional family-centered programs.
improve and insisting that they should not be silent or limited partners in
marriage suggests possibilities for further enlargement of women's range of
options. In this complex process of helping the Mormon church adapt to changes in
the larger society while remaining true to its underlying values, Mormon
intellectuals play a vital, if often not-fully-appreciated role. Independent
journals such as Dialogue, which are viewed with suspicion by much of the
Mormon rank and file, have been especially important in helping the church to
deal creatively with the complex new problems and challenges that it faces. For
women, Exponent II has played a similarly pivotal role, reaffirming a
commitment to a vision of women in Mormonism that is broader and more
dynamic than that which is currently accepted by the mainstream of the church.
Exponent II fills a real need, especially for the brightest and most intellectually
acute women of the church who are struggling to maintain their loyalty to a faith
in which they deeply believe at the same time that they are trying to change
policies that they feel are excessively restrictive. By reprinting articles from the
original Woman's Exponent and celebrating the achievements of their pioneer
foremothers, Exponent II suggests additional appealing role models for women
of the church today and helps keep open options that otherwise might tend to be
closed off.

The responsibilities of leadership in a highly centralized organization such
as the Mormon church are awesome. On the one hand, effective new programs
can be rapidly instituted within an entire organization; on the other hand, if the
leadership makes a fundamental error in judgment, the negative effects can be
similarly far-reaching. The current policy of correlation within the church holds
particularly ambiguous potential, both for women and for Mormonism as a
whole. If the policy of correlation is to work well, women, as well as other
elements in the church, need to be actively and effectively involved in every issue
which directly affects them. Otherwise, blunders and policy mistakes are almost
inevitable. It is not in the church's interest to make mistakes such as producing a
Relief Society lesson manual sent to working women which criticizes them for

38 Linda Sillitoe, "Perceptions of the Plight: A Review-Response," Sunstone 4 (January-
February 1979): 6-9, presents some reflections on present and future possibilities for women in the
church related to these and other recent developments.

39 Insight into the vital role that Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought plays in the Mormon
curch is suggested in the letters to the editor of the journal, as well as in the many pathbreaking
articles concerning difficult and controversial issues which must nevertheless be addressed if the
church is to remain healthy in a complex and ever changing world. See also Leonard J. Arrington,
Thought 3 (Summer 1968): 56-65. Another, more recent journal which deals with similar issues is
Sunstone.

40 A convenient introduction to the role of Exponent II in the Mormon church is Claudia
One wonders if part of the appeal of this paper, started in 1974, may be due to the fact that with the
ending of the Relief Society Magazine in 1970, women in the church no longer had any forum of their
own through which they could regularly express themselves and their concerns in writing. Among
the other efforts to come to terms with some of these issues, see Emma Lou Thayne, "Ashtrays and
Gumwrappers: Women in Utah Mormon Culture," Task Papers in LDS History No. 19 (Salt Lake
City: Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977), and Maureen
Ursenbach Beecher, "Past and Present: Some Thoughts on Being a Mormon Woman," Sunstone 1
(Summer 1976): 64-73.
working and creates a deep-seated sense of outrage. Likewise, it is not in the church's interest to underestimate or misconstrue the tensions that women face. Even if the Mormon church continues to keep its women in a position of ultimate subordination to men, not to involve half the church in creating the policies which affect them is not only ethically questionable but organizationally dysfunctional as well. On a broader note, if organizational health is to be maintained, not simply for Mormon women but also for the entire church, a balance must be maintained between order, on the one hand, and creativity, on the other. To establish an organizational straightjacket, to cut back too severely on the room for individual variation within the church would be to threaten the possibility of the very universality to which Mormonism aspires.41

In conclusion, the need for continuing creativity and openness in dealing with the role of women within Mormonism is powerfully expressed by a woman who moved back to Utah after thirty-five years of living in Delaware. She stated: "I feel that what we're losing in the Church is diversity. There's such a push for uniformity and conformity that all the beautiful little nuances of differences are being swept aside. That's really what God enjoys. Otherwise he wouldn't make every leaf and snowflake different. You should have the freedom to have some time to be yourself, and to have people appreciate that you're different. You should appreciate this in your children and not try to push them all into a prescribed mold. . . . I think that in an authoritarian church this is one of the dangers. . . . we have to let some pilot projects develop in individual lives too. Until we do that, how are we going to let a woman make the individual contribution which is particularly her own?"42 The role of women within Mormonism is surely one of the continuing challenges with which the church will have to grapple seriously in the years ahead.

41Whether the Mormon church will indeed be able to make the radical transformation into a universal church or whether it will ultimately take the easier route and lapse back into narrow sectarian insularity remains to be seen. On this point, see Thomas F. O'Dea, "Mormonism and the Avoidance of Sectarian Stagnation: A Study of Church, Sect, and Incipient Nationality," *American Journal of Sociology* 40 (November 1954): 285-93.

42Helen Candland Stark, Oral History, Interview by Jessie L. Embrey, 1977, in the James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, p. 28.
The *Journal of Mormon History*, annual publication of the Mormon History Association, reflects the purposes of the association, "to foster scholarly research and publication in the field of Mormon history."

Manuscripts dealing with all aspects of Mormon history are invited. First consideration will be given to those which make a strong contribution to knowledge through new interpretations or new information. A panel of readers will also consider general interest of the paper, extent and accuracy of research, and literary quality.

For matters of style, consult *A Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press, 1969) and a recent issue of the *Journal*. Specific guidelines are available upon request from the editor.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should be typed, double-spaced, with footnotes, also double-spaced, in a separate section at the end. Preferred length is fifteen to twenty-five pages, including footnotes.

Submit manuscripts to Richard W. Sadler, Department of History, Weber State College, Ogden, Utah 84403.
New Light on the Sun: 
Emma Smith and the 
New York Sun Letter

By Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery

Emma Hale Smith occupied a special place among the early Latter-day Saints as wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She was his confidante, partner, and companion, and he created a special "first lady" role for her. Consequently, when an acid letter allegedly signed by Emma appeared in the New York Sun newspaper on 9 December 1845 — eighteen months after Joseph's death — its contents puzzled those who knew her. Emma said she did not write it, but a century and a third later a question still exists over the authorship of the Sun letter.

Raymond T. Bailey, in his 1953 master's thesis on Emma Smith, concluded that Emma did indeed pen the letter and "when there were so many repercussions from it, she published a denial." Most LDS historians have not taken issue with Bailey's explanation. On the other hand, RLDS writers have taken Emma at her word, assuming that the Sun letter was a forgery. They declare her innocence in the affair but do not offer a solution to the vexing question of who wrote it, and why.

The editorial comment preceding the letter announced that it came by private conveyance from Mrs. Smith, widow of the Mormon prophet:

Linda K. Newell of Salt Lake City and Valeen T. Avery of Flagstaff, Arizona, are completing a book-length biography of Emma Hale Smith. The authors are most grateful to Ronald K. Esplin for his support and interest in this paper. He offered suggestions and helped us locate many of the Bennet letters that enabled us to piece the puzzle together.

1Raymond T. Bailey, "Emma Hale, Wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith" (M.S. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1952).
To the Editor of the New York Sun: Sir: — I hope to be excused for addressing, for the first time in my life, a letter to the Editor of a newspaper, and this I have been induced to do, from seeing the letters of Gen. Arlington Bennett, published in the newspapers, urging the Mormon people to remove to the Pacific Ocean, and advocating the cause of the Tyrants, who have seized on the government of the Mormon Church. This church, such is it is, was formed by my lamented husband who was martyred for its sake, and whether true or false, has laid down his life for its belief!

I am left here, sir, with a family of children to attend to, without any means of giving them an education, for there is not a school in the city, nor is it intended there shall be any here, or at any other place, where the men who now govern this infatuated, simple-minded people, have sway. I have not the least objection that these petty tyrants remove to California, or any other remote place, out of the world if they wish; for they will never be of any service to the Mormons, or the human family, no matter where they go. Their object is to keep the people over whom they rule in the greatest ignorance, and most abject religious bondage, and if these poor, confiding creatures remove with them, they will die in the wilderness! The laws of the United States are quite good enough for me and my children, and my settled intention is to remain where I am, take care of my property, and if I cannot educate my children here, send them to New York or New England for that purpose. Many of the Mormons will, no doubt, remove in the Spring, and many more will remain here; and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have a mixed Society in Nauvoo; as in other cities, and all exclusive religious distinctions abolished.

I must now say, that I have never for a moment believed in what my husband called his apparitions and revelations, as I thought him laboring under a diseased mind; yet they may all be true, as a Prophet is seldom without credence or honor, excepting in his own family or country, but as my conviction is to the contrary, I shall educate my children in a different faith, and teach them to obey and reverence the laws and institutions of their country. Shall I not, sir, be protected in these resolutions against the annoyance of the men I now oppose, for they will no doubt seek my life?

What object Gen. Arlington Bennet has in advocating the cause of these petty tyrants, I am not able to understand, for he assured me, when at my house, that he had not the smallest intention of connecting himself in any manner with them, much less removing with them to the Pacific Ocean. But this is a strange world, and I would not be surprised if they had offered to anoint and crown him King or Emperor in the West! As I have something more to say, I will take the liberty to write you another letter.

With great respect,
I am, sir, your humble serv't
EMMA SMITH

The missive contains six main points: There were no schools in Nauvoo. Emma did not intend to follow the Mormon leaders west. She would educate her children in a different faith. Nauvoo should have a mixed society without a dominant religion. The leaders of the Mormon church were petty tyrants. And Emma never believed in Joseph's revelations; instead she thought he was "laboring under a diseased mind."

"Mrs. Smith, widow of the Mormon Prophet," New York Sun, 9 December 1845. We have been unable to locate the original of this letter, though we have made a search for the papers of Moses Yale Beach, editor of the New York Sun at the time the letter was written. Donna Hill searched a number of New York City libraries for us, including the New York Public Library, Columbia University School of Journalism Library, New York Public Annex. The Annex does have part of the morgue of the old Sun, with a few clippings about Moses Beach, but nothing relating to Emma Smith or James Arlington Bennet. Beach was part of the Yale family of Yale University, and Linda Newell searched the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library there but could not find his papers. Neither are they in the Library of Congress. Donna Hill obtained a photocopy of the original Sun article for us. See also Bailey, "Emma Hale," pp. 142-43.
Following publication of the letter, the newspaper's editor commented on the preceding points and added that General James Arlington Bennet of New York had seen the letter and "pronounces it genuine."

Emma's reaction was immediate. Conveyances between Nauvoo and New York usually took from ten days to three weeks, but only eleven days after the 9 December issue of the Sun was off the press, Emma fired this letter to Bennet at Long Island:

General Bennett, Sir: The apology I have to offer for addressing you at this time is the unexpected appearance of a letter published in the New York Sun of Tuesday Morning, December 9. I never was more confounded with a misrepresentation than I am with that letter, and I am greatly perplexed that you should entertain the impression that the document should be a genuine production of mine. How could you believe me capable of so much treachery, as to violate the confidence reposed in me, and bring your name before the public in the manner that letter represents? If you thought I had committed such a breach of trust, you certainly valued my integrity much less than I did yours. Should you be now satisfied that I am not unworthy of your confidence you will please give me your opinion, if any you have formed, as to what quarter I am to look for the author of that forgery. By so doing you will greatly increase my obligations.

Yours with great respect,
EMMA SMITH

It was not Emma's style to use a public forum for personal expression, and her response, a private letter to Bennet, followed her natural inclination. Apparently her friend John Bernhisel thought that was not sufficient, however, for on 27 December he borrowed a copy of the Sun from Heber C. Kimball's office and presumably went to Emma with it. Three days later Emma responded publicly in one terse paragraph:

To the Editor of the New York Sun; Sir: I wish to inform you, and the public through your paper, that the letter published Tuesday morning, December 9th, is a forgery, the whole of it, and I hope that this notice will put a stop to all such communications.

EMMA SMITH

For some reason this denial never appeared in the Sun, but it was printed in the next issue of the Times and Seasons.

A search for answers to the puzzle reveals at least three possibilities: (1) The Sun letter was written by Emma in a period of frustration. (2) It was an outright forgery, written by a clever impostor. (3) Unbeknown to Emma, it was written by someone in whom she had confided her frustrations, but who had intentions quite apart from hers. Whoever wrote the letter had a reason for doing so. What purpose could it have served Emma? Bailey offered no motive. He only suggested

3"Some Facts Concerning Emma Smith," Saints' Herald 52 (October 1905): 268, reprinted from the New York Sun, 25 January 1846. In most published sources and in letters to Bennet, his name appears "Bennett." His own signature is "Bennet," which we have used throughout, except where it occurs in a quote.

4Heber C. Kimball Journal, 27 December 1845, holograph, Archives of the Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereinafter cited Church Archives.

5Times and Seasons, 15 January 1846.
that it “must have been written during a time of emotional upheaval.” The author of one popularized version of Emma’s life concluded that she suffered a severe mental breakdown at the time of Joseph’s death and was a changed person thereafter.

There can be no doubt that the year and a half between Joseph’s death and the appearance of the Sun letter was an emotional and difficult time for Emma. The same can be said, of course, of Mary Fielding Smith, widow of Joseph’s brother Hyrum. Yet no one has suggested that she went into “deep depression” or had a mental breakdown, and it is hard to believe that Emma did either. At the death of the brothers, the two widows reacted similarly. Dr. B. W. Richmond’s moving account of the grief-stricken women viewing the bodies of their dead husbands shows them both in almost uncontrolled anguish. Mary followed Brigham to the Great Basin. Emma did not and therein lies the difference in how they were viewed. Even when Mary anointed and blessed her dying oxen out on the western prairie, no one questioned her mental stability.

In the months following the martyrdom the widows greeted friends and other mourners in much the same way, sometimes giving mementos of the Prophet and Patriarch to close associates who would cherish a lock of hair or a cane made from the oak coffins. Both women received visits from the leaders of the church. On 14 September 1844, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and George A. Smith made a courtesy call to Mary. A few weeks later a similar group visited Emma. Kimball recorded the event in his journal: “Met in council at Sister Emma Smith . . . and expressed our feelings to her & [what] our intentions ware she seemed pleased with our course. it seemed like old times.”

If Emma was mentally competent and she did write the Sun letter, she had to have a reason. Was it part of her continued opposition to plural marriage? The letter does not even hint at the subject, and there is little evidence that her opposition to polygamy ever affected her attitude toward other aspects of Joseph’s prophetic role.

On the other hand, there is extensive information to substantiate Emma’s continued support of Joseph and his calling. After following him through five states under extreme conditions of hardship, she arrived in Illinois after a harrowing escape from Missouri. In March of 1839, she wrote to Joseph, who was still confined in Liberty Jail:

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7Erwin E. Wirkus, Judge Me Dear Reader (Idaho Falls, Ida.: Erwin E. Wirkus, 1978), unpaged.
8Deseret Evening News, 27 November 1875, reprinted from the Chicago Times. Researchers should note that the Deseret News was publishing three newspapers at this time. They were the Deseret News (weekly), Deseret Semi-Weekly News, and the Deseret Evening News. The three papers often carried different news accounts and only the Deseret Evening News printed this particular article.
9Wilford Woodruff Journal, 23 and 24 August 1844, Church Archives.
Was it not for . . . direct interposition of divine mercy, I am very sure I never should have been able to have endured the scenes of suffering that I have passed through, . . . but I still live and am yet willing to suffer more if it is the will of kind Heaven, that I should for your sake.\textsuperscript{12}

Three and a half years later, when Joseph was contemplating a period of self-imposed exile in the pine country of Wisconsin, Emma wrote to her husband, “I am ready to go with you if you are obliged to leave. . . . I shall make the best arrangements I can and be as well prepared as possible.”\textsuperscript{13} The next summer, June 1843, Joseph returned triumphantly to Nauvoo after being accosted by a party of Missourians. Emma was with the large company who rode out to meet him on the outskirts of town. Joseph said, “After embracing Emma . . . who wept tears of joy at my return . . . I mounted my favorite horse, ‘old Charley,’ when the band struck up ‘Hail Columbia,’ and proceeded to march slowly towards the city, Emma riding by my side into town.”\textsuperscript{14} William Clayton also recorded the scene: “Such a feeling I never before witnessed when the Prest. took hold of the hand of his partner in sorrow & persecution. Surely it would have moved anything but the heart of an adamantine.”\textsuperscript{15} Emma would not — \textit{could not} — have endured what she did had she believed Joseph’s mind was diseased or that he was an impostor.

The protective instinct of her role as a mother, however, suggests a possible motive. With memories of Missouri, and events such as Hauns Mill, where even young boys were shot because “nits make lice,” Emma may have feared the men who killed her husband would not rest until all the Smiths were out of the way. By writing the letter she could have been trying to secure sympathy and safety for herself and her children. But Samuel Smith’s daughter, Mary, who was living with Emma during this time, indicated that Emma believed she and her children were in danger from within the church as well as from without.\textsuperscript{16} If that was the case, then Emma would surely not have put herself and family in further jeopardy by writing the inflammatory sections of the \textit{Sun} letter, calling the leaders of the church petty tyrants.

As it was, these same leaders had already rallied to Emma’s defense over another issue. Late in 1844 a rumor circulated among the detractors of the church that the widow of Joseph Smith was soon to publish an expose of Mormonism and its new leaders. In response to that rumor, the Twelve — with John Taylor acting as spokesman — published the following defense of Emma in the \textit{Times and Seasons}:

[Emma] honored her husband while living, and she will never knowingly dishonor his good name while his martyred blood mingles with mother earth! Mrs. Smith is an

\textsuperscript{12}Emma Smith to Joseph Smith, 7 March 1839, Joseph Smith Letterbook, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives.

\textsuperscript{13}Emma Smith to Joseph Smith, 16 August 1842; Smith, \textit{History of the Church}, 5:110.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 5:459.


\textsuperscript{16}Mary B. Norman to Ina Coolbrith, 24 April 1908, Library-Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri, hereinafter cited as RLDS Library-Archives.
honorable woman. The very idea that so valuable and beloved a lady, could be coaxed into a fame of disgrace is as cruel and bloody as the assassination of her husband at Carthage.

The fact is, the story must have been put in circulation to injure the Latter Day Saints; and as Mrs. Smith was one of them, to destroy or murder her reputation, and create division in the church.\footnote{Times and Seasons 5 (15 January 1845): 776-77.}

Though Brigham Young and Emma had some strong differences that were surfacing during this time, the Twelve refused to allow any exterior force to use her name to divide the church as they moved to protect her.\footnote{Lawrence Foster, in his doctoral dissertation, "Between Two Worlds: The Origins of Shaker Celibacy, Oneida Community Complex Marriage, and Mormon Polygamy (University of Chicago, 1979), p. 329, states that the tone of the above statement "is similar to the tone of other statements which tried to discourage Rigdon from writing exposés," indicating that it was a move to counter Emma, rather than support her. We have not found enough evidence to support his thesis.}

If no substantial motive can be established to support the thesis that Emma wrote the letter, the next question is, who else might have penned it? A number of possible suspects present themselves, and several merit mention.

John Cook Bennett knew the power of the press and had already used it against Joseph. But he was not in Nauvoo and was not likely aware enough of Emma's situation or other circumstances and plans within the city to form a convincing letter. Nor was the letter written in his style.

William Smith had been unsteady in his loyalties to Joseph, who had had a difficult time keeping this younger brother in line. William's motive could have been simple jealousy or an attempt to discredit the new leadership in a ploy to gain control. But to deny Joseph's role as prophet would have destroyed the lineal claim to leadership for both himself and for Joseph III.

Brigham Young was vexed by Emma by this time and he might have written the letter to hurt or embarrass her. But writing letters to newspapers was not something Brigham normally did. Also, if he had been responsible for the Sun letter, he surely would have capitalized on it in some way. It is significant to note that there is no evidence that Emma was ever excommunicated nor was her name ever removed from the membership records of the Utah church.

James Arlington Bennet, Joseph's first choice for his vice-presidential candidate, had a history of writing letters to newspapers regarding Mormon issues. He was the man whom Moses Yale Beach, the editor of the New York Sun, asked to verify the letter's authenticity before he printed it.

No evidence has surfaced that any of these people were involved in the writing of the notorious letter, with one exception — James Arlington Bennet.

Let us go back to the months preceding the publication of the letter. The threat of violence from mobs was high in and around Nauvoo after the martyrdom, and armed men guarded several of the church leaders' homes. Sometime in the summer or fall of 1845 that guard was expanded to include the Homestead where Emma and her family moved soon after Joseph's death. The Smiths regarded this action as hostile house arrest.\footnote{Joseph Smith III, Joseph Smith III and the Restoration, edited by his daughter Mary Audentia Smith Anderson and condensed by his granddaughter Bertha Audentia Anderson Hulmes (Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1953), p. 87.} Whether the family was just
oblivious to the external danger or whether the guard was meant to harrass the Smiths, it was under these circumstances that James Arlington Bennet, proprietor of Arlington House School in Long Island, New York, visited Emma in October 1845 — just six weeks prior to the appearance of the Sun letter.

Three years earlier, Joseph Smith had accepted Arlington Bennet at more than face value. Sight unseen, the Prophet conferred upon him the title of Inspector General of the Nauvoo Legion and awarded him an LLD degree from the University of Nauvoo — a dubious honor. When Joseph wrote to Bennet in September 1842, he explained that the honors had come solely on the recommendation of John C. Bennett. By then Joseph had already established his own relationship with the New York educator and writer by sending Willard Richards to call on him the previous June. Now he requested help in stemming the unfortunate publicity directed toward the church. The task was not difficult for Bennet as he had already defended the Mormons (using the pseudonym "Cincinnatus") in a letter to the New York Herald.

In August of the next year, Brigham Young baptized James Arlington Bennet in the Atlantic Ocean, but Bennet downplayed the occasion in a subsequent letter to Joseph:

You are no doubt already aware that I have had a most interesting visit from ... B. Young, with whom I have had a glorious frolic in the clear blue ocean ... without a moment's reflection or consideration. ... I am capable of being a most undeviating friend, without being governed by the smallest religious influence.

An ambitious man who saw Joseph as a vehicle for achieving his personal goals, he did not want his affiliation with the church known publicly. He promised the Mormon leader support, but felt his post as Inspector General in the Nauvoo Legion would be a handicap to his current political aspirations. He proposed a way to divest himself of the honor and still save face for both of them, explaining to Joseph, "It can be shown that a commission in the Legion was a Herald hoax, coined for the fun of it by me. ... in short, I expect to be yet, through your influence, governor of the State of Illinois."

Three months later Bennet must have entertained doubts about this plan for he wrote to Willard Richards that the letter to Joseph, referred to above, was written after Brigham Young had invited him to go to Illinois. "We had been joking," he said, "on the subject of Mormon influence in making me governor of the State — Why Doctor your Governors Salary would not pay me for leaving my own beautiful establishment."
Still confident of Bennet's political prowess, Joseph asked him to be his vice-presidential candidate in his bid for the nation's highest office. The wily Easterner saw the hopelessness of that campaign and backpedaled again. He appeared to be constitutionally ineligible for the office for he claimed foreign birth. Bennet had passed as Irish-born to further sales of his book (a manual on bookkeeping) even though his parents immigrated to America before his birth. He told Willard Richards:

There have been reasons why I wished to have it thought I was born abroad. Who regarded the book of an American native author twenty-five years ago? Most of them fell stillborn from the press. . . . You are at liberty to use my name for any office you may think proper . . . not however with any view of arriving at a successful result, but merely for effect.27

Having been told five weeks earlier that Bennet was Irish, Joseph had already chosen Sidney Rigdon to share the ticket.

Arlington kept a running correspondence with Joseph until the Prophet's death; and Emma wrote at least once to Bennet's wife.28 He also wrote to other men prominent in the church and took it upon himself to communicate with various newspapers, sometimes using pseudonyms, and with dignitaries such as Governors Carlin and Boggs, and even the president of the United States — all in behalf of Joseph and the church.29

Within two months after Joseph's death, Bennet decided to seek a position of leadership in the church. On 20 August 1844 he wrote to Willard Richards that Joseph and Hyrum had appeared to him in a vision. He described a grandiose spectacle of star-studded crowns, miters, seals, and angels, one of whom “came forward and said to me Kneel which I did in great fear (which is contrary to any standard of mine) he placed on my head the crown of 30 stars. . . . these dreams . . . have troubled me much and have almost moved me to go to Nauvoo.”30 Young and the Twelve sent no invitation. By the next June, Bennet was ready to be more explicit in pursuing his desires, writing,

I feel very confident that if I were at Nauvoo I could reorganize the Legion & put it into such a state of defence, as would bid defiance to any MOB that might be brought against it. Nothing on this Earth could give me so much pleasure as to be able to bring into actual operation the tactics of the great Napoleon, by fighting his Battles over again.31

He suggested Nauvoo as the battlefield but felt that it would be more advantageous to use California as the theatre of war. He even suggested that the church petition Great Britain for friendship and protection. He proposed they establish a "mighty Nation" in the West. "If I cannot put the 'Mormon Legion,'" the letter continued, "in such a state of discipline . . . to drive three times their number of any other troops, I will suffer Crucifixion on a Locust."32

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27 James Arlington Bennet to Willard Richards, 14 April 1844, Willard Richards Papers, Church Archives.


29 James Arlington Bennet to Joseph Smith, RLDS Library-Archives.

30 James Arlington Bennet to Willard Richards, 20 August 1844, Willard Richards Papers, Church Archives.

31 James Arlington Bennet to Willard Richards, 4 June 1845, Church Archives.

32 Ibid.
Bennet must have also realized that he needed to seal his quest with higher authority. His "frolic in the ocean" with Brigham Young took on new meaning as he saw a way for it to serve his purpose.

Brother Young's Blessing when naked in the Atlantic Ocean is now coming over me like a spell — [Brigham] said 'You Shall Conquer to your hearts desire' Doctor! It is neither ambition nor worldly glory that now moves me — It is inspiration in the Cause of the Saints. I will receive a commission from no Civil power — it must come from Heaven.  

Not understanding Brigham Young's propensity to handle his own affairs, Bennet plunged on by reporting that he had already written to President Houston of the Texas Territory and asked for asylum for the Saints. Houston replied "that he would receive the 'Mormon Legion' as armed emigrants, with open arms. . . . 'I am no bigot.'"  

Brigham Young's patience with Bennet wore thin. As Willard Richards continued to share the correspondence with Young, Brigham observed: "This wild spirit of ambition has repeatedly manifested itself to us by many communications received from various sources. Suggesting schemes of blood and empire, as if the work of the Lord was intended for personal aggrandisement."  

Unaware of Brigham's displeasure, the New Yorker surged ahead. On 1 September he wrote Richards and Young that he had offered the services of the Nauvoo Legion to the President of the United States as volunteers to defend Texas against the Mexicans.  

Willard was more intrigued with Bennet's potential than Brigham, and it appears that he prevailed upon the president of the Quorum of the Twelve to cosign a letter to the eager Easterner. The missive informed Bennet that an attempt to organize the Legion would signal an open and bloody war. He must wait until they moved west before realizing his ambitions. Significantly, they invited him to come to Nauvoo to consider the plan, and they expected him in about thirty days.  

Bennet, however, was in Nauvoo within three days, having already decided to make his plea in person. The letter was hand delivered. While there he met with the Twelve, discussed the western plans, and toured the temple. Whatever the plans discussed, it is clear they were not finalized, due in part to Bennet's untimely departure from Nauvoo. He stated the reason in a letter to President Young:

If you could appreciate the State of my health, you would not censure me for [leaving], as I was puking all round the City every hour I remained in it. Even the day you did me the honor to wait on me through the Temple I was so Sick as to prevent me from accepting brother Taylors polite invitation to ride down to his house, fearing my stomach would

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53Ibid.
54Ibid.
55Smith, History of the Church, 7:429.
56James Arlington Bennet to Willard Richards, 1 September 1845, Willard Richards Papers, Church Archives.
57Willard Richards and Brigham Young to James Arlington Bennet, 17 October 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.
give out on the way. . . . I had a most dreadful attack of Cholera Morbus on my way to Nauvoo . . . and from that time . . . I was in a very bad state of health, which resulted, after I left the City, into a terrible attack of the gout. . . . I am now partially recovered.\textsuperscript{38}

But just before his abrupt exit he visited Emma Smith. As he started back to New York he sent word to Richards telling him he would write soon “and that he would cross the Rocky Mountains with [the church] in the Spring.”\textsuperscript{39}

Six weeks later the letter to the editor of the \textit{New York Sun} appeared. When copies of the papers reached Nauvoo, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Parly P. Pratt, and Joseph Young discussed the matter in a council meeting. They concluded Bennet was the author of the letter.\textsuperscript{40} They knew Emma well enough to believe that she did not write the letter, and they knew James Arlington Bennet well enough to believe that he did.

But why would he use Emma in such a way? From the time he left Nauvoo until the letter was published, Bennet had time to evaluate his position. On 18 November 1845 he wrote to Brigham Young and Willard Richards from New York:

Since I have been here I have endeavoured to place the Nauvoo affairs on the best foundation I could considering the position I am compelled to maintain. You will see my Articles in the Sun & several other papers have already copied them. . . . My letters have raised no small indignation against the Anties & no small abuse against myself from the priests & their adherents.\textsuperscript{41}

He said he had met with Emma before leaving Nauvoo and had pretended to be against the Twelve so she would confide in him. Bennet also referred to the letter given him in Nauvoo as flattering but not to the point. “\textit{Will you consecrate me your Military Chief?”} he inquired.\textsuperscript{42}

Emma, he was sure, had lost all favor with the Twelve and would be cut off from the church sooner or later, yet the Eastern press had been quite favorable to her and would consider her a reliable source of information.\textsuperscript{43} In Bennet’s view, a public exchange of letters with Emma would establish a forum of expression for him and enable him to fulfill his promise to Brigham to put “the Nauvoo affairs on the best foundation” possible. It is clear that he intended to continue the correspondence until he exhausted it as a tool, for the last line of the \textit{Sun} letter in question states, “As I have something more to say, I will take the liberty to write you another letter.”\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{38}James Arlington Bennet to Brigham Young, 18 November 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.

\textsuperscript{39}Smith, \textit{History of the Church}, 7:488.

\textsuperscript{40}Heber C. Kimball Journal, 4 January 1846. Our thanks to Michael Quinn for pointing this entry out to us. It gave the first solid clue to Bennet’s involvement.

\textsuperscript{41}James Arlington Bennet to Brigham Young, 18 November 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives. Interestingly, this letter is dated two days before the date on the “Emma” Sun letter.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{43}Though few, if any, eastern newspapers wrote extensively about Emma, a number of them carried short reports on her, and most of these were favorable or neutral. See \textit{Tioga Eagle} (Wellshorough, Pa.), 31 July 1844; \textit{Public Ledger} (Philadelphia, Pa.), 24 August 1844; \textit{Albany Evening Journal} (Albany, N.Y.), 25 July 1844. There are others; these are used as examples. Our thanks to LeGrand Baker and Paul Elsworth for sharing this collection with us.

\textsuperscript{44}“Mrs. Smith,” \textit{New York Sun}, 9 December 1845.
Perhaps, too, the "abuse" from the "priests and their adherents" was beginning to wear on Bennet and he sought a way to subdue the onslaught against him and salvage his reputation. In that light, the six points of the Sun letter mentioned earlier were possibly a screen and a seventh point becomes obvious. The crucial paragraph is the last one, for coming from the respected Emma Smith was the statement: "What object Gen. Arlington Bennett has in advocating the cause of these petty tyrants, I am not able to understand, for he assured me, when at my house, that he had not the smallest intention of connecting himself in any manner with them, much less removing with them to the Pacific Ocean."^45

With a stroke of the pen Bennet publicly disassociated himself from the Mormons. At the same time, this statement gave him a base for future dialogue with the Sun and a reason to speak out in favor of the church and its leaders as he countered "Emma's" letter.

Since the Sun editors were familiar with Bennet's own handwriting and style it is likely that he had an accomplice write the Emma letter — perhaps an adventurous student, his wife, or even friends at the Harper Publishing Company, as he later suggested. His recent visit to Nauvoo and his meeting with Emma had given him enough information to help him formulate a convincing letter.

With characteristic deviousness, he had intimated to Emma that he was unhappy with the leadership of the church. Through this baiting process he was able to play on her frustrations. How much of the information for the letter Bennet drew from Emma is a matter of speculation. Concerned for the education of her children, she had hired a teacher for them, but surely she would have preferred a regular school situation, which was not available in the tumultuous circumstances of Nauvoo.

It was no secret that Emma and others also felt the safety of the Saints could be secured if the members did not band together in a central place, as the gathering presented a political and economic threat to their non-Mormon neighbors. She could have expressed to Bennet her desire for the Saints to scatter and permit a mixed population to occupy Nauvoo.

Bennet knew about the previously mentioned guard around Emma's house. And that, together with an anonymous arson threat and several small fires set against her home, could well have caused her to express fear for her life.

Emma did not accept as revelation the document on celestial marriage, presented to her by Hyrum Smith on 12 July 1843. It is clear from Bennet's correspondence with church leaders and newspapers that he was not privy to the private teachings of the doctrine. If Emma expressed a lack of faith in any of Joseph's revelations it was to plural marriage — and only plural marriage — that

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^45Ibid.

^Elinore Partridge did an analysis of Bennet's writing style compared with the style of the Sun letter. She concluded that "it would have taken a good deal of study and conscious effort, as well as stylistic sophistication" for Bennet to have written the letter himself.

^James Arlington Bennet to Brigham Young, 18 November 1845, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.

^Joseph Smith III, Memoirs, pp. 87-88.
she referred, and the comment would undoubtedly have been misinterpreted by Bennet.

With his plan in motion Bennet took the next step. On 19 December, the Sun carried his reply to the “Emma” letter of the ninth:

You have intimated that I pronounced the letter of Mrs. Emma Smith . . . genuine . . . I had no other means of judging . . . its authenticity than that it expressed facts respecting myself which were known to no other person than Mrs. Smith . . . consequently . . . it must have emanated from her, or some person in her confidence. 49

He then argued impressively for the church, praising Orson Pratt, defending the previous state of education in the community, and lauding Joseph Smith and the truthfulness of his revelations. Never one to pass up an opportunity, he added a postscript: “In addition to the above, you will, no doubt, permit me to say, that I have four fine farms, of 160 acres each, first rate prairies, for sale.”

It was this letter that caused Brigham and others to suspect Bennet of forging the “Emma” missive, and it was not long before they felt repercussions from his letters to the press and public officials. Samuel Brannan, himself in New York, informed Brigham that the government planned to intercept their movement to the West and confiscate their firearms. “Brannan said this jealousy originated from Arlington Bennett’s letters in relation to our movements.” 50

Word of Brigham Young’s displeasure must finally have reached Bennet, and he felt obligated to publish in the Sun the letter Emma had written to him nearly two months earlier, when she first heard of the controversy. With it, he offered this explanation to the editor:

The following letter is offered for publication in strict justice to Mrs. Emma Smith of Nauvoo, who appears to have no knowledge of the author of the letter published by you . . . in her name. . . . From this letter I am fully persuaded that the lady is incapable of betraying any confidence reposed in her, — She must look for its author among some of the seceders from the Mormon Church. 51

Thus closed Bennet’s career of letter-writing to the New York Sun. His fervently sought-after position of power, his commission as military chief of the Nauvoo Legion, and his grand plan to reenact Napoleon’s battles never materialized. Brigham Young and the Twelve had had their fill of James Arlington Bennet and his schemes to save the church. But the old New Yorker tried at least twice more to reestablish a relationship with Brigham. In 1851 he wrote to him:

Your people did wrong to abuse me some years ago, for, what I wrote went to the praise of the Saints — I never wrote the paper purporting to have come from Mrs. Smith, that was written among the Methodist Priests at the Book Establishment of the Harper who are no better than they ought to be. 52

49“The Mormons — Emma’s Letter,” New York Sun, 19 December 1845. Photocopy of original article was given to the authors by Donna Hill. See also Saints’ Herald 52 (October 1905): 267–68.
50Smith, History of the Church, 7: 577.
51New York Sun, 25 January 1846. See also Saints’ Herald 52 (October 1905): 268.
52James Arlington Bennet to Brigham Young, 22 June 1851, Brigham Young Papers, Church Archives.
Interestingly, it was Harpers who printed Bennet’s bookkeeping manual. If there is any truth to his allegation, the “Methodest Priests” most certainly got the information directly from their client.

In 1858 Bennet, then 70 years old, made one last attempt at power within the church. He wrote again to Brigham asking the governor to dismiss John Bernhisel as the Utah delegate in Washington and appoint him. Still entertaining delusions of grandeur, he claimed that Joseph had written him a letter before his death saying Arlington was “to Succeed some Great man.” Governor Young, he suggested, was that “Great man.” There is no indication that Brigham ever bothered to answer.

Emma, too, finally saw through Bennet and later in her life seemed to be aware of his treachery in her behalf. When a letter of doubtful authorship arrived at the Mansion House in January 1870, Emma forwarded it to her son Joseph III with this comment:

You will know best what attention, such a letter deserves, and yet I don’t feel like sending it without just hinting some of my natural suspicions, . . . if I knew old Gen James Arlington Bennet was yet living, and I never heard of his dieing, I should believe the letter came direct from him. . . . Well now do not take it for granted that it is from that old arch hypocrite for it is only some of my disagreeable impressions, that will come sometimes unbidden, when I see such a guady cloak over any thing as the letter has over it.

The New York Sun episode had been Bennet’s undoing with the Mormon church, but the incident, buried in historical archives and forgotten issues of the long defunct Sun, has served as a major blot on the character of Emma Smith for over 130 years. Until more conclusive evidence such as a draft of the letter, a diary entry, or some other direct reference surfaces, some may still question the authorship of the controversial letter. But perhaps it will no longer be taken for granted that it was penned by Emma Hale Smith.

53James Arlington Bennet to Brigham Young, 20 November 1858, Church Archives.
54Emma Bidamon to Joseph Smith III, 21 January 1870, RLDS Library-Archives. Our thanks to Buddy Youngreen for locating this letter and providing us with a typescript of it.
NOTICE

It has recently been brought to my attention that in my article in Journal of Mormon History, Volume 5 (1978), I inadvertently failed to give Marvin Hill of Brigham Young University due credit for his work on plural marriage during the Kirtland era. Although we await a detailed analysis from him on the subject, he has established a valuable base and framework from which I drew heavily. See his study, “The Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom, 1830–1844” (Ph. D. dissertation. University of Chicago, 1968); and his article, “Secular or Sectarian History? A Critique of No Man Knows My History,” Church History 43 (March 1974): 79–96. My apologies to Dr. Hill.

Danel W. Bachman
March 1979
One Man’s Nauvoo: William Clayton’s Experience in Mormon Illinois

By James B. Allen

“We were pleased to find ourselves once more at home and felt to praise God for his goodness,” wrote William Clayton on 24 November 1840. A simple enough statement on the surface, but what was happening in the life of this English factory clerk helped make this assertion one of the incredible stories of Mormon history.

“Once more at home,” he said, but where was home? This was William Clayton’s first day in the frontier town of Nauvoo, Illinois, “home” of perhaps three thousand displaced Latter-day Saints. Clayton was an English immigrant whose native home was the industrial city of Penwortham and whose spiritual home, since the fall of 1838, had been industrial Manchester. There, as full-time Mormon missionary and branch president, he had endured months of separation from his wife and family; labored “without purse or scrip,” as he lived almost totally on the charity of the Manchester Saints; built up the largest branch of the Church in England; and spent long and often tearful hours laboring with his charges in efforts to solve their spiritual and other personal problems. “I feel it hard to leave the Saints in Manchester,”1 he wrote as he prepared to depart, for he had built up a love and compassion for them that knew no bounds.2

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2This love was tenderly expressed in a letter written about two weeks after his arrival on the American frontier: “Many times have I pondered upon those happy times we spent in each other’s company ... and often my heart has filled when I have reflected upon those whom I have left behind ... I can feel stronger attachment to those I have left behind than any I have yet found. Give my love to all the saints. They have my love and prayers. I could rather weep than write about them.” William
So where or what was “home” for William Clayton? Perhaps the special meaning he attached to that term was nowhere more evident than in a diary entry made while crossing the Atlantic in September 1840. Crowded with two hundred other Mormon emigrants aboard the North America, he shared with them all the horrors and discomforts of steerage passage. On 22 September a fire broke out in the little wooden ship as some wood stacked beneath a galley stove ignited and burned through the deck. Ultimately the fire was not serious, but there was great concern before it was put out. For Clayton the fact that they were becalmed with no wind was a blessing from the Lord; but then, he wrote in his diary, “As soon as the bustle subsided we were again on our way home.” For this English convert to Mormonism, “home” was no longer England. Rather, it was a place he had never seen, but where the Saints had been commanded through their prophet Joseph Smith to gather and where one day a magnificent temple would herald the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. No matter how new or strange the particular location, “home” was where the Saints were, and for a twenty-six year old factory clerk from Penwortham a new city struggling to raise itself from the swampy banks of the Mississippi was as good a spot as any. And what was equally or more important was the fact that Joseph Smith, the man he revered as God’s chosen prophet on earth, was also there.

While William Clayton could hardly be called the typical or average Mormon (what one person, indeed, is ever typical or average?), his life in Nauvoo is nevertheless significant for it helps us get at the whole meaning of the Mormon experience in Illinois. Through the lives of those who did not become leaders we can better understand the full impact of Mormonism on more ordinary people, and Clayton’s life is uniquely well suited for such a study. Except for his stint in Manchester and a short period on an Iowa high council he never held a position of church leadership, yet in Nauvoo he drew closer to the Prophet than most other Mormons. He was never an innovator so far as new ideas or perspectives were concerned. Rather, he was a follower and disciple in the profoundest sense of those terms. This was how he viewed himself — a willing disciple and workhorse, determined to follow the instructions of his leaders regardless of the outcome.

Clayton’s introduction to Nauvoo was anything but propitious. His first night was spent sleeping on the floor at the home of Henry Moore. The next day Clayton’s and three other families — fourteen people in all — were temporarily assigned to a small house with no furnishings. They made beds of hay on the floor and were so cramped for space that they had to move them each morning. But none of this was cause for pessimism. On the contrary, within two weeks he had written two remarkable letters to his friends in England that combined his assessment of the hard realities of emigration and frontier life with a simple faith and optimism that was the hallmark of the Mormon success story.

Clayton to William Hardman, 10 December 1840, as copied by Hardman, 26 January 1841, Archives of the Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereinafter cited Church Archives. Hardman apparently received Clayton’s letter with instructions to copy and circulate it.

Allen and Alexander, Manchester Mormons, p. 177.

William Clayton to Edward Martin, 29 November 1840, in Heart Throbs of the West 5 (1944): 373-80; Clayton to the Saints at Manchester, 10 December 1840, Church Archives.
Allen: William Clayton

have believed," he wrote, "that it was possible for me to endure the toils I have endured, but to the praise of God be it spoken, all I have endured has never hurt or discouraged me, but done me good." And there was much to look forward to. So far as their health was concerned the new land was actually good for the Claytons. For example, according to William his sister-in-law Margaret Moon "is grown fatter, her clothes are growing small too. Sister Mary Ware has grown so fat that all her best dresses are very much too little, she has only one that she can wear the other she cannot get on. Yesterday I had to take my pen knife and cut her new shift sleeves . . . open for they had made her arms almost black. She is indeed a fat lump . . . Brother William Poole is at work for a farmer about 10 miles from here. He is grown so fat that all his clothes are too little. His wife is also very healthy, fat and cheerful." If Margaret, Mary, and the Pooles had read Clayton's descriptions of their new rotundity, they may not have appreciated it, but he was only trying to persuade their friends in England that life on the American frontier was not so bad.

Perhaps most important of all, Clayton made it a point immediately to learn all he could about Joseph Smith — he wanted his faith confirmed, and he got what he wanted. "He is not an idiot," Clayton wrote to England as if to combat some vicious tale, "but a man of sound judgement, and possessed of abundance of intelligence." He was, according to Clayton, a fine conversationalist, a willing teacher, well versed in the scriptures, an enemy of unrighteousness, and filled with the Spirit of God. "He says, 'I am a man of like passions with yourselves,' but truly I wish I was such a man."5

Clayton was "at home" with the Saints and their prophet, but his faith and optimism would soon be severely tested. The prophet's brother Hyrum had land to sell on the Iowa side of the river at three dollars an acre, and it was Hyrum's counsel that Clayton should purchase land from him and settle there. Clayton wavered, for his heart was set on Nauvoo and even though there was a settlement of Saints on the Iowa side his friends in Nauvoo warned him that "the devil was over the river." But it was his nature to follow counsel so he finally went, though he purchased his prospective 185-acre farm from another brother of the Prophet, William Smith, who was also one of the Twelve Apostles. He agreed to pay by working on a Mississippi steamboat and giving the apostle half his wages until the debt was settled. Therein lay one of the important symbolic episodes of Mormon history, for there was something inspiring and yet strangely incongruous about an English bookkeeper in his twenties, with a wife and two small children, embarking on an adventure as a farmer on the unbroken Iowa prairie, hoping to pay for his farm by working on a Mississippi steamboat. But the Mormon experience wrought such chages in the lives of many.

On 21 January 1841, after purchasing a wagon, livestock, and some farm equipment, the young Clayton couple began moving their belongings across the frozen Mississippi. It took four days, and after that life seemed to be a stream of unending disappointments. The little house they had rented was so poorly ventilated they could not long keep a fire indoors, which made the cold winter weather even more unbearable. They even had to cook their food outdoors. They

5Clayton to the Saints at Manchester, 10 December 1840.
were shocked at the low state of spirituality among the Iowa Saints, who, Clayton wrote, were “having no meetings, full of envy, strife and contention and in a very bad state.” When the weather moderated they began constructing their own log house, but on 15 March it caught on fire. Little damage was sustained, but Clayton did lose a large rope and a pair of bed cords which, he said, “in our circumstances was a considerable loss to us.” That same day the fine hog they had “set much store on” was mysteriously “cut” (i.e., castrated), after it had broken out of the yard and wandered away, which destroyed their plans to use it for breeding purposes.

By this time Clayton was undoubtedly wondering whether it really was the will of the Lord that he should be an Iowa farmer instead of doing something else in Nauvoo. If he had such a question in mind, however, it seemed to be answered on 20 March when Joseph Smith received a revelation in response to the question, “What is the will of the Lord concerning the saints in the Territory of Iowa?” The answer, which was read in general conference on 8 April, declared that those who were “essaying to be my saints” should keep the Lord’s commandments and prepare to build up cities to his name in the places appointed by Joseph Smith. Specifically, with respect to Iowa, the Saints were to “build up a city unto my name upon the land opposite the city of Nauvoo, and let the name of Zarahemla be named upon it.”

Nevertheless there were still problems. For one thing, the legal status of the Zarahemla property was still not clear. Isaac Galland had apparently sold land to the Saints when his own title was unclear, and the problem of conflicting claims led to delays in Clayton’s spring planting. In addition, fences were broken by cattle, crops were destroyed, and Clayton frequently became so ill he could not work. On top of this, he was attempting not only to work on the steamboat, but also to invest in it, and the investment failed.

At the same time his wife Ruth was pregnant, but even this happy event had minor problems. Time for delivery came on 6 May, and Ruth wanted her mother, who was on the other side of the river in Nauvoo. Clayton borrowed a skiff and rowed across “as hard as I could,” but when he returned with his mother-in-law two hours later Ruth had already delivered a healthy baby girl. At least there was one bright moment for the family.

There were also moments of great spiritual satisfaction, though not in Zarahemla itself. In April Clayton attended the general conference in Nauvoo, where he heard the revelation about Zarahemla read. He was made a member of the Nauvoo high priest’s quorum and thus could sit in a special place at meetings. He watched with pleasure the elaborate parade of the Nauvoo Legion and thrilled at the laying of the corner stones for the Nauvoo Temple. He

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Allen: William Clayton

frequently returned to Nauvoo on Sundays to hear the Prophet preach, and on 9 May he heard a sermon on baptism for the dead. Though he had probably heard the doctrine before, he was so impressed on this occasion that he immediately went down to the river with several others to act upon what he had heard. It was a time of spiritual rejuvenation, for Clayton there and then rededicated himself to the Lord by being personally rebaptized. He was then baptized in behalf of his grandfather Thomas Clayton, his two grandmothers and an aunt.7 It was such times as these, learning at the feet of the Prophet and sharing spiritual experiences with the Saints, that probably kept Clayton’s faith alive and well enough to endure the return to Zarahemla.

Things did not improve in Zarahemla, and though Clayton never complained to the Prophet he was gratified in August when Joseph finally inquired about his circumstances. “I told him,” wrote Clayton, “that [we] had not the privilege of having many things which we greatly needed.” Apparently the Prophet was touched, for Clayton soon began to receive some welcome aid from the church. But he was also severely ill with the ague, a form of malaria that produced alternate chills and fevers. Epidemics of the ague were common in western frontier communities, and in 1839 the Saints along the Mississippi had been hit with a particularly severe outbreak. Though many miraculous healings were reported that year, the epidemic reappeared in succeeding years and in 1841 reached calamitous proportions. So many died in fact that on one occasion Sidney Rigdon preached a “general funeral sermon” for them all.8

One of the casualties that year was Henrietta Lucretia Patten Clayton — the baby girl who had been born to Ruth and William just three months earlier. “When dead she was as pretty as I ever saw in my life,” wrote the griefstricken father. But like the ideal disciple he was striving so hard to become, he let his faith mellow his sorrow. “This was a grief to us,” he said, “but we afterwards saw the hand of God in it and saw it was best to be so during this time.”9

As the summer wore on some of their crops matured, but more illness and other problems delayed the harvest, and in September a frost destroyed half their potatoes. Severely ill, Clayton was unable to finish digging the potatoes so Ruth and her sister Lydia completed the job alone. They also harvested an acre and a half of corn. Finally, in mid-November, Clayton sought advice from Heber C. Kimball who counseled him to move his family back to Nauvoo. He did this on 14 December, still sick and “occasionally shaking,” but all he could find to live in was a poorly-built house that caused the family to suffer severely from the cold. So ended this English convert’s first year in the promised land, and in just a few months the whole Iowa venture completely failed.

If recorded, Clayton’s reaction to all this has not survived, but he must have been disappointed and dismayed. He was, after all, a witness to two distressing failures: his own efforts at self-sufficiency and the Saints’ efforts to fulfill Joseph Smith’s revelation concerning Iowa. Despite these and other severe tests, however, he never lost confidence in the Prophet. He was already convinced that

7Allen and Alexander, Manchester Mormons, p. 212.
8Ibid., pp. 215-16.
9Ibid., p. 215.
trials, sorrow, and failures were part of the process of building the Kingdom, for the Devil was also at work and because of the imperfections of the Saints he often won some battles. More important, Clayton had such inexorable faith in the ultimate victory of the Kingdom that he simply would not allow any failure or disappointment to shake it.

The return to Nauvoo was a new beginning where Clayton would soon make his real contribution to the Kingdom through the skills he knew best — clerking, writing, and record keeping. The turning point came on the morning of 10 February 1842, when Heber C. Kimball told Clayton that he must report immediately to Joseph Smith’s office. Elder Willard Richards had been appointed recorder for the Nauvoo Temple on 13 December, but his work load had become so heavy that he needed an assistant. Clayton was given that assignment, which meant that for the rest of his Nauvoo career he would work regularly in the counting room of Joseph Smith’s new brick store on Water Street. On 29 June Richards turned over all the work of Joseph Smith’s office to Clayton, and on the evening of 3 September the Prophet announced, “Brother Clayton, I want you to take care of the records and papers, and from this time I appoint you Temple Recorder, and when I have any revelations to write you shall write them.”

Beginning in early 1842, then, William Clayton became involved in nearly every important activity in Nauvoo, including the private concerns of the Prophet. In this respect his life reflects the Nauvoo experience better than does the life of almost anyone else — even better than many church leaders who were often away on missions. He became an intimate friend and confidant of Joseph Smith, writing letters for him, recording revelations, and performing important errands. As a scribe he kept the sacred “Book of the Law of the Lord”; was officially designated to write the history of the Nauvoo Temple; helped prepare the official history of Joseph Smith (indeed, his personal journals become the source for many entries in that history); and kept various other books and accounts as assigned. He was a member of the temple committee and kept all the financial and other records dealing with the building of the temple, including the collection and recording of tithes. Later, after the baptismal font was

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10 Ibid., p. 214; Journal History, 23 October 1842, Church Archives. In connection with this assignment it is interesting that William Clayton’s private journal seems to be the source for the text of several of Joseph Smith’s revelations. It is clearly the source, for example, for the text of Section 129 of the Doctrine and Covenants, since the revelation as recorded there is practically verbatim as written in Clayton’s journal. William Clayton, Journals, November 1842 to January 1846, in private custody and used here by special permission, 9 February 1843. It is interesting to observe that the basic information in that revelation was actually given by Joseph Smith to the Twelve as early as 27 June 1839. See Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 27 June 1839, Church Archives. When William Clayton recorded it in 1843 he did not say that it was revealed on that particular date, but only that “Joseph related some of his history and gave us a key whereby we might know whether any administration was from God.” He then recorded the statement that is now in the Doctrine and Covenants, though it did not appear in that volume until the 1874 edition. What all this suggests is that this revelation actually came to Joseph Smith much earlier than the date given in the Doctrine and Covenants, and that when the 1874 edition was prepared the editors used William Clayton’s journal as the best source for the text. The same is true for the editing of Joseph Smith’s History, for in Joseph Smith’s private journal for that date the entry says only that Joseph Smith “explained” the information, not that the revelation was received at that point.
completed, it was up to Clayton to issue receipts certifying that a person was entitled to the privileges of the font (for baptisms for the dead) because he had paid tithing. He became Nauvoo city treasurer, recorder, and clerk of the Nauvoo City Council, secretary pro tem of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, an officer of the Nauvoo Music Association, and a member of the committee responsible for erecting the Music Hall in Nauvoo. He was present when Joseph announced or explained many new doctrines and practices, particularly the controversial practice of plural marriage. He also became a member and clerk of the highly important Council of Fifty, as well as a member of Joseph Smith’s private prayer circle. He may have functioned in more public and semi-public capacities than almost any other person in Nauvoo, save Joseph Smith. What is important here, however, is not just the Nauvoo that Clayton saw and helped build, but the Nauvoo that Clayton felt, deep inside. Only by capturing the feelings and emotions of a disciple such as Clayton can we understand the real meaning of Nauvoo in the lives of the Illinois Saints.

William Clayton idolized the Prophet Joseph Smith, and for almost two and a half years, until Joseph’s death in 1844, they were in each other’s presence almost daily. Clayton rose to every occasion to defend the Prophet’s name. Slander made him irate, and the power of his pen in putting it down is seen in a March 1842 letter to a friend in England. Notwithstanding the disappointments and failures of 1841 he forcefully declared that “my faith in this doctrine, and in the prophet and officers is firm, unshaken, unmoved, nay, rather, it is strengthened and settled more firm than ever.” He then referred to the slanderous accusations that Joseph Smith was guilty of business fraud — particularly land fraud. These charges, he said, “I, MYSELF, KNOW POSITIVELY TO BE FALSE.” After all, Clayton was handling many of Joseph’s business transactions, so he considered himself in a position to know the truth. Joseph’s land business, he declared, was necessary to raise money for building up the church and to take care of the poor. 11

On numerous occasions Clayton acted as a personal emissary for the Prophet. In the fall of 1842, when Missouri officers were attempting to arrest Joseph for alleged complicity in the attempted murder of ex-governor Boggs, Clayton was actively involved in Joseph’s efforts to avoid arrest. On 9 December he found himself one of a delegation of nine men leaving Nauvoo for Springfield to plead Joseph’s case with the new Illinois governor. Clayton was with Joseph Smith on an important visit to Ramus, Illinois, in April 1843 when some important doctrinal and prophetic statements were made, and he recorded them. 12 On 18 June 1843 Hyrum Smith suddenly sent for Clayton and asked him to ride to Dixon, Illinois, to warn Joseph of another impending arrest. Clayton borrowed $120 for the trip, persuaded Stephen Markham to go with him, and covered the 190 miles in sixty-four hours to deliver the message. 13

12See Smith, History of the Church, 5: 323-26. All these ideas are reflected in Clayton’s journal.
13Smith, History of the Church, 5: 435-73; Clayton, Journal, 18 June to 30 June 1843. There are a few minor discrepancies between Joseph Smith’s History and Clayton’s journal. Clayton says he borrowed $120, while Smith says it was $200. Clayton says he and Markham rode 190 miles in 64 hours, while Smith lists it at 212 miles and 66 hours.
Clayton ran such errands frequently, but he also drew close to the Prophet in other ways. Sometimes they rode out on the prairie together, often discussing new and still private doctrines that Joseph had not yet unfolded to the church. On one such occasion Clayton wrote, "Joseph swore to me he would forever defend & protect me and divide earthly things with me if I would be faithful to him which I carefully promised." Such promises could only strengthen Clayton's loyalty. Sometimes, however, he did not please the church leader, such as on 2 January 1844 when he sold Willard Richards's two lots for $500. For some reason, recorded Clayton, "this did not please the Prest. & he scolded." 14

Clayton's responsibilities also gave him opportunity to observe and reflect upon the personal relationship between Joseph and Emma. It was no easy thing for Emma to be the wife of a prophet who was so constantly in demand, both by his friends and his enemies. On occasion she felt the strain, and it is well known that the introduction of plural marriage was perhaps her most difficult trial. It was undoubtedly this issue that caused Joseph Smith to discuss some "delicate matters" with William during an eventful trip to Dixon, Illinois, in June 1843. Clayton had taken his first plural wife less than two months earlier, had recently performed a marriage ceremony between Joseph Smith and Lucy Walker, and was allowing another of Joseph's plural wives, Desdemona Fullmer, to board at his home. 15 It is understandable that Emma would somewhat resent William Clayton at this particular point, and this seems to be the only explanation for Joseph confiding in his friend not only that Emma wanted somehow to "lay a snare" for Clayton, but also that she had treated Joseph himself coldly since Clayton's arrival. 16 Seven days later it was a particular pleasure for Clayton to see the tender evidence of reconciliation as Joseph and Emma embraced each other upon Joseph's triumphal return to Nauvoo. "He called for sister Emma & his brother Hyrum who when they came up and took him by the hand all wept tears of joy. Such a feeling I never before witnessed when the Prest. took hold of the hand of his partner in sorrow & persecution. Surely it would have moved any thing but the heart of an adamantine." 17

14Clayton, Journal, 21 April 1843; 2 January 1844.
15Ibid., 27 April, 1 and 13 May 1843.
16Ibid., 25 June 1843. Joseph told Clayton of other problems that day, even suggesting that some close associates had transgressed their covenants. He then told Clayton that if he (Clayton) would do right and abide his counsel, Joseph could save his life. "I feel desirous to do right & would rather die than to lose my interest in the celestial kingdom," Clayton responded.
17Ibid., 30 June 1843. Clayton also tenderly described the emotional reunion between Joseph and his mother and children, including "Little Fred exclaiming 'pa the Missourians wont take you away again will they.' "

Clayton provides important evidence for the fact that Emma recognized the existence of the doctrine of plural marriage, that it caused some strain between her and Joseph, and that she came near at times to accepting it. On 23 May 1843 Joseph told Clayton of Emma's irritation when she discovered him and Eliza Partridge (one of his plural wives) in conversation in an upstairs room. On 12 July the revelation was written down by Clayton but rejected by Emma. On 13 July Joseph Smith called Clayton into a private room and Emma was also there. They told Clayton of an agreement they had entered into (the details are not stated), then both Joseph and Emma stated their feelings on many subjects and "wept considerable." Given the context this could have been about nothing other than the new principle, for Clayton then wrote in his journal, "O may the Lord soften her heart that she may be willing to keep and abide by his Holy Law." On 11 August 1843 Joseph told Clayton that Emma was displeased that Clayton had married Margaret Moon. On 16 August 1843 Joseph told Clayton that since Emma had returned from her recent trip to St. Louis she had resisted the principle
Because of Clayton's closeness with the Prophet he became a member of two highly confidential groups; the Council of Fifty and Joseph Smith's prayer circle. Both groups, operating behind the scenes, had an important impact on Nauvoo, and Clayton's feelings about them are therefore significant.

The Council of Fifty was not an ecclesiastical organization, though it was deliberately organized and dominated by priesthood leaders. Joseph Smith saw it as a secular group that would handle secular and political affairs and anticipate the establishment of the political Kingdom of God on earth. The philosophical roots for the organization of the Council of Fifty reached back many years, and were directly related to the millennial expectations of the church. The immediate impetus, however, came from two letters signed by Lyman Wight and four other brethren who were working in the church's lumber camps in Black River Falls, Wisconsin Territory. These were read at a special meeting of the Twelve, Bishop George Miller, and the Nauvoo Temple Committee on the evening of 10 March 1844. The letters proposed a grandiose plan for Mormon colonization in the Southwest, and led to an important discussion where, according to Clayton, "many great and glorious ideas were advanced."

The next day they met again and this time organized a special council which would consider not only the proposal from Wisconsin but also, according to Joseph Smith's history, "the best policy for this people to adopt to obtain their rights from the nation and insure protection for themselves and children; and to secure a resting place in the mountains, or some uninhabited region, where we can enjoy the liberty of conscience guaranteed to us by the Constitution." This was the official origin of the Council of Fifty or the government of the Kingdom of God. The following day it met again, admitted three new members, and appointed William Clayton "Clerk of the Kingdom."
As a member of such a prestigious body, the former factory clerk from Penwortham could hardly contain his exuberance, for there, he said, the "principles of eternal truths rolled forth to the hearers without reserve and the hearts of the servants of God [were] made to rejoice exceedingly." They even voted on 11 April to make Joseph Smith their "Prophet, Priest and King," confirming it with "loud Hosannas." Nevertheless, the specific deliberations of the council were confidential, and as clerk William Clayton kept the confidence well, not even recording the details in his personal diary.

He apparently kept detailed notes during the meetings then spent long hours recording them in the official minute books of the Kingdom. So important and yet confidential were these records that on 23 June 1844, as Joseph Smith was preparing to flee Nauvoo for safety, he whispered to Clayton that he should either put the records of the Kingdom in the hands of a faithful man who would take them away or he should burn or bury them. Clayton chose to bury them. Five days later the Prophet was killed and not long after that Clayton must have dug up the records, for on the morning of 18 August he was working on them again.

The council met frequently during the last four months of Joseph Smith's life. During the first month it gradually added to its numbers until by 18 April it actually consisted of fifty-two members, including William Clayton as clerk and Willard Richards as recorder.

After Joseph's death the council met for the first importance of the new organization. Said he: "This organization was called the council of fifty or kingdom of God and was titled by revelation as follows, 'Verily thus saith the Lord, this is the name by which you shall be called, the kingdom of God and his law, with the keys and power thereof and judgments in the hands of his servants Ahman Christ.' " In this council, he reminisced, the plan for supporting Joseph Smith as a presidential candidate was arranged, as well as plans for establishing an immigration to Texas and for "the exaltation of a standard and ensign of truths for the nations of the earth." Further, he declared with obvious emotional satisfaction, "In this council was the plan devised to restore the Ancients to the knowledge of the truth and the restoration of union and peace amongst ourselves. In this council was prest. Joseph chosen as our prophet Priest, & King by Hosannas. In this council was the principles of eternal truths rolled forth to the hearers without reserve and the hearts of the servants of God made to rejoice exceedingly." Clayton, Journal, 1 January 1845.

The question as to whether Joseph Smith was actually ordained a King is still highly debatable. Evidence for this presented in Hansen, Quest for Empire, is questionable.

The exceptions came after the death of Joseph Smith when Clayton then very briefly summarized some decisions. In every case his comment had to do with the westward movement of the church.


On 19 March for example, Samuel Bent, Uriah Brown, Samuel James, John D. Parker, O.P. Rockwell, Sidney Rigdon, William Marks and Orson Spencer were admitted to the council. Hansen, Quest for Empire, lists forty-seven people who were supposedly members of the council under Joseph Smith. Clayton's list of 18 April gives the names of eleven who are not listed by Hansen: Ezra Thayer, Sidney Rigdon, John P. Green, Joseph Fielding, C. P. Lott, P. B. Lewis, Elias Smith, Edward Bonny (or Bonney), D. D. Yearsley, G. J. Adams, and M. G. Eaton. On the other hand, John S. Fullmer, Edward Hunter, John E. Page, John Scott, Joseph Young and William Smith are not on the 18 April roster. When the council reorganized itself on 4 February 1845, the names of William Smith and A. W. Babbitt appear for the first time in any of Clayton's listings, though it must be observed that he may not have noted all additions in his journal. At the same time Uriah Brown, William Marks, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, James Emmett, Samuel James, Edward Bonney, Alexander Badlam, George J. Adams, M. G. Eaton and Lorenzo D. Wasson were all dropped from the council. On 1 March 1845, a member of the Oneida Indian tribe, Lewis Dana, was admitted to sit in the place of the absent Amos Fielding. John Pack and John D. Lee were also admitted as substitute members. Other new members admitted to the council that day were Joseph Young, John E. Page, David Fullmer, Theodore Turley, Albert P. Rockwood, Jonathan Dunham and Lucien R. Foster. Cyrus Daniels was admitted on 11 March and Phineas Young was admitted on 15 April.
time on 4 February 1845 and reorganized. By then the main topic of discussion was the westward movement, with the council actually directing the planning and sending out various exploring companies.

The grand significance of the council, so far as Clayton was concerned, was that it was "making laws and sanctioning principles which will in part govern the saints after the resurrection." It is clear that he did not see it as an immediate replacement for civil government, though he did feel strongly that whatever principles it established would govern during the millennium. "Is there not a similarity," he asked himself, "between this grand council & the council which sat previous to the organization of the world?"26 No wonder he felt so honored to be a part of it.

Of even greater spiritual importance for Clayton was his invitation to become a member of Joseph Smith's private prayer circle. In a way this represented the height of his evolution from factory clerk to confidant of the Prophet.

A recent article by D. Michael Quinn in Brigham Young University Studies has spelled out the significance of prayer circles in Mormon history, particularly Joseph Smith's prayer circle.27 Variously called the "Holy Order," the "Quorum of the Anointed," the "First Quorum," or just the "Quorum," it may have had its beginning as early as 1842, but was not fully established with the inclusion of women until 28 September 1843. From then until the death of Joseph Smith this select group met at least weekly. The members were taught the sacred ceremonies that would subsequently be administered in the Nauvoo Temple. These symbolic washings, anointings, and special signs and symbols that constituted the temple endowment were held to be a most sacred part of the restoration movement, for they were part of the "ancient order of things." Members were initiated into the quorum through washing and anointing. At the meetings, dressed in special priesthood robes, they went through the endowment ordinances and also participated in fervent prayer concerning the problems of the day. Membership was restricted — only sixty-five persons had been admitted before the death of Joseph Smith — but as soon as the temple was completed and useable, beginning in December 1845, this exclusiveness ended. The Anointed Quorum was a preliminary training group preparatory to the general introduction of the endowment ceremony to the membership of the church as a whole.

With this background it is easy to see how important it was to Clayton to become a member of the quorum. As a close friend of the Prophet it seemed almost as if he had been deprived of a spiritual right when by December 1843 he had not been invited to participate. He even suspected that two members of the quorum in particular were keeping him out: Reynolds Cahoon, who had some private pique against him, and Emma Smith. All this, he lamented, "sink[s] my mind and fills me with agony." On 2 December he even went so far as to write a long letter on the subject to the Prophet. Three days later Joseph Smith

26Clayton, Journal, 10 March 1845.
personally returned his letter, assured him that he had no need to be troubled, and explained that it had just not been convenient as yet to admit him. He also assured Clayton that his paranoia concerning Cahoon was ill-founded, for Cahoon considered him to be “true blue.”

On 22 January 1844 Clayton’s desire was fully realized when Reynolds Cahoon came to his home and informed him that he had been voted into the quorum. “This filled my heart with joy and gratitude,” he wrote, for truly the mercy of the Lord and the kindness of my brethren have been great to me.” Immediately one of the women in Nauvoo began to make his priesthood robe and garment, which were necessary for the endowment ceremony, and on 3 February he received the washing and anointing ordinances and was admitted to the quorum. He could not refrain from recording the depth of his feelings. “This is one of the greatest favors ever conferred on me and for which I feel grateful. May the God of Joseph preserve me & mine house to walk in the paths of righteousness all the days of my life & oh that I may never sin against him or displease him For thou oh God knowest my desire to do right that I may have eternal life.”

For Clayton, and for all the other Mormons who shared his experience, this was the meaning of Nauvoo — the stepping stone to eternal life.

After Joseph’s death Clayton grew especially anxious to complete the temple. Even before ordinance work officially started, the First Quorum began meeting in the temple where prayer circles were held and portions of the endowment were rehearsed in order to perfect them. Then, on 10 December 1845, the day the first official washings and anointings were to be performed in the temple, an ironic chain of events occurred. At 11:15 a.m. a Catholic priest and his associate were admitted to the temple for the purpose of negotiating the purchase of church property, possibly including the temple itself! On the one hand the Saints were sacrificing to complete the temple so they could offer to everyone the ceremonies already received by the quorum, while on the other

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28Clayton, Journal, 3 February 1844. With reference to the apparent stress between Clayton and Emma Smith, it might be noted that even a week or so before Clayton wrote the letter to Joseph Smith mentioned above he lamented in his journal that Emma had power to prevent him from being admitted to Joseph’s “Lodge.” What the term “Lodge” refers to is not specified, but the context makes it almost certainly the quorum. Ibid., 21 November 1845.

29On 22 December 1844 Clayton’s wife Ruth became a member, along with the wives of Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt and Amasa Lyman. Clayton noted some meetings of the quorum in his diary but seldom gave any details — probably because much of what went on was so confidential. He noted meetings in 1844 on 11 February, 25 February (where Joseph gave “important instruction”), 3 March, 25 May, 7 July (where the matter of appointing a Trustee in-Trust was discussed), and 22 December. In 1845 he noted only three meetings: 7 December, 14 December, and 17 December (where his second wife Margaret Moon and several other people, including many husbands and wives, were received into the quorum, apparently by virtue of receiving their endowments). Undoubtedly the quorum met often during that year, however, for on 7 December Brigham Young addressed the group and said “that a few of the quorum had met twice a week ever since Joseph and Hyrum were killed and during the last excitement, every day in the hottest part of it twice a day to offer up the signs and pray to our heavenly father to deliver his people and this is the cord which has bound this people together. If this quorum and those who shall be admitted into it will be as diligent in prayer as a few has been I promise you in the name of Israels God that we shall accomplish the will of God and go out in due time from the gentiles with power and plenty and no power shall stay us.” Clayton, Journal, 7 December 1845.

30Clayton, Journal, 30 November, 7 December 1845.
hand they were painfully aware that they soon must leave Nauvoo and were contemplating the possible sale of the temple. After discussion Brigham Young proposed that the Catholics lease the temple for a period of from five to thirty-five years, and that the profits go toward finishing it and keeping it in repair. The priests agreed to consider the proposal and left about 12:30 p.m.

A few hours later Clayton and others consecrated (i.e., blessed) sixteen bottles of oil in preparation for the coming ceremonies, and at 3:00 p.m. the first washings and anointings to be performed in the temple commenced. Later that evening the full endowment ceremony was performed for the first time in the temple, and it was completed at 9:30 p.m. Brigham Young then called everyone into a room known as the “Celestial room” and they all knelt while Amasa Lyman offered prayers. Clayton then went home, but others remained until 3:30 the next morning. From that day until they finally left Nauvoo the Saints flocked to the temple, and the exclusive nature of the Quorum of the Anointed gradually came to an end.

These things, of course, were only part of the total Nauvoo experience as seen and felt by William Clayton. Building a home; running errands for Joseph; keeping records; collecting tithes; building a temple; meeting in secret councils and private prayer circles; attending singing school several times each month; practicing and playing his violin, a drum, and a horn with the Nauvoo band; participating in the Masonic Lodge; accompanying the Prophet on trips and writing letters for him; attending theaters and concerts — all this, in addition to the harrassment from outside the church, made his life full indeed.

Clayton loved the frequent dances and parties that provided variety and entertainment in Nauvoo. As a member of the band he was frequently part of the entertainment. On 29 July 1845, for example, after a hard day at the office, he went to the home of John Kay where, he said, “we played till near 1 o clock chiefly with the violin. There was a first rate supper provided with plenty of wine and good things.” On 29 November 1845 the band spent the evening at the home of Brigham Young, where everyone must have been delighted to see Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball of the Twelve and Joseph Young and Levi W. Hancock of the Seventies dance “a french four” together. Clayton and the Nauvoo Saints were anything but sad-faced religious recluses.

It was the doctrine of plural marriage, however, that had a more visible and far-reaching effect on William Clayton’s personal life than perhaps anything else he learned in Nauvoo. His experiences as he semi-secretly courted, married, and lived with four young women besides his first wife, Ruth, become a significant illustration of the human problems this new marriage system could cause, as well as the kind of faith and determination that sometimes made it surprisingly successful. It is impossible to understand Clayton’s Nauvoo without knowing something about his plural marriages.

Why would the straight-laced, idealistic William Clayton, who was almost overly concerned with what people thought of him, seriously consider the practice of plural marriage when it so clearly violated the sensibilities of the society in which he lived? He had a good marriage with Ruth Moon, one that had endured considerable adversity. Spiritually they were attuned, he was close to her

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51Ibid., 10–11 December 1845.
parents and other family members, and by the time the doctrine of polygamy was presented to him Ruth had borne three children and a fourth was on the way. On 27 February 1843, just two months before his second marriage, she presented him with his first son, and over the next fourteen years she would bear him six more children. It was no lack of love or compatibility that led him to expand his marital horizons. It was only his single-minded conviction that whatever Joseph Smith told him to do was right and that he must spare no pains to accomplish it. Eventually he became one of the most-married men of Mormondom.32

It is highly unlikely that Clayton had not at least heard of the doctrine of plural marriage before he was formally instructed to adopt it. As early as 1841 Joseph Smith was teaching it to various church authorities as part of the restoration of the ancient order of things. The policy of the leaders, however, was to keep it secret; otherwise there would undoubtedly be a public outcry both in and out of the church. The leading Saints must be instructed first, then the doctrine would be preached to the rest. But since for the time being it was limited to a few stalwarts, Joseph Smith himself issued carefully worded public denials that the church was either teaching or practicing it.33

Clayton was officially instructed in the doctrine either in February or March 1843.34 Joseph Smith then authorized him to send for a young lady in England by the name of Sarah Crooks, and even offered to furnish the money. Clayton was apparently not shocked, and the Prophet proceeded to give more instruction. In later months, as Joseph continued to teach him privately, Clayton became convinced that “without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fullness of exaltation in celestial glory.”35

Being convinced of a principle is quite different from putting it into practice, and therein lay a great human drama for Clayton. He was delighted with the possibility that Sarah Crooks would become one of his first plural wives since he had known her back in Manchester and the two had become very very close. Ruth, too, was acquainted with her, and they all got along very well indeed.36 It is unclear whether Joseph actually furnished money for Sarah’s passage, but when she received a letter that Clayton wrote on 12 February 1843 she immediately started out for America. She arrived in Nauvoo on 31 May.

Meanwhile, Clayton had already taken his first plural wife, apparently in accordance with a pattern that became fairly common among the Utah Mormons. Ideally the consent of the first wife was required before a second


34There is some discrepancy in this, though it is very slight. In 1874 Clayton wrote a reminiscence of his introduction to polygamy. See “Another Testimony — Statement of William Clayton,” 16 February 1874, statement notarized by John T. Caine, manuscript, Clayton Papers, Church Archives. Here Clayton says he was introduced to the doctrine in February, which seems to be substantiated by the fact that he wrote Sarah Crooks on 12 February, but in his diary the story that sounds most like the one told in “Another Testimony” occurs on 9 March.

35Clayton, “Another Testimony.”

marriage could take place, and this often meant that she also helped make the choice. Ofttimes this was a sister, and in Clayton’s case it was Ruth’s younger sister Margaret.

Poor Margaret, however, had a terrible choice to make. She was already engaged to Aaron Farr, but he was away on a mission, and the Prophet himself encouraged her to marry William Clayton. William, of course, also instructed her in the doctrine and once confided in his diary that “she is a lovely woman and desires to do right in all things and will submit to council with all her heart.” On Thursday, 27 April 1843, Clayton and Joseph Smith went to the home of Heber C. Kimball where Clayton and Margaret Moon were married. That evening he told his mother-in-law, but there is no record of how she reacted.37

It is not difficult to imagine the anguish that William and Margaret must have experienced, especially Margaret. She was married by the power of the priesthood but not in the eyes of the law, and she could not tell anyone about it. The two had to meet furtively, at least at first, and to make matters worse she still had feelings for the absent Aaron. This must have worried Clayton no end, for a little over two weeks after their marriage they took a private walk together where he extracted a promise from her that she would be true to him.38

While all this was happening Clayton was being instructed along with other Saints in the principle of eternal marriage, which went hand in hand with the doctrine of plurality. In brief the doctrine held that any covenant, including the marriage covenant, that was sealed by authority of the priesthood was everlasting and would thus endure beyond the grave.39 On 16 May Clayton was with Joseph Smith and others in Ramus, Illinois. In the evening, at the home of Benjamin F. Johnson, Joseph Smith gave the group considerable instruction in this doctrine. The impact on Clayton was clear. “I feel desirous to be united in an everlasting covenant to my wife,” he wrote in his journal, “and pray that it may soon be.” On 22 July that sealing ordinance with Ruth took place. Clayton got another, even more powerful, spiritual boost the night of 16 May. At one point Joseph suddenly put his hand on Clayton’s knee and said to him, “Your life is hid with Christ in God,” and then explained to Johnson that “nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent him [i.e., Clayton] from inheriting eternal glory for he is sealed up by the power of the priesthood unto eternal life having taken the step which is necessary for that purpose.”40 Clayton was beginning better to comprehend this sealing power of the priesthood as it applied to his eternal salvation as well as to his marriages.

All available evidence suggests that, incredible as it may seem, Clayton’s first wife, Ruth, not only accepted the principle but welcomed each new wife into the fold and treated her warmly and with affection. This was especially true, of course, with her sister Margaret, who lived in the same house with William and

37Clayton, Journal, 22 March, 24 and 27 April 1843.
38Ibid., 14 May 1843.
39This is clearly expressed in the revelation as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 132, but it was also very clear in all the teachings of Joseph Smith as recorded in Clayton’s journal and other places.
40Quotations are from Clayton's journal for the dates indicated. See also Smith, History of the Church, 5:391.
Ruth and on occasion even shared the same bed with them.⁴¹ Joseph Smith’s wife Emma, on the other hand, could never fully accept the doctrine. So it was that in the midst of all his own troubles Clayton was called upon by Joseph to record the revelation which the Prophet hoped would help convert Emma. As Clayton reported in his journal on 12 July 1843: “This A.M. I wrote a Revelation consisting of 10 pages on the order of the priesthood, showing the designs in Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon having many wives and concubines &c. After it was wrote Prests. Joseph and Hyrum presented it and read it to E[mma] who said she did not believe a word of it and appeared very rebellious.” Clayton explained later that it was actually Hyrum who took the revelation to Emma, confident that he could persuade her of its authenticity. He returned a wiser man, never, he reported, having been subjected to a more severe “talking to.”⁴²

But at least the revelation was in writing, and sometime during the day it was read to several church authorities. The next day, with Joseph’s permission, Joseph C. Kingsbury made an exact copy of it. A few days later Joseph Smith told Clayton and a few friends that Emma had destroyed the original copy. Continually, he said, she had teased him about it and finally “to get rid of her annoyance” and pacify her he allowed her to destroy it. He could dictate it again if necessary but a copy had already been preserved.⁴³

Meantime, Clayton had a disappointing experience with Sarah Crooks. Despite the affection they shared in England and the good will that existed between Sarah and Ruth, Sarah simply could not reconcile herself to the doctrine of plural marriage. “She seems willing to comply with her privelege,” Clayton hopefully observed two days after she arrived in Nauvoo, and the next day he took Sarah along with Ruth and Margaret on a pleasure cruise aboard the Maid of Iowa. But Sarah’s initial willingness faded fast,⁴⁴ and by mid-April 1844 she was showing open hostility toward Joseph Smith, which Clayton sadly interpreted as a “wicked spirit.” Sarah eventually married a man named William Cook, also from Manchester, and it must have been a sad affair for Clayton when he placed both their names on a list of people who had actually aided and abetted in the disturbances that led to the martyrdom of his beloved prophet.⁴⁵

Clayton was more successful in courting Alice Hardman whom he had also known in Manchester. Her family ran the boarding house on Maria Street where Clayton stayed, and even then he seemed to take a special interest in her. He noted her illnesses in his diary, took her to meetings with him, wrote to her when he was away from Manchester visiting his own home in Penwortham, and listened patiently as she confided family problems to him. In Nauvoo she seemed to

⁴¹Ibid, 24 August 1843, for example.
⁴²Clayton, “Another Testimony.”
⁴³Ibid. For a full and perceptive discussion of the authenticity of Clayton’s claims concerning the revelation, see Bachman, “Plural Marriage,” pp. 204-16.
⁴⁴On 13 June, for example, she “went away abruptly” (she was apparently staying at the Clayton home), though she returned the next day. Clayton says little more about her in his diary, though it is interesting to note that as late as 20 September 1844, he still had some hopes of reconciliation.
accept the plurality doctrine with little hesitation, and on 13 September 1844 the two were married by Heber C. Kimball. In contrast to Margaret, Alice did not move in with Clayton, but he frequently visited her home and Ruth and Margaret seemed to accept her readily. There is no evidence of strain while in Nauvoo, and eventually she bore him four children.46

Just as we assume that Ruth helped select Margaret as Clayton's second wife, it is also possible that Alice helped select his fourth: her cousin Jane Hardman. Jane had also lived in Manchester while Clayton was there, and it was he who baptized her on 31 May 1840. Later she was among those who provided money to assist him as a missionary, and when he emigrated to America she gave him a watch guard to remember her by. He indeed remembered, and after he had accepted plural marriage he visited her frequently in Nauvoo. “She prefers me for a Savior to any one else, so she says,” Clayton once recorded, which was an obvious reference to the concept of eternal marriage.47 On the evening of 20 November 1844 Clayton took Brigham Young with him to see Jane and there “Prest. Young blessed her with the blessings of the ever lasting covenant and she was sealed up to eternal life and to W[illiam] C[layton] for time and for all eternity.”

What happened after that is not at all clear, except that for some unknown reason the marriage failed. When or why we simply do not know, but Jane was apparently no longer with Clayton when he left Nauvoo in 1846, and she apparently later married a man by the name of Thomas Richardson.48

Clayton was also interested in other young ladies in Nauvoo, including Sarah Ann Booth, Jane Charnock and Mary Aspen, but for various reasons he married none of these. He also seriously wanted to marry Lydia Moon, the younger sister of Ruth and Margaret, but Joseph Smith himself disapproved of that union. A man could marry only two of the same family, the Prophet told him, except by “express revelation,” for to have more than two in a family “was apt to cause wrangles and trouble.” Clayton had obviously had enough of that, though it was probably difficult for him to see how the Moon sisters could seriously quarrel. As it turned out Joseph Smith himself wanted to marry Lydia and in that same conversation asked William to speak to her for him! Two days later the faithful disciple became the Prophet's spokesman, but Lydia, though receiving the suggestion kindly, turned him down. She had promised her mother, she patiently explained, that she would not marry while her mother still lived. A few days later Joseph spoke for himself, but still the resolute Lydia refused — she was not as easily persuaded as her brother-in-law, it seems.49

What happened after Joseph's death is especially significant, for it illustrates another aspect of the doctrine of celestial marriage. Clayton still wanted to marry Lydia, and Heber C. Kimball advised him to do so, but only “for

46See Allen and Alexander, Manchester Mormons, pp. 93, 114, 128, 147, and other entries listed in the index. Alice finally divorced him in 1858 for reasons not known.
47Clayton, Journal, 8 November 1844.
48A family group sheet for William Clayton and Jane Hardman is on file at the Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.
time."

What this seemed to mean is that Kimball believed that even though Joseph Smith was dead Lydia should be "sealed" to him by proxy for eternity—a very common practice at the time. Clayton could marry her for this life, but in the eternities she would be part of the family of Joseph Smith. The next day Clayton discussed the matter with Lydia but again she turned him down.

Perhaps one of the most tender stories in all the annals of plural marriage is that of William and his fifth wife—Diantha Farr. A beautiful young woman, Diantha was the sister of Aaron Farr and was only fourteen years old when her brother lost Margaret to William Clayton. As members of the Farr family became naturally upset with Clayton, young Diantha was apparently distressed for she wanted to stay close to William and Margaret. But the strain was real, so much so that the Farrs even neglected to invite the Claytons to a wedding party when another daughter, Olive, was married.

Within a year, however, William was actively courting the lovely young Diantha and on 5 December 1844 Brigham Young consented to the marriage and ordered Heber C. Kimball to perform it. Diantha, however, was not yet fully convinced though Clayton was confident he could soon persuade her. He also sought the approval of Diantha's father, Winslow Farr, who on 27 December finally gave his consent. "I have a good prospect of adding another crown to my family," he could say as he looked forward to 1845.

Clayton was now thirty years old and, in a sense, the younger Diantha was living in a different generation. Involved with all the cares of the Kingdom as well as all his own personal problems, he was probably a little too solemn and straight-laced and probably judged too harshly when he considered some of Diantha's activities too "gay and trifling." Nevertheless he was deeply attracted to her, prayed about her often, and kept up his visits. And Diantha did not discourage him.

So it was that on the night of 9 January 1845 a very unusual assembly convened in the home of Winslow Farr, Diantha's father. When Clayton arrived with Heber C. Kimball shortly after 7:30 p.m., they found Diantha waiting along with her parents, her brother Lorin and his wife Nancy, and her sister Olive with her husband William Walker. Aaron was noticeably absent. Two marriages took place that night. First, Elder Kimball married Winslow Farr and his wife, Olive Huntington, for time and eternity. Then, as Clayton described it, the "seal of the covenant" was put upon Diantha. Kimball then asked everyone if they freely gave up Diantha, and they all responded affirmatively. So there they were—William and Diantha married at last, but unable to make it public or even to be together on their wedding night. Kimball and Clayton left the Farr home about 8:30 p.m., and Clayton could only go home and write in his journal a poignant prayer: "May she never violate her covenant, but may she with her companian

50Ibid., 29 August 1844.
51Ibid., 10 August 1845, 1 November 1843. In August Diantha even threatened to "tell all she knew" about the situation, then commit suicide.
52Ibid., 27 December 1844, 1 January 1845.
53Three days later she came to the Clayton home, where she "tarried with us all night." Such was the nature of a polygamous honeymoon.
realize to the full all the blessings promised. And may there never [be] the first jar or unkind feeling towards each other exist to all eternity."

Diantha continued to live in the Farr home where Clayton frequently visited her, though on occasion she would spend the night at William’s home. She was apparently accepted well by Ruth and Margaret, just as Clayton was accepted into the Farr household.

Sometime in the late summer Diantha became pregnant. Undoubtedly Clayton felt a special concern for one so young, and it meant something special to him to conduct her through the endowment ceremony in the temple on 29 December. Then, on 26 January his venture into the principle of celestial marriage (which in the parlance of the quorum meant both eternal marriage and plural marriage) reached a touching and fitting zenith when he took Ruth, Margaret, and Diantha to the temple. They had already been sealed before, but here, clothed in robes of white, they were all sealed to each other again by Brigham Young. In Clayton’s mind nothing could have been a more fitting end for his career in Joseph Smith’s Nauvoo.

It is difficult to conceive of all that was going on in these last hectic days of the Mormon sojourn in Nauvoo. Certainly Clayton’s plural marriages did not preoccupy him as threats of violence hung like a pall about the city. He was a member of the committee selected to move the scattered Hancock County Saints into Nauvoo. As a member of the band, he was given $150 by Brigham Young to purchase instruments in preparation for entertainment on the way west. He also had to help get in order all the church records for transportation to their next place of refuge. He spent the month of February obtaining wagons and teams, packing, loading, and sending goods across the river. With four wives and four children to care for, in addition to all the records, he had-little time to rest. Finally, on 27 February 1846, he took all his family except Diantha across the frozen Mississippi as part of the vanguard company leading the way west.

The seventeen-year-old Diantha was only a month away from delivering her first child, and was in no condition to face the hardships of this winter trek. The weather was cold, often rainy, the roads were muddy, the ground was sometimes frozen, cold winds toppled the tents, and no one escaped the hell of winter chill and wetness.

Understandably there were times when Clayton was less than happy. Nerves wore thin, some of the pioneers lost their tempers, and the unquestionably loyal disciple even hinted at dissatisfaction with the fact that Brigham Young was able to get wood for a wagon box but he, William, could not. And all the time he was wondering about Diantha, writing to her frequently, and preparing for her to join the family.

Diantha, meantime, was lonely for her husband, and her letter of 16 March undoubtedly contributed to William’s own longing for her. It also poignantly expressed the most tender feelings a marriage can evoke, even under such an unusual system as polygamy. “My beloved but absent William,” she began.

It rejoised my heart to heare a word from you but it would have given me more joy to have had a line from you but I am thankful for a little you know that is the way to get more.

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54Journal History, 24 September 1845, Church Archives.
To tell you I want to see you is useless yet true you are constantly in my mind by day and I dream about you almost every night, as to my health it is about the same as when you left only a little more so I often wish you had taken your house a long for it looks so lonesome it seems a long time since I saw you but how much longer it will be before I can have the privilege of conversing with you face to face it is yet unknown to me father is doing as fast as he can he wants to get away soon after conference if possible Mother sends her best respects to you, often says how lonesome it seems dont you think Wm will come to night I expect it would cheer her heart as well as mind to hear your voice once more, dear Wm write as often as you can send, for one line from you would do my heart good

I must draw to a close for I am in haste

I will try to compose myself as well as I can. I never shall consent to have you leave again.

Farewell, Farewell

Clayton spent the night of 14 April on watch, frustrated because cattle and horses were breaking into tents and wagons. He needed a boost and suddenly the next morning it came. Ellen Kimball, wife of Heber C. Kimball, found Clayton and told him that Brother Pond had just received a letter which said that Diantha had given birth to a son. He hurried to Pond's wagon to read the letter for himself. "She had a fine fat boy on the 30th," he wrote that night, "but she was sick with ague and mumps. Truly I feel to rejoice at this intelligence but feel sorry to hear of her sickness." That evening Clayton invited a special group of friends to his tent for a "social christening." It was a happy celebration with music, singing, and rejoicing until midnight. They "drank health to my son," he said, and in this long-distance christening they called him Adriel Benoni Clayton. That name was only for the moment, however, for his real name became Moroni.

It was in this atmosphere of hardship, tenseness, and sudden rejoicing that William Clayton unknowingly performed a special service for posterity. Undoubtedly thinking of his young wife and infant son in Nauvoo, he wrote a song which had special meaning for him, but would also bring tears and inspiration to Latter-day Saints for generations to come:

Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor fear  
But with joy wend your way  
Tho' hard to you this journey may appear  
Grace shall be as your day.

'Tis better far for us to strive  
Our useless cares from us to drive;  
Do this, and joy your hearts will swell —  
All is well! All is well!

Only four and a half years later on 11 September 1850, less than a month after giving birth to her third child, Diantha died in Salt Lake City. The heartbroken William wrote another poem, but the last stanza of the song he wrote while thinking of her in 1846 probably caught his feelings just as well:

And should we die before our journey's through,  
Happy day! all is well!

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55Diantha Clayton to William Clayton, 16 March 1846, Church Archives.
Allen: William Clayton

We then are free from toil and sorrow too!
With the just we shall dwell.

But if our lives are spared again
To see the Saints their rest obtain,
O how we'll make this chorus swell
All is well! All is well!

What, then, was the significance of the Nauvoo experience for the Mormon people? It meant different things to different people, of course, but its meaning for William Clayton at least captures the essence of what it meant for many of those who went west to Utah.

Perhaps for Clayton it was partly felt in his reaction to the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Joseph was Clayton's ideal, and his death on 27 June 1844 was a profound and indelible shock. "The blood of those men," he wrote the next day, "and the prayers of the widows and orphans and a suffering community will rise up to the Lord of Sabaoth for vengeance upon those murderers." Not that Clayton would himself take vengeance — violence was no part of his personality — but he fully expected that somehow, some time the perpetrators of the crime as well as the people that allowed it to happen would be duly punished. "Thus the whole State of Illinois have made themselves guilty of shedding the blood of the prophets by acquitting those who committed the horrid deed," he wrote later, "and it is now left to God and his saints to take vengeance in his own way and in his own time." 56

In the confusing times that followed, Clayton observed the various claimants to the leadership of the church and was himself in the thick of the debate over who should take Joseph's place as Trustee-in-Trust. He resented Emma's efforts to draw Joseph's property to herself, and to influence the selection of the trustees, 57 and for a short time he became the temporary trustee.

56William Clayton, "Wm Clayton's Journal, etc.," pp. 80-81, manuscript, Clayton Papers, Church Archives. This is not really a journal but rather Clayton's account of the history of the Nauvoo Temple, prepared apparently as part of his duties as temple recorder. It was later edited and reproduced serially in the Juvenile Instructor 21 (1886) under the title "An Interesting Journal," by William Clayton. In the quotation above regarding vengeance on the murderers of the Prophet, the editor of the published version eliminated the words "and his saints," evidently to avoid lending support to the charge that the Mormons were consciously bent on taking vengeance. For a comment on the implication of the desire to avenge the blood of the martyred prophets, see Juanita Brooks, The Mountain Meadows Massacre (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950), pp. 35, 41. For the history of the acquittal of those accused of murdering the Prophet, see Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

57Clayton's discomfort with Emma probably began during Joseph Smith's lifetime, partly because of the strains he saw over the issue of plural marriage and the other demands she made on Joseph, and he may have therefore distorted some of his reporting. On 21 May 1844, for example, Clayton reported that when Joseph had ridden outside of Nauvoo to keep away from an officer with a subpoena, he sent Clayton to find out how Emma felt about Joseph returning home. "I found her crying with rage and fury because he had gone away," he said. "She wanted him to go home I came and told him & he returned home at 9 o clock." What Clayton did not report was that Emma was very ill at the time and Joseph was evidently worried about her. See Smith, History of the Church, 6: 398-99.

Clayton's concern with Emma and the trustee problem began at least as early as 2 July 1844, when he went to see her. She was upset because Mother Smith (Lucy Mack Smith) was "making disturbance" about the property that had been in Joseph's hands. Observed Clayton, "There is considerable danger if the family begin to dispute about the property that J's creditors will come
As he observed the debates on what should happen he could not help but comment that "The greatest danger that now threatens us is dissensions and strifes amongst the Church. There are already 4 or 5 men pointed out as successors to the Trustee & President & there is danger of feelings being manifest. All the brethren who stand at the head seem to feel the delicacy of the business." 58

There were several seemingly viable alternatives so far as leadership was concerned. The decision one made at the time depended, in part at least, on one's personal background and experience and was often influenced by emotional as well as logical considerations. This was especially true of Clayton. Of all the options available, what Nauvoo meant to him could only be fulfilled in the course taken by Brigham Young and the Twelve. For him Nauvoo was Joseph Smith, but it was also the most sacred, trying and emotional experiences to which Joseph Smith had introduced him. Only through the Twelve would the Council of Fifty, the Anointed Quorum, the endowment, the eternity of marriage and the practice of plurality of wives be maintained as he understood them. Clayton was never as intimate with Brigham Young as he was with Joseph Smith — there was, in fact, a seeming coolness at times. But because of his personal involvement with so many private activities and concerns of the Prophet, it was easy for him to transfer his loyalty to the man who seemed most likely to carry on those same activities.

In a way Clayton's Nauvoo was the secret Nauvoo, for all the things that had the most long-lasting effect on him were secrets that he shared with the Prophet and a limited number of faithful disciples. Of course other westering Mormons did not know of most of these things, so they followed for different reasons, just as some followed other leaders for other emotional or rational reasons. But the church Clayton knew and loved in 1845 was something different from the church he knew in 1840, and Joseph Smith had been responsible for the change. Clayton liked the change and would stay with it.

58 Clayton, Journal, 6 July 1844.
Clayton's Nauvoo then was really the Joseph Smith he knew, and in later years he kept the memory of that Joseph Smith alive. He was constantly reminding the Utah Saints of things Joseph had said or done, and on one occasion was even criticized for not being able to bend enough to preach at least one aspect of the gospel "according to Brigham" instead of the way he remembered Joseph putting it. On another occasion one of his sons found him weeping as he listened to some brethren singing, and he explained that this singing reminded him of the Prophet. It was a natural opportunity for the boy to ask, "Father, did the Prophet Joseph really see an angel?" Clayton forcefully replied, "My son, he did see an angel, and don't you ever doubt it!" At the same time William recognized the subjective, emotional nature of his commitment to the prophet of Nauvoo, and he admitted it. As he wrote to Joseph C. Rich in 1869, "I could not hear the 'old settlers' talk coolly about the murder of the Prophet and Patriarch without getting terribly mad and showing it. You did not feel it as I did, hence you can act wisely and with prudence. I could not."

59 Minutes of the School of the Prophets, Salt Lake City, 10 February 1873, Church Archives.
MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION
ENDOWMENT FUND

The Mormon History Association invites contributions to a special Endowment Fund established in 1979 to further the Association's goal of promoting the understanding of Mormon history and scholarly research and publication in the field. Tax-deductible donations to the fund will be invested in a trust fund established at Zion's First National Bank in Salt Lake City. Interest from the account will help defray publication costs of the *Journal of Mormon History*. For further information, contact members of the Investment and Finance Committee: Leonard J. Arrington (chairman), James B. Allen, Jay E. Brandt, James Everett, William B. Smart, and E. Gordon Gee.

The Association extends its thanks to the following for contributions to the MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION ENDOWMENT FUND:

Emily Chipman, in memory of her husband, the late Francis M. Chipman.
Alice Smith Edwards: The Little Princess

By Nancy Hiles Ishikawa

Alice Smith Edwards is an enigma. Her world was seldom seen and even more rarely understood by those who called her "friend." She felt she lived in a world of glass, but few were those permitted a look inside. She taught classes and lectured all of her adult days, and yet the work of most importance to her she left incomplete, unavailable, and unread. An understanding of Alice in entirety is impossible — there are gaps unfilled and questions left dangling — and yet it is the aim of this article to attempt a glimpse into her heart.

"I cannot remember when I did not try to put what I saw and felt in words," said Alice Myrmida Smith, born in the small southern Iowa border town of Lamoni just prior to the dawning of the twentieth century. Her roots were firmly tied to Mormonism and her psyche was securely wedged between the traditions of her faith and her own intellectualism. To understand Alice, it is essential to understand something of her roots.

Lamoni was typical of most American Midwestern rural communities in 1899 except for one thing: it housed the headquarters of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Reorganized church grew out of the broken dreams, frustrations, and yearnings of many who had earlier joined with Mormonism under the dynamic and charismatic leadership of Joseph Smith, Jr. They were those who would not or could not make the long trek west with Brigham Young. They came, spent and seeking, after years of chasing their
dreams among the Strangites, the William Smith followers, the Lyman Wight Texans, and those who could only resist and wait, such as Emma Smith Bidamon and her sons.

It was in Beloit, Wisconsin, in the late autumn of 1851, that Jason Briggs had his “revelation.” Briggs believed that God revealed to him a promise: “In mine own due time will I call upon the seed of Joseph Smith, and will bring one forth, and he shall be mighty and strong, and he shall preside over the high priesthood of my church.” Upon sharing this experience with Elijah Banta and others, Jason felt impelled to build an organization that would await the coming of the prophet. After a great deal of cautious debate and discussion, the first conference of the Reorganization was held at Zarahemla, Wisconsin, in April of 1853.

Several trips were made to Nauvoo in the ensuing years to encourage Joseph III to cast his lot with the fledgling group. His reluctance is understandable considering the trauma and sorrow that his family had suffered because of Mormonism. However, after much prayer and thought, Joseph became convinced that he was “directed” to join the Reorganization. In April 1860 he and his mother went to Amboy, Illinois, and accepted membership in the Reorganized church. The headquarters of the church was established in Plano, Illinois, and remained there for nineteen years. In 1870 the United Order of Enoch was formed and commissioned to search for inexpensive farm land. The decision was made to move to Fayette Township, Decatur County, Iowa, where Lamoni soon became the center of church activities. It remained so until the final move of the headquarters was made to Independence, Missouri.

Alice’s entire life was to be influenced and directed by this history, for she was the great-granddaughter of the assassinated prophet. Her father, Frederick Madison Smith, was to succeed Joseph Smith III as president of the Reorganized Latter Day Saint church early in her lifetime. Alice’s own birth was awaited with some expectation by church members who assumed “Frederick, Jr.,” would arrive and be groomed to one day take the place of his father. It is indeed very possible that if Alice had been born the expected sex she too would have become the leader of the church begun by her family. For the extremely bright, sensitive, and talented woman she was to become, this was a source of much frustration. It is not that Alice did not learn to live within this context; she did, and often quite well, but she acutely knew the pains of being born and raised a princess who never became queen.

Alice’s mother, Ruth Lyman Cobb, benefited from having unusually conscientious parents. She received a good classical education at a time when few men, let alone women, were able to attend institutions of higher learning.  

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3The Messenger of the Reorganized Church . . . (Salt Lake City) 2 (November 1875): 1.
6Ruth Lyman Smith, Concerning the Prophet: Frederick Madison Smith (Kansas City, Mo.: Burton Publishing Co., 1924), p. 103.
7Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, p. 59.
showed early interest and promise in the field of acting and studied dramatic arts at Acadia College in Crowley, Louisiana. After graduation from Philadelphia’s National School of Elocution and Oratory in the field of speech, Ruth returned to her mother’s home in Lamoni, where she became one of the first faculty members of the newly founded Graceland College. It was here that she renewed her previously casual acquaintance with Fred M. Smith; this soon led into courtship, engagement, and marriage.\footnote{Ibid., p. 59.}

As the oldest living son of Joseph III, Fred M. was early designated as his father’s successor. He was frequently reminded, even as a small boy, of the future responsibility which would be his to bear.\footnote{Ibid., p. 17.} Surely this had its effect on the lad who was known all of his life as serious, somber, and often quite harsh. Fred M. was also a very private man in many respects and even his wife spoke of his “vast hidden nature.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 53.}

Joseph III, understanding that this son would be his logical successor, was determined that Fred M. would have a proper education.\footnote{Joseph Smith III, \textit{Joseph Smith III and the Restoration}, ed. Mary Audentia Smith Anderson (Independence, Mo.: Herald House, 1952), p. 125.} A story is passed down in the Israel A. Smith family that young Israel was told by his father that they could only afford to educate one son, and it would have to be the elder Frederick who would, of course, one day assume the leadership role of the church.\footnote{Oral History of Don Carlos Smith, Norma Hiles interviewer, (Independence, Mo., 2 August 1977), p. 4.} Thus, Fred M. was enabled to pursue his natural inclination toward serious study. His disposition tended toward mathematics, and he was quoted as occasionally remarking that “they had spoiled a good engineer to make an indifferent preacher.”\footnote{Alice Edwards, “What Am I Doing Here?” p. 17.}

After graduation from high school in Lamoni, Fred M. attended Iowa State University. His year there was always fondly recalled as the one time in his life when he could remain anonymous from his future work and be respected and loved for himself alone.\footnote{Ruth Smith, \textit{Concerning the Prophet}, p. 36.} He then somewhat reluctantly, but in accordance with his father’s wishes, returned to Lamoni and was the first graduate of Graceland College. On 3 August 1897, in a simple and private ceremony, Ruth Lyman Cobb and Frederick Madison Smith were married.\footnote{Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, \textit{Ancestry and Posterity of Joseph Smith and Emma Hale} (Independence, Mo., Herald House, 1929), p. 589.} Their daughter Alice Smith spent her early years in a community which enveloped her with its love and warmth. Until she was five years old, Alice lived with her parents in her Grandmother Cobb’s home on the southwest corner of Tenth and Linden in Lamoni.\footnote{Paul M. Edwards, “The Often Unheard: An Essay Concerning Alice M. (Smith) Edwards” (Lamoni, Ia.: By the Author, 1975), p. 1.} It was here, in her grandmother’s warm feather bed during those many cold Iowa winter mornings, that Alice’s education began. Of these times she later wrote:
From babyhood my grandmother taught me to see weird faces and figures in the fluent ivy patterns of our bedroom wall, while she explained such intriguing matters as the intricacies of prosody, semantics and logic. 'Logic,' she would say savoring the sound of the word, from the Greek, logos, the law. Is it any wonder that I could read before I was three?\textsuperscript{17}

What is of most significance in Alice's unusually early introduction to the learning process is not her precocious reading or arithmetic ability but rather the fact that her childish fantasies were not repressed, but encouraged and "tapped" by her poet-grandmother and others. In her lifetime Alice was to display an incredible sensitivity to others and the world around her. While this will be discussed in greater detail below, it is important to note that it is a characteristic evident even in her very young years.

Beside Grandmother Cobb and her Smith grandparents who lived in Lamoni at their home named Liberty Hall, Alice also enjoyed very "dear" aunts and uncles nearby. Some forty years later Alice explained their role in the beginnings of her life-long battle with weight:

If the meal at our house was earlier than Aunt Caddie's I would often finish my lunch or dinner (we called them dinner and supper in those days) and then I would appear at the Sillsbee table in time for one of Aunt Caddie's desserts. I remember especially a luscious lemon pie. And on the other hand Aunt Bess invariably saved some dainty, like her creamy batter donuts or a fried or baked chicken or whatever\textsuperscript{18}

One gets the picture. Alice's problem with overeating also reveals something of her personality. Whatever she did, Alice did passionately and often excessively. For her, good eating was a pleasurable and even aesthetic experience, and as such Alice indulged to her desire. A foster daughter who much later lived with the Edwardses, recalled that while Alice hated to cook, she loved to add the delicacies which would make the food look lovely.\textsuperscript{19}

Alice and her parents returned from a year in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1906, the time of the transfer of church headquarters from Lamoni to Independence, Missouri.\textsuperscript{20} As his father's secretary, Fred M. decided it was both logical and necessary to be close by, and so the two families made the move together, shipping their household belongings in the same boxcar.\textsuperscript{21} Fred M. built a new house for his family, and Alice always cherished the memories of childhood days spent in the tree swings, secret play houses, hidden tunnels, and open spaces of their Independence home.\textsuperscript{22}

It was during these years that Alice became aware of the not-so-pleasant consequences of being female in the early 1900s, especially a female whose father had an important position and reputation to maintain. For tomboy Alice, the removal of her favorite overalls and the replacement with longsleeved heavy dresses was a trauma she was never to forget. With these dresses was added the

\textsuperscript{17}Alice Edwards, "What Am I Doing Here?" p. 16.
\textsuperscript{18}Paul Edwards, "The Often Unheard," p. 2.
\textsuperscript{19}Interview with Olena Epperson, Independence, Mo., January 1979.
\textsuperscript{20}Anderson, Ancestry and Posterity of Joseph Smith and Emma Hale, p. 589.
\textsuperscript{21}Paul Edwards, "The Often Unheard," p. 5.
\textsuperscript{22}Alice M. Edwards, Lecture Notes, AMEC, UAG no. 7.
increased torture of long stockings — beige before the age of eight to be then substituted with black. The former, being flesh colored, were considered too immodest for Victorian America. Alice also recalled being severely scolded for playing with one knee inside her wagon and her other leg pushing from the ground. At a somewhat older age Alice was not allowed to play baseball with the boys, although she could umpire. Alice later caustically noted: “Probably the danger was in showing the upper limb in running.”

These incidents, while small in scale, reveal something of the prevailing attitude of the time. They were also the catalyst for Alice’s life-long interest in raising the consciousness-level of women and her own personal struggle for equal rights. They help to explain her statement that “not men, but what men were and did and had, always seemed to me more desirable than what women were, did and had.”

The contrast between Alice’s education and ability and the opportunities which were available to her produced a situation which was at best aggravating.

The move to Independence found Alice in a public school system which challenged her, and she loved it. Throughout her years in elementary school, Alice encountered numerous teachers who inspired in the young and eager girl a love of learning.

At the age of eight Alice’s first poem was published. It is entitled “Come, oh Come Sweet Spring,” and was accepted by a children’s weekly. Alice kept a composition book filled with her first attempts at verse, and the following is an example of her early poetry:

My Cows
Every evening at sunset
I love to drive my cows
When the breeze is scarcely strong enough
To stir the leafy boughs.
Then back to pasture land
Green and fair
With the silvery moon
Awaiting me there
And the silvery start
like lamps above
Shine down upon me
With a look of love.

Alice Smith
8 years old

Alice spent most of her high school years in Independence; however, in 1914 the Smiths moved to Worcester, Massachusetts. This was to enable Fred M. Smith to attend Clark University and work on his doctorate. He had earlier earned his masters degree from the University of Kansas. Alice was allowed to attend many of her father’s lectures and seminars. The fifteen-year-old soaked up her environment like a sponge and found tremendous intellectual stimulation from the often-discussed sociological literature of the time.
The next year Alice wrote and published a series of articles on historical markers, as well as edited a period novel by the wife of a local celebrity. She also revised several narrative biographies which came out serially in a magazine for young people. In 1977 Alice entered the first and only class of the Kansas City Junior College with a rather exceptional group of students and faculty. Neither the atmosphere, which was the old Central High School building, nor the name of the new institution was particularly prestigious. Yet a great deal of "good learning" took place there, and a remarkable graduating class resulted. Many of the students became journalists and writers; among the most well-noted was Goodman Ace, dramatic critic and inventor of Easy Aces. There were also sociologists, foreign diplomats, poets, and composers who, as Alice noted, "have cast a pretty long shadow in their corner of the pasture." She gave most of the credit for her classmates' success to a handful of teachers who were more concerned with their subject and the students than with method and administration. The inspiration and training Alice received from these teachers was to remain with her always, and came to influence her own teaching methods a great deal.

During her final year of junior college, Alice was the motivating force behind the formation of a literary club. Her group was known as the Anonymous Club and their publication was entitled The Anons. It is significant to note the title Alice chose, for it reflected her life-long passion for anonymity. As the daughter of President Smith her home and family affairs were open to the public for their constant inspection, and Alice felt she had "always lived in a glass fish bowl." To counter this, she developed her own private world of poetry and prose; she wrote under pseudonyms and shared her work with almost no one she knew, particularly no one in the church. Her writing, and the unconventional friends which she collected all throughout her life, were Alice's one intellectual outlet, her means of escape from a dearly loved but much too confining church which assumed a "proper" life-style and thought pattern existed which she should follow.

Along with her involvement with the Anons, Alice also edited the weekly school paper, served as art editor of the yearbook, and won the first-place prize for a short story. It was with some strain that she later recalled two of her classmates: "Maugham and Lockridge tied for the essay award and have become successful fiction writers, while I, who won the short story prize, am still teaching freshman English."

At the end of two years, Alice prepared to move with her mother to California and her friends scattered. She was to keep in close touch with many of them, and it was always with a sense of pride that Alice recalled the small but important college where she received her earl training.

The move to California was made largely to aid Ruth Smith's declining health. For mother as well as daughter, the pressures of Fred M's work left their

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28 Alice Edwards, "What Am I Doing Here?" p. 2.
29 Ibid., p. 4.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid. p. 17.
mark. At one point when her husband was critically ill with pneumonia, Ruth said to Alice out of anger and frustration, “If I were to wire them of his death I suppose those business messages would have come right along.” It was not an easy life, and for a woman of so sensitive and delicate a frame and nature as Ruth Cobb Smith, it often was too much to bear. Her eldest daughter became the strong shoulder for Ruth to lean on, and in her role as nurse and friend, Alice found that her education suffered from numerous interruptions.

In 1919 Alice enrolled at the University of Southern California, where she continued to pursue her interest in writing. She served on the staff of the university daily and edited, as well as largely wrote, Concerning the Prophet, her mother’s book on Fred M. Smith, who had succeeded his father as president of the Reorganized church in 1915. More importantly for Alice’s writing career, however, was the publication of her first small volume of verse.

Upon completion of her junior year at USC, Alice was forced to leave school and begin working due to the press of family finances. She and her mother returned to Independence, Missouri, and it was during this time that she met the young Englishman who was to capture her heart. F. Henry Edwards was encouraged to come to the States and attend Graceland College by church officials who had visited his homeland and seen his potential for leadership. He was aggressive, dynamic, and intelligent and found in Alice Smith a woman who could meet his match. Aggressive, dynamic, and intelligent Alice also found in Frank Edwards a man who could meet her match. A courtship and engagement followed, but the latter was prolonged, as Alice returned to California to finish her degree and Frank traveled a great deal in his new role as apostle.

Alice was able to return to California, this time to Stanford University, due to the generous support of a family friend. Her year at Stanford was one of the best of her life. Here Alice had the security and warmth of a love far away, the anonymity she had always desired, and the intellectual and aesthetic environment of a poet’s dreams.

It is very interesting and important to note that throughout her entire writing career Alice almost never identified herself as the author. She used the pseudonym Alison Margaret Swift, among others, and had all correspondence dealing with her writing sent to an anonymous address. In a letter to a literary critic in 1962, Alice explained her use of a fictitious name: “My husband is a minister and neither he nor the people with whom I associate as his wife would appreciate my doing a book like this. They read them, and like them, but they wouldn’t want me to write one.” The novel Alice refers to was her major work in the last decades of her life, and yet she felt compelled to keep it in hiding. Perhaps this can partially be explained by the fact that Alice seemed to enjoy enveloping herself in an aura of mystery. It made life more exciting and romantic. However, it also reflects Alice’s isolation from a community whose toleration for the unusual could not be stretched too far. Alice understood this

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33Ruth Smith, Concerning the Prophet, p. 141.
35Alice Edwards, Lecture Notes, UAG no. 7.
36Alice Edwards to Margot Johnson, 6 September 1962, UAG no. 7.
and continued to pla the proper role in public, but she withdrew to a private world which more accuratel reflected who she was.

The poet Alice wrote during her year in the stimulating environment of the prestigious California campus remains among her best. It represents the beginnings of her attempts at experimental verse. In explaining the better quality of her Stanford poetry Alice wrote, “In addition to greater age and experience, I had at Stanford leisure time, a congenial environment, and intellectual stimuli which I had never known before.” Many of the poems Alice penned at Stanford were published in such periodicals as the Wooden Horse, a publication of the American College Quill Club; the Cardinal, the undergraduate magazine of Stanford; Poets of the Future for 1922-23, by Dr. Schnitking; and the Stanford Review, a magazine of excellent reputation. The following two poems are examples from her Stanford period.

STUDIES IN NON-CONFORMITY

California Poppy

I have found a poppy growing
By the Sea’s blue barrier,
Its petals painted with the hues of flame,
Red of delight and yellow mockery.
The rocks of eons crumble
At its threading roots,
It sways with every wind that sweeps unbounded
From the boundless ocean . . .

A tiny living atom!
How does it dare to flaunt
For one supreme enraptured day
Its flaming fragile beauty
In the face
Of all inanimate eternity?

Palo, Alto, California
1922

THUMB-NAIL SKETCHES

Arrows

A patch of baby birches in the sun,
With shimmering, frost-gilt leaves. In elfin fun
Some god has stuck his silver arrows there
To quiver, gold-tipped, in the morning air.

Palo Alto, California
1922

Alice completed her senior year at Stanford with a bachelor of arts degree in economics and journalism. She graduated “in absentia,” for on 24 June 1924 she was at the Stone Church in Independence, Missouri, at her wedding. Alice was now to launch into a new phase of her life, leaving formal education behind her.

38 Alice Edwards, Lecture Notes, UAG no. 7.
for a very long time. She was soon to know the joys and pains of being both
daughter and wife to two men in the upper echelons of RLDS church leadership.
It was 1924, women had just been granted the vote four years earlier, and raising a
family was the expected pattern for a young wife to follow. Understanding
something of Alice's background, intelligence, and talent, one can better
appreciate why the ensuing years were referred to by Alice as "the dark ages." 39

Alice's marriage to F. Henry Edwards was a major turning point in her life.
Her husband was to have many years of involvement in leadership roles of the
church as an apostle and member of the First Presidency, and their life together
was to reflect their mutual interest and concern for the church and its people. For
Frank Edwards the church, as his profession and his love, was an all-consuming
passion, while for Alice it was only one of several. This can be largely explained
by the obvious fact that Alice was not allowed a voice in major decisions of the
church because she was a woman. She was always referred to as "the daughter of .
. ." or "the wife of . . .," and as the years went by this became more and more of an
irritant. In an interview with this writer, Alice's oldest son, Lyman, described his
mother as a woman who relished the limelight and who often disliked going
anywhere that she was not the center of attention. It is an important and
interesting reflection on Alice that she regularly became "ill" when it was time to
attend priesthood-wives banquets and often even church. 40 It was there that she
was forced to play a secondary role, and largely because of this Alice turned to the
avenue of education and gave her heart to the classroom. Alice did, however,
teach many classes for the church, and her lecture notes range from Einstein's
theory of relativity to the various phases of womanhood. 41 She seems to have been
a popular speaker, and her wit and intelligence were well recognized. In the
capacity of teacher, Alice was able to happily and competently contribute to the
work of her church.

In the early years of their marriage, Alice continued with several of her
interests. She was the associate editor of a Midwestern music trade journal, she
designed and wrote greeting cards, and began the first of her many teaching
positions. While these jobs were very important to her they were all only
temporary. In February 1927, three years after their marriage, she gave birth to
twin boys, Lyman Francis and his brother David Henry, who died as an infant.
Three years later, in April 1930, a little girl, Ruth Ellen, was adopted when she
was just days old, and in 1933 their last child, Paul Madison, was born. Paul later
wrote:

The years of children were difficult ones for Alice. F. Henry's work took him away from
home a great deal; the depression hit with all its force upon a people whose dedication
kept them alive; illness was ever present and much of Alice's own work, as well as that of
the children's, were put up on the shelf for awhile. 42

During these years Alice was especially moody. She was often depressed by the
combination of a traveling husband who was gone for weeks at a time, three

39Ibid.
41Alice Edwards, Lecture Notes, UAG no. 7.
small children at home, and very little money. Alice also found almost no time for the reading and writing which had earlier filled so much of her life. It is not that this situation was very different from that of many women raising families in the 1930s, but rather it is that Alice herself was so different from most women of her own era. She was a snob in many respects; she was well-educated and well-read. She was an advocate of women’s rights before the terms “women’s lib” and “feminism” came into common usage, and she wanted a career of her own. However, at the same time her family was extremely important to her. It is essential not to equate Alice’s frustration at stereotyped roles with her dislike of being a wife and mother. Nevertheless, we must also acknowledge that she was hardly the typical middle-class Midwestern American woman of the 1930s.

Everyone who knew Alice well at all understood that the “domestic side” of her was almost nonexistent. She hated to clean, wash, or cook, and she would hire someone to do these chores whenever possible. Frequently this was not possible, and consequently the house was somewhat of a disaster area. Alice once responded to the rumor that in their kitchen the dirty dishes piled up for weeks as false! Why, they simply didn’t have that many dishes.

Similarly, Alice did not enjoy the more mundane side of child-rearing. She did, however, love her children a great deal. Both Lyman and Paul recall the way their mother always treated them as if they were adults and included them in on all of her schemes. Alice was a lover of adventure and excitement, and being denied this most of her life because of her position to maintain, she sought it for herself and her children whenever she could. Lyman’s first memory of his mother is being bundled up in the car and driving to a riot in Cameron, Missouri. Paul remembers riding the trolley car from Independence to Kansas City for “the heck of it,” just to be going somewhere. During these rides Alice would read to them from such classics as Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, and Moore’s *Utopia*. It was this aspect of parenting that she loved most.

Alice did write some poetry during this period, and the following was inspired by an “old soft maple” outside their home in Independence.

PATTERNS 1.

The Soft Maples

In Summer

Stacks of dirty dishes
in the sink,
Dusty tables, rugs and floors,
Phone calls about —
No blessed thing at all,
Some infant variations
of the Punic Wars;
An unexpected guest
Just when the baby has
poured oatmeal on her head . . .

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44 Interview with Lyman Edwards.
46 Alice Edwards, *Personally Yours*, p. 29.
And then
About the time I wished
The world and all were dead,
Some minutes to myself.

I spread a blanket
on the shady backyard grass,
Lay still, and looked
into the crenelated crevases
And through the patterns
of the leafy maple trees
into the blue — soft sky
with clouds — not heavy ones
for rain, but gentle ones
for decoration only
Sliding by. . . .

If someone had asked me then
“What is most beautiful?”
Or “What most high?”
I would have said, “Patterns
of maple leaves
Against a summer sky.”

The coming of World War II filled Alice’s life, as it did the lives of many Americans, with “war work.” This included first aid, rationing boards, and collecting fat, aluminum, and paper. Alice did do some substitute teaching and boarded several students from the juvenile court. This latter was for both patriotic duty and the money. Her eldest son, Lyman, went off to the war, Ruth left for Texas because of a job, and Paul was soon to fight in Korea. The children also each began families of their own.47 By the time the World War was concluded and the conflict in Korea growing, Alice found herself with a tremendous vacuum to fill. Her children were all gone and the fury of the war years had vanished. Yet, here she was with half of her life still in front of her. What was she to fill it with?

One night during this crucial time Frank asked Alice, somewhat sarcastically, if she had read anything “decent” lately. As Alice seriously pondered this she began to realize that she had not. So partially to spite him for his remark she picked up an old copy of Epictitus and found to her great dismay that she could not concentrate for more than a few minutes at a time. Even worse yet, it took literally weeks for Alice to memorize the “Hymn to Cleanthes” which she found in the front of the book and wanted to retain for future use. She later noted that “after years of trying to find a minute to read, write or study, it gets so it doesn’t look too important.”48 It was this question by Frank, and another by an old friend who simply asked Alice if she was having fun, which made her conclude that indeed she was rusty and was not “having fun.” This realization spurred the renaissance, if you will, of Alice Smith Edwards.

In the midst of this critical time of her life, a perceptive friend called and asked Alice if she wouldn’t consider teaching night classes in English and speech

48Alice Edwards, Lecture Notes, UAG no. 7.
for the war veterans who were returning home so hungry for knowledge and school again. This suggestion led Alice to ask the University of Kansas City to sponsor her extension class, so that the students could receive credit for their work. To her pleasure and surprise the answer was yes! This renewed contact with the academic world, coupled with Frank's extended tour of Europe, gave Alice the perfect opportunity to return to school. The second semester was just beginning at the University of Kansas City, and Alice quickly enrolled before she lost her nerve. Very few adults were attending college at that time, and she felt conspicuously obvious the first week or so. However, the presence of the GIs, who were somewhat older than the usual student, and the mere joy of being back in school again had Alice feeling at home very quickly. In her first class in over two decades she received an "A," and was to receive many more of them before her masters degree was completed in May 1958 in English language and literature.49

During the entire time Alice was working on her degree she continued teaching her extension night courses for the veterans. Alice was perhaps one of those rare teachers who could especially relate and reach out to the reluctant and troubled student. She described her classes as giving "special attention to the foreign students, the handicapped veterans, the non-liberal arts freshman, and any other problems sent me by counseling."50 Alice was vitally concerned with her students as persons and received tremendous satisfaction from helping the "boys" and "girls" whom she always collected. In an essay on his mother Paul wrote: "For as long as I can remember, until the year of her death, she spent part of every day either working with someone or on something another had written."51 Alice kept much of the writing done by her students in a "scruffy series" of ringed notebooks entitled Other Voices.52 Her life was dedicated to helping other voices be heard, and Alice's emptiness was largely filled, because as a teacher she was needed for her particular talents and herself alone. She was no longer "President Smith's daughter" or "F. Henry Edwards's wife," but Alice Smith Edwards, a woman in her own right.

The busy years as teacher, student, wife, and mother were very happy ones for Alice, and they produced her most prolific period of writing. In her own words "something happened that woke the old urge out of its long nap, and my second writing phase seemed to spring full panoplied, like an adult Minerva out of the forehead of somebody or other."53 It was at this point that Alice began what was to be the major work of her later life. It appeared in verse, in prose, in short story form, in stream-of-consciousness, and in various combinations of all of these. It centered around the experiences of six or seven veteran GIs, and in its various forms of verse is known as The Veterans, and as a novel of about eight hundred pages, it is entitled This Dark Mirror.

Alice wrote of the veterans and their experience, I believe, in an attempt to express the horror and pain of war to those less sensitive than herself. While she

50 Alice Edwards, "What Am I Doing Here?" p. 13.
52 Ibid, preface.
never experienced combat first hand, the intensity of life during wartime, the stresses and demands, and the crises individuals are forced to deal with produced a situation which captivated perceptive, passionate, and creative Alice. When the soldiers came home she was drawn to them and their problems with a concern which seems unusual in its strength. This is only partially explained by Alice's sensitivity. More importantly, I believe, was that the veterans were outcasts, oddities, and didn't quite fit into the mainstream of society. It is because Alice perceived herself much in the same way that she could relate so well with veterans.

These were good years for Alice Edwards; she was busy doing her favorite things — writing, teaching, and learning. Some of the happiest times of her life were the years spent at Junior College, the University of Southern California, the University of Kansas City, and Kansas University. Alice was admitted to the KU doctoral program and was well along in her course work when she was forced to quit in 1964 because of her increasingly poor health. She regarded this as one of the greatest disappointments of her life.54

However, despite this, the years between her first graduate course and 1964, when she had to leave KU, were some of the most invigorating, stimulating, and productive periods in Alice's entire life. It is, perhaps, only sad that this renaissance did not occur for a thirty-year-old Alice, rather than one of fifty. Nevertheless, it reveals something of the too-often-buried and too-long-dormant capacity of Alice Smith Edwards.

The last years of Alice's life were ones of pain. Her weight made mobility difficult, her sight was failing, and diabetes was progressing. An unfinished poem found in her notes is entitled "We Who Are About to Die...," and reflects something of these years:

Ah, God, to be again
Without pain...

And not, oh God, to be so painfully aware
That life at best is but a borrowed thing.

To feel not pain, nor fear
Would be to live again...

Yet every man who lives
Feels fear. For one
Who suffers hopelessly there is only hope.

Alice Edwards
About 1965

The clarity and quickness of Alice's mind remained as always, and she would spend her days, when able, reading, drawing, and occasionally writing. She made a trip with F. Henry to Hawai'i in 1966, which was her only travel overseas. It was one of much anticipation and enjoyment, but it was brief and Alice was old. F. Henry made efforts to be at home more often and care for Alice, but she was well aware of her dependence and deteriorating physical condition,

54Alice Edwards, "Why I Am a Teacher."
and it bothered her a great deal. She had always been a lover of independence and action, and to be so confined was especially depressing.

However, Alice had her family and a great many friends from church and school to comfort her. She wrote during these years:

I have many things now that I never had before and perhaps under different circumstances, could never have had. I have my family, my 'boys and girls' and Great Book series that I teach, my painting, and my enjoyment of writing flippant articles on serious subjects which I am publishing under an assumed name.

This quote reveals that in many ways Alice was reconciled and satisfied with the life she had led. It was indeed a full one — of family, of church, of teaching, of school, and of friends. She was well-respected and well-loved by many. Her intelligence, wit, and sensitivity were recognized by all who knew her. It was a good life and in many ways great fun. Yet, one cannot help but see the pathos in her also. It is not that Alice was unique in having unfulfilled dreams or difficult times; certainly all persons are faced with such situations in their lifetimes. Alice was placed in a position different than most; she carried the genes of Joseph Smith, and because of this was set apart from her peers. She was raised in a family of leaders, she was well-educated, and she was taught to serve her church. The Reorganized church was literally a part of who Alice Smith Edwards was, a part which she could not and would not ignore, and yet a part which forced her to play a role she would not have chosen. At the same time she was a woman, and as such was never called to lead her church but only to wait and watch. A friend Alice knew through the church and with whom she shared an unusual intellectual rapport wrote:

She was a talented woman, and one would like to think that other circumstances (other parents), would have brought out more of what she was. I do not mean this as a criticism of the Smith's... but Mr. Smith's position, and their living in the very center of the church life, may have molded Alice in a way that was not truly representative of her native spirit. This is a criticism of the church (of all organizations) which seek to compress behavior and thinking into a form acceptable or ... a form dimly perceived as proper.

Alice Smith Edwards died on a mucky July seventh in 1973. Her life was molded, I believe, in a way she would not have freely chosen. Yet, it was also a life well-lived and filled with people and experiences Alice cherished. "Those of us concerned with man at his creative best can benefit by walking awhile through the pastures of her mind; by resting for a moment under the shade of her love and to linger with her as she drank deeply from Pierian Springs."
Amasa Mason Lyman, 
The Spiritualist

By Loretta L. Hefner

My mind turned quickly to the time long ago when President Young said that Father was a spiritualist, which I did not believe, but now I know.
— Francis Marion Lyman Journal, 1870

Amasa Mason Lyman was excommunicated from the Mormon church on 12 May 1870. The events that led to this action had their origin as far back as Lyman's childhood where the seeds of liberal religion were planted in his impressionable mind by his grandfather, a Universalist with whom Amasa lived for some time. Under the influence of his loving guardian, Lyman learned to disdain the harsh teachings of Calvinism which taught that man was innately evil and that only a few predestined elect could hope to escape the wrath of an angry God and a fiery hell.

When in 1832 young Lyman heard the message of two Mormon missionaries, Orson Pratt and Lyman E. Johnson, the optimistic doctrines they preached appealed to his own conception of the nature of man and the loving character of God.

Lyman joined the newly organized sect and became one of its most diligent and loyal members, laboring in fifteen missions and serving as colonizer, mission president, counselor to Joseph Smith, and apostle.

Through his long and faithful service in the ministry, Lyman came to believe that a knowledge of truth should be pursued above all else. To Lyman, any one religion, including Mormonism, was only part of the universal truth, and it was the obligation of every individual to take what truth his or her religion

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offered and add to it in whatever way possible. Perhaps Lyman had taken to heart the counsel of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young. The Prophet said, “We shall not come out true 'Mormons' [unless we] gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up.” Later, President Young said, “It is our duty and calling as ministers of the same salvation and gospel, to gather every item of truth, wherever it may be found.”1 Over the years, Lyman took his search for truth to its logical conclusion by developing a personal philosophy that Mormonism was simply a preface to the larger truth. This sentiment prepared him well for the flourishing semi-religious movement of spiritualism that was at that time sweeping the country.

In 1847, at Hydesville, New York, not far from the place where Mormonism had its beginning, two daughters of a Methodist farmer created a tempest that flooded the country. Katie, age twelve, and Margaret, fifteen, daughters of John O. Fox, told their family and neighbors that there had been rappings, tippings, and noises in their home which they believed were communications from the dead. Soon neighbors and investigators came to scrutinize the strange events for themselves, and within months, spirit mediums reported enjoying dialogues with world famous personalities and departed loved ones through table turning, slate writing, mysterious appearances, speaking in tongues, and the involuntary operation of musical instruments.2

Converts were acquired rapidly, and because there were no councils, tracts, priesthoods, theological schools, or ecclesiastical orders involved in these spiritual activities, no one had to abandon his more orthodox denomination in order to participate. Followers came from every sect, profession and economic class. Involved were persons like Judge John W. Edmonds of the New York Court of Appeals; Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, elected to the U.S. Senate from New York in 1833 and later appointed by President John Tyler to be governor of Wisconsin Territory; Adin Balou, former Universalist clergyman, editor, and founder of the Hopedale Community; Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune; Mrs. Abraham Lincoln; Alfred Russell Wallace; Victor Hugo; William James; and Arthur Conan Doyle.3

Most of those who participated in the phenomenon were ecstatic over the experience. Converts were confident that knowledge was falling from heaven and that all of society would benefit from it. Spiritualism soon united with rationalism, science, and social awareness and was predicted to bring a new day for mankind. As one prominent spiritualist said, “Spiritualism is a broad and

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By 1851, four years after the Fox sisters made their announcement, there existed seven newspapers that devoted themselves to spiritualism. Six years later the number of spiritualistic newspapers had increased to sixty-seven. “At the height of the flurry, about 1855, there may have been between one and two million persons adhering in some degree to the movement.”

Although Apostle Lyman may have heard about the movement earlier through some of the numerous newspaper accounts and published investigations about it, his first reference to spiritualism was in 1852 in California, when he and Apostle Charles C. Rich were in southern California presiding over the church's affairs in that area. Living in the midst of the diverse population of the West Coast, a territory which was growing each day with the constant influx of people from the East who were in search of gold, it is not surprising that Elder Lyman would hear about spiritualism there. By 1852, Lyman, like many other Americans, was reading the popular works of spiritualism's most prolific and prominent writer, Andrew Jackson Davis. Lyman read The Harmonial Philosophy, as well as numerous works by Davis, including The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and A Voice to Mankind and The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse: Being an Explanation of Modern Mysteries.

In August 1853, Lyman had his first experience with the phenomenon of spiritualism at the San Bernardino Ranch in California. This was a Mormon settlement which he and Elder Charles C. Rich had colonized to be a gathering place and outfitting station for members of the church on their way to Salt Lake City. On 4 August, in the seclusion of Mill Creek, California, Lyman with a few others, met in a seance in which Calvin Reed, a Mormon, acted as a writing medium who was allegedly controlled by Hyrum Smith. The message was written in Lyman’s journal and was later recopied in a more legible hand:

The time has come that the spirits of the justified as well as the unjust have power to communicate to the rudimentary sphere and you must try the spirits to ascertain the amount of dependence to put in the communication you get from them and if good, take it and if bad, reject it and then you may be benefitted and improved in all things. I am Hyrum Smith.

Later in the same seance, Lyman was given further communication:

Why do you doubt? Do you not feel my influence in you? Be just, be wise, be prudent; and lo, I am with you to warn you of danger of all serious kinds on all occasions, as I have done for you on your way from the Valley of Salt Lake to here.
I will be with you and in your presence all the day. I now feel this Amasa and and you will find that I will not forsake you. I am Hyrum.ª

As for Lyman's colleague, Elder Rich was in northern California and was never told of the incident. Mormon authorities had strongly denounced the teachings of Andrew Jackson Davis and of spiritualism in general. In an editorial published in the Deseret News, 24 January 1853, Davis was sharply criticized for teaching salvation that did not include a reunion of the body and the spirit. On 5 January 1854, the paper editorialized:

A. J. Davis is doing much to enlighten the Christian world on religion, and a great many other things, but his light goes out just enough to profess Christendom apostize, and this leaves more in the dark than ever; and so great is that darkness that it will take some time for Christians of the world to learn that his theory is one of those strong delusions which God said either by himself or prophet, a great many years ago would send about this time, that men might believe a lie that they might be damned, because this generation has pleasure in unrighteousness.

In April 1853, Apostle Parley P. Pratt, who had lived in the San Francisco Bay area for a short while, made spiritualism the subject of an hour-long discourse. He said:

We hear much, of late, about visions, trances, clairvoyance, mediums of communication with the spirit world, writing mediums, and etc., by which the world of the spirits is said to have found means to communicate with the spirits of the flesh. . . . The world is agitated on these subjects. . . .

I will suppose, in the spirit world, a grade of spirits of the lowest order, composed of murderers, robbers, thieves, adulterers, drunkards, and persons ignorant, uncultivated, and etc., who are in prison, or in hell, without hope, without God, and unworthy as yet of Gospel instruction. Such spirits, if they could communicate, would not tell you of the resurrection or of any of the Gospel truths, for they know nothing about them.ª

Less than a year later, Elder Jedediah M. Grant delivered a sermon in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City on the same subject. He predicted that spiritualism would join evil forces to resist the priesthood. He continued:

Let the devils rap, then, and let them talk, and mutter, and have their mediums; what do I care, so long as the Priesthood is upon the earth, and the Apostleship is upon the earth, and the government of God, and the light and influence of the Holy Ghost, are upon the earth? Can they shake the Saints? No. But let a man lose the Spirit of God, and depart from his Church, and from the men that hold the Priesthood of God on the earth, and I have no doubt that Lucifer will reveal a great many truths to them, and teach and advocate principles and sentiments that will agree with doctrines of this Church. And they will even imitate Joseph Smith's handwriting, and the handwriting of brother Hyrum, of Bishop Partridge, and of Bishop Whitney, and others and they will give you flaming revelations and the light they emit will blaze like a comet.ª

However, soon after Charles C. Rich returned from northern California, Elder Lyman joined him in denouncing spiritualism in church services in the area. Francis Marion Lyman, Amasa's eldest son, wrote in his journal that

ªAmasa Mason Lyman Journal, 4 August 1853, Church Archives. Capitalization and punctuation have been added to this and other quotations from the journals.

ªJournal of Discourses, 1: 6-7, 12.

ªIbid., 2: 15
“spiritual communications and manifestations [were] denounced in strong terms as delusions from an evil source.” Two weeks later, still addressing the subject, Lyman and Rich wrote a letter to President Brigham Young, saying:

We had some curious manifestations under the head of spiritual communications by working table tapping and writing but the people are generally satisfied that God is not in the whirlwind nor the storm, but whispers peace to the contrite heart.

Evidently, spiritualism was widespread in southern California as well. Again, Amasa’s son wrote, “I was but a boy, but I remember that spirit rappings, tippings, and writing mediums were quite common in those days.”

It appears that Elder Lyman tampered with the spirits only once on that August day in Mill Creek. Following that experience, he spoke out strongly and stated in no uncertain terms that he deplored the practice of calling upon the dead. In his journals, there is no mention of any other experiences with spiritualism, and his correspondence never referred to it, while his sermons openly denounced it. But evidently Francis Marion Lyman saw it quite differently. He felt that his father was continuing his involvement with spiritualists in secret while he publicly opposed it. He stated that for the date of 4 August 1853 his father made no mention of his Mill Creek encounter in his journal but only noted it in the back of his diary.

On the 11th of March Father puts down in his Diary “Sunday had no meeting today as it rained all day. At night had an interview with Dr. [Ira] Burns and Bro. N.C. Tenney.” That meeting, I have no doubt, was one of the many that was mischievous to Father, for the Doctor was a very bad man and bro. Tenney was a Spiritualistic medium of the pronounced kind.

But despite this questionable behavior, Lyman went about his apostolic assignments and responsibilities as he had for the past ten years. He faithfully filled every assignment and request Brigham Young and the Twelve gave him. While he presided over the Saints in California, there were no signs that Lyman’s faith and devotion to Mormonism were faltering.

Lyman seemed to have been impressed by the spiritualist philosophy even more than by the phenomenon itself and felt that it augmented those liberal concepts of Mormonism that aided his search for truth. To one who already conceived of man as innately good and who had developed a definite universalistic ring to this theology by the mid-1840s, the concepts of Andrew Jackson Davis were not foreign at all. Amasa, who frequently wrote in his

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11Francis Marion Lyman Journal, 14 August 1853; Amasa Mason Lyman and Charles C. Rich to Brigham Young, 1 September 1853, Church Archives; Francis Marion Lyman Journal, 4 August 1853.

12The Francis Marion Lyman Journal “Number Zero” quoted in this article appears to have been written memoir style, in about 1885. Francis Marion reviewed his other volumes of personal journals and his father’s journals which he had in his possession after Amasa’s death to compile journal “Number Zero”

13Francis Marion Lyman Journal, 11 March 1855.
journal, “Spent all day reading,” studied many of Davis’s works and showed this influence in his own sermons by the teachings of the “Poughkeepsie Seer.”

Eventually, some of Davis’s doctrines found their way into Lyman’s sermons. By 1855, several of Lyman’s published talks discussed the universality of the gospel, as well as the notions that mankind is saved through knowledge and truth, and that the more one comprehends universal truth, the closer he is to salvation. Obviously such a plan of salvation had little need for the Christian doctrine of atonement. Also, in 1855 Lyman spoke of Jesus as a holy man, a man of counsel, and said that it would have been better for Jesus to have lived than to have died. In 1859, Lyman taught that Jesus was a holy man who developed his perfection through years of learning. He became the firstborn of God’s children because he was the first to gain all knowledge and truth in mortal life (but he would not be the last). The shedding of his blood had no effect on the salvation of man, and the only way he could be considered a savior was through his good example of learning righteousness, which, if followed by others, could save them. “He marked the path and led the way.”

This was remarkably similar to the doctrine of Andrew Jackson Davis. To him, Jesus was a moral reformer and an exemplar of love. He said, “Jesus didn’t know enough to be a Savior.” In one of his books, he wrote:

We believe that “Christ” was and is a central Principle of divine Love — impersonal, universal, unchangeable. It obtains an expression or an incarnation in every pure act of fraternal affection.

Jesus, on the contrary, was a man — one who lived in daily harmony with the Fraternal Principle of love — and is valuable to the race chiefly as an exemplar. But the Principle, not the man is our Savior.

While Lyman’s sermons were not a carbon copy of the teachings of Davis, especially with Davis’s pseudo-scientific rattlings about the inhabitants of Jupiter or the advantages of walking with a bent posture, the key notions of Lyman’s theology seem to have been strongly influenced by Davis’s concepts of truth, knowledge, and the mortality of Jesus. Each was confident that spiritual insights would teach him to understand himself, society, science, and the entire universe much better than by mere empirical knowledge. Both spoke in broad terms of mankind, humanity, and the human family, and taught that there “is an eternal pilgrimage toward the Infinite.” This sojourn would bring man into contact with new experiences and knowledge which was “the newest new birth, and the shortest road to the kingdom of heaven.”

Within the framework of their humanism, both men lamented the sorrows, injustices, and poverty in the world. Davis said that “individuals in discord, in misfortune, in sickness, in prison, in poverty, in crime, in ignorance, and in

14Ibid., 4 August 1853.


17Andrew J. Davis, Arabula, p. 12; Amasa Mason Lyman Journal, 4 May 1861; Davis, Arabula, p. 384.
Hefner: Amasa Mason Lyman

misery” caused him deep concern and he regretted that “the gates of wealth [were] closed against the poor.” Lyman, too, became very sensitive to the suffering of others. He frequently talked about the poverty and cruelty of the majority of people on earth. Both Lyman and Davis thought that true education was the solution to those problems and that all evils were the result of darkness and ignorance.

There were also striking similarities between Lyman’s style of speaking and writing and that of Andrew Jackson Davis, whose writings were described as “wordy and diffused, and the meaning elusive beyond the tolerated usage of philosophers.” For example, Davis wrote in his *Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse*:

The mental sky is fast becoming clear and serene; the scene is one of grandeur and sublimity. Truth will consume all error and artificial theology, whose power is weakened; and whose corruptions are revealed, by the divine light of Nature’s manifestations. Yea, all evil and error will be finally subdued, and banished by the triumph of the principles that are good, divine and unchangeable, and unrighteousness shall be no more! Streams of good and healthy inspirations will spring up, and flow down to cleanse and refresh the moral world, on whose advancing tide the whole race will ascend to intellectual and social harmony, and to a high state of spiritual elevation and intercourse.

In an 1855 sermon, Lyman said:

There is a principle of truth which pervades everything which is in itself immutable, that is the same everywhere, in every land, country, and clime, whether we speak of a single atom, the crawling insect, or the clustering universe of worlds, all are moving, and existing and are controlled by the same great law — the same great principle that causes them to have their existence in truth and harmony with each other. . . .

[Truth] bursts the chains of ignorance asunder that have held us in bondage; it dissipates the clouds of darkness that obstruct the sun-light of truth from shining around us.

Even though there is no record of Lyman having participated in the phenomenon of spiritualistic seances from 1853 to 1869, Lyman ascribed to many tenets of the philosophy and incorporated them into his conception of Mormonism.

He continued to preach these liberal doctrines after the demise of the San Bernardino colony and afterwards as he served as one of the European Mission presidents. In Europe, he found that he had more time and energy to pursue ideas, thoughts, and matters of intellect than ever before. He did not have the responsibilities of providing for his large family. The new languages, cultures, and peoples of Europe provided inspiration for the forty-seven-year-old apostle, and he found that his transcendental doctrine was readily accepted by the new converts who were unfamiliar with traditional Mormonism. Lyman’s ideas seemed at home amid this culture of free thinkers, mesmerists, pheno- mesmerists, spiritualists, and clairvoyants. The sermons he gave won him the

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respect of a new convert named Edward W. Tullidge, a man with considerable literary ability. The admiration of this and other new converts prompted Tullidge to dedicate a verse to Lyman:

“A Universal Man”

I love the noble majesty of mind
That dares to soar on independent thought —
That, seeking Deity and truth to find,
Has not among the earth-chained slaves been bought.

I love the man who bows to Truth alone,
Who worships her for her intrinsic worth,
Who hears sweet music, in her every tone,
And by each note receives diviner birth.

Give me the spirit that demands its right —
The great prerogative which God has given,
To choose his own, and not another’s light,
And with his kindred make a kindred heaven.

I love the free man and the truly proved,
That will to others give the right they claim,
And blush to ask of man or God aloud
To give them aught, if they withhold the same.

Give me the simple, universal soul,
That sees some loveliness in every field,
And hears in nature one harmonious whole,
And everywhere beholds a truth concealed.

I love the heart that beats for human kind,
Nor ask its owner’s nation, rank, or creed:
He but labours truly for mankind,
I’ll waive the difference to admire the deed.

Such men are brothers! Clasp each kindred hand!
There is with them Freemasonry of soul!
I long to see them linking every land,
And making man again a family whole.

Though minds do vary, be their actions good,
We’ll lay the platform of the broader plain,
And mounting it as one great brotherhood,
Then greet each other by the name of Man!22

But when Lyman returned to the Salt Lake Valley in September 1863, he did not receive praise for the heterodoxy he displayed in Europe. During the next four years he left many Utah Saints confused by his ideas, and in congregations such as Manti, Beaver, and Fillmore, they questioned his teachings outright. Finally, as a direct result of his unorthodox teachings, Lyman was dropped from

22Edward W. Tullidge, “Universal Man,” a poem dedicated to Amasa Mason Lyman, in Amasa Mason Lyman Collection, Church Archives.
the Quorum of the Twelve on 6 May 1867 to remain a lay member of the church, being censored from any further public speaking.\(^{23}\)

For the first nineteen months after his disfellowshipment, he did not attend a single church meeting but still maintained his belief that Mormonism was based on true principles and was one system among many that could assist man in reaching universal truth. But in August 1869, after becoming once again active in attending his meetings, Amasa became reacquainted with some of the friends and converts he had known in Europe who had also come to Utah. Many of them, including William S. Godbe, Elias Lacy Harrison, and Edward Tullidge, were having their own problems of conscience, experiencing growing scepticism about doctrines of Mormonism. All three men were attracted to Lyman’s concepts of Mormon theology. These men, among others with whom Lyman associated, did not support the traditional view of the atonement of Jesus, nor were they comfortable with the limited scope of a single sect, particularly Mormonism, but preferred to think of religion in terms of an all-encompassing world movement toward truth. William Godbe, a man of means, was sympathetic to these ideas and supported many of the views of Harrison and Tullidge with money and publicity. The trio was unusually gifted with intellectual and literary abilities and made good use of them in several publications. In the fall of 1864, Harrison and Tullidge published *Peep O’Day*, a magazine devoted to education and culture, but particularly to criticism of the Mormon church. In 1868, Godbe backed the *Utah Magazine*, which was edited by Harrison. The magazine challenged Mormon economic policies and criticized Brigham Young’s ultimate control over the territory’s affairs. By mid-1869, Godbe and Harrison were gradually disclosing their attitudes about spiritualism. Nearly a year earlier, they had travelled to New York City to reevaluate their allegiance to Mormonism, and through seances with the famous spiritualistic medium, Charles Foster, they received their answer. “They [would] return to Utah armed with a blueprint for the transformation of Mormonism into a philosophical-spiritualistic faith.”\(^{24}\)

On 4 August 1869, William Godbe told Lyman about this intended social reform which became known as the New Movement, and later the Church of Zion. Lyman’s response was enthusiastic, and after that August weekend, Lyman communicated with Godbe and his friends regularly and began travelling to Salt Lake City to meet with them. He discussed Mormon doctrine with them, and began participating in seances again. Although he embraced the spiritual philosophy ardently, he continued to attend his Mormon church meetings as if there were no conflicts at all.

Eventually, Lyman came to realize the great distance between his beliefs and those of the Mormon church. Moreover, the restrictions placed on his public speaking by Brigham Young left Lyman stifled and frustrated, and on 8 May 1870, he announced to his son, Francis Marion Lyman, and his son-in-law, William Clayton, that he was going to resume preaching. He wrote to his wife,

\(^{23}\)Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, John A. Taylor, and George Q. Cannon to Amasa Mason Lyman, 30 April 1867, Amasa Mason Lyman Collection.

Louisa Maria, "The time has at length come when I shall again open [my] mouth in proclamation of the Gospel." 25

Conveniently, the New Movement had just the place for Lyman to vent his unexpressed feelings. Godbe and Harrison, through a spiritual communication, had long expected that their cause would be led by none other than Joseph Smith III, son of the Prophet Joseph Smith. When this hope did not materialize, the schismatic group wanted for leadership as well as credibility. Placing an ex-apostle who had been known as the orator of the church as president of the New Movement resolved both problems. 26

"He commenced his preaching for the New Movement at once." Public speaking, missionary work, social calls to new friends, and all the duties of a prophet were gracefully attended to. The news travelled fast, and on 10 May 1870, a delegation from the Salt Lake Stake High Council came to ascertain Lyman's beliefs. His first statement was, "[I have] smothered up [my] ability to do good for three years." 27 In the ensuing conversation, Lyman spoke frankly of his beliefs and intentions, and the next day on the high council's report, Amasa Lyman was excommunicated from the church.

Lyman loved the new cause. He wrote to his wife, "My health is good and my spirits never better one week ago today it was announced that I was cut off from the church for apostacy." From 24 May to the end of June, Lyman visited Toquerville, Stockton, Provo, Beaver, Minersville, Reed Creek, Parowan, Kanosh, and other communities spreading the new word on spiritualism. The dissident group published and instructed each other in their theology, and together they publicly espoused universalism and the rejection of physical resurrection, the concept of a personal god, successive priesthood organization, the reality of Satan, the authenticity of the Bible, the efficacy of the atonement, and the divinity of Jesus. 28 These doctrines had been taught by Lyman's spiritualist mentor, Andrew Jackson Davis.

Like most American spiritualists, the Mormon clairvoyants reported having communication from the spirits of prominent persons who tended to reinforce the beliefs of those taking part in the seance. Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Heber C. Kimball, and many other respected persons were said to have spoken through mediums.

In his journal, Lyman did not mention his participation in Godbeite spiritualism until a week after his excommunication. True to form, he had been very secretive about the circles, mediums, and communications which he must have participated in during the numerous meetings he had had with the Godbeites before he left the church in May 1870. But after the disclosure of that first seance of 18 May 1870, he wrote about his experiences often. In a period of

25Amasa Mason Lyman Journal, 8 May 1870; Francis Marion Lyman Journal, May 1870; Amasa Mason Lyman to Louisa Maria Lyman, 10 May 1870, Amasa Mason Lyman Collection.
26Ronald Walker, "The Godbeite Protest in the Making of Modern Utah" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1977), p. 113. The date Lyman was appointed president of the New Movement is not known, but was rumored as early as January 1870, when William Clayton wrote to Francis Marion Lyman; William Clayton Papers, Church Archives.
three years (1870–1873), he recorded nearly two hundred such meetings.29 There were some months in which he participated in a seance almost daily. On a few occasions he took part in as many as two or three a day. Lyman enjoyed this activity and continued with it until his death, although less frequently in his last two years.

He often wrote of these occasions, "At night had a sitting at home with good results," or "results were gratifying." He also listed his friends with whom he shared these experiences. For the most part, they were Mormon-Godbeite discontents, family members, and long time friends who had travelled to San Bernardino with him and who had returned to Utah when the colony was disbanded. The Crosbys, Flakes, Hankses, Hopkinesses, and Johnsons were mentioned often. Among the family members mentioned were Maria Louisa, his wife, and four of his children, Agnes Hila, Love Josephine, Lorenzo Snow, and Lelia D., all of whom acted as mediums for him. These four children also asked that their names be removed from the records of the Mormon church after their father was excommunicated.30

Most of the spirit contacts Lyman described in his journal came by way of rapping, speaking, and writing. The spirits always informed Lyman of the opinion or wishes of some past church leader, such as Joseph Smith, or of a deceased family member. In 1871, Amasa received the following advice through a Mrs. Crouch:

Brother Amasa,

I am happy to meet you this morning in the capacity of a circle. You are doing just what a good many others ought to do [at] the present time. Remember what I told you before concerning your own council. All will come out right. Your children wish [sic] will be yours. ... Now a little word of caution: Patience, Patience Patience, is a grand secret of all perfection. Nothing was ever discovered and investigated and done well in a hurry. We are around you and will try to help everybody who tries to help humanity. Our kindest love to those engaged in the same cause as yourself.

Joseph and Heber, Hyrum, and many friends.

From another communication the same year, Lyman heard from family members through Charles Foster, who would contact the spirit and then send information from New York.

Rosewell Lyman has a word for his Son, Amasa. He is with me, dear Father. My blessed Grandfather lives and is very happy. We are all together. Martha Mason [his mother] and Perez Mason [his uncle] and Perley Mason [his grandfather] would each be remembered to you. They would have you know that they are near to help you and you will be prospered. Your much loved Daughter, Ruth Adelia Lyman.31

Word of intense spiritualist activities in the Salt Lake Valley spread throughout the country, attracting many notable clairvoyants who were, for the

29Amasa Mason Lyman Journal, 5 January 1871–2 December 1873, passim.
30Lorenzo S. Lyman, Lelia D. Lyman, Love J. Lyman, and Agnes Hila Lyman to President Thomas Callister, 16 February 1871, as copied in Francis Marion Lyman Journal, 19 February 1871.
31Amasa Mason Lyman Journal, [no date given] January and 8 March 1871.
most part, on their way to California. Among the famous spiritualists were Emma Hardinge Britten, the author of *History of Modern American Spiritualism*, who delivered inspirational speeches while being possessed by a spirit; author and lecturer James Martin Peebles; famous New York medium Charles Foster; and John Murray Spear, an inspirational writer who claimed the gift of healing by the spirits. He also claimed to be the inventor of “the new motor” (revealed to him by a spirit).

While Lyman never met Andrew Jackson Davis, he continued to read his works intensively. Among the periodicals Lyman read were *Banner of Light* (in which Davis had a column) and the *Religo-Philosophical Journal*. He also read *Fireside Friend*, *Weekly Woodhull and Cashier*, and the *Champion of Humanity*, all of which were free thought-spiritualist newspapers. Furthermore, like every philosophical spiritualist, Lyman read the ancient histories of the Greeks, Romans, and Persians which testified to the progress of humanity. He also began to study oriental writings to broaden his perspective of universal truth. Among the writings he studies were those of Buddha, Vusuna, Brahma, and Confucius.

The *Carrier Dove*, a spiritualist newspaper published in the San Francisco area, contained numerous articles concerning the importance of continual study in the pursuit of universal truth, a concept which Lyman obviously reflected brilliantly. On one occasion the editor said:

> The student of spiritual science should enter upon his search for knowledge with as earnest a determination to find truth, no matter at what cost of time or self-sacrifice, as does the student of any other branch of science.

> Here is where Spiritualism is of practical value to mortals; its teachings are for the highest, purest, and best, in all that pertains to physical life. It not only insists upon the equality of the whole human family, [but] of its universal brotherhood [as well]. . . .

Due to organizational problems and the lack of sufficient interest among the Mormons, the New Movement eventually met its demise. The meetings in Salt Lake City became infrequent, and by 1873 most of the men had returned to their professional interests. However, Lyman’s involvement in spiritualism did not end with the end of the Godbeite movement. For the remaining four years of his life he participated in seances with his family and other community members while maintaining his interest in the writings and ideas of spiritualists throughout the country. He continued reading the *Banner of Light* and other well known spiritualist newspapers and, along with most doctrinaire members of the movement, joined the Free Religions Association and the National Liberal League. Both organizations were too radical to be popular but they nonetheless continued to advocate their belief that the kingdom of heaven would come through man rather than God. In fact, they recommended that all references to God in any public context, whether it be state and local government, schools, or

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32Ibid., 1862-1863, 1868-1876, *passim*.
34*Carrier Dove* (San Francisco, Calif.), 5 September 1888, p. 600.
Francis Ellington Abbot, a Unitarian and Harvard Seminary graduate, was the spokesman for the extreme left wing faction of American religion and founded the weekly journal, the *Index*, to which Lyman subscribed for several years.

In the last four years of Amasa Lyman's life, no significant change in his ideas or opinions occurred. His theology remained spiritualistic in nature, and he, like other spiritualists throughout the country, was confident that all religion should be a means to help mankind learn universal truth, and that no one dogma, creed, or sect could assure mankind's salvation.

When Amasa Lyman died on 4 February 1877, he was a true believer in the gospel of spiritualism. He was introduced to the movement nearly twenty-five years earlier during his service as a faithful Mormon apostle. During the succeeding quarter century, Lyman's involvement in spiritualism steadily increased, so that by the time of his excommunication in May 1870, his loyalty to spiritualism had surpassed his loyalty to the Mormon church.

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36 *Index* (Toledo, Ohio), 4 February 1870.
Mormon History Association
FIFTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING
Sheraton Inn
Canandaigua, New York
May 1-4, 1980

Program Committee: Richard L. Bushman, University of Delaware, chairman; Madelon Brunson, Alfred L. Bush, Claudia L. Bushman, Warren Jennings, Cheryl Lynn May, Dean L. May, Wendell Tripp

Local Arrangements: Duane Bunnell, Adele McCullom

Members of the Mormon History Association will receive program announcements and registration information by mail. For membership information, see inside front cover.

Plan Ahead for Future Annual Meetings

Program Committee: Davis Bitton, University of Utah, chairman
Local Arrangements: Lawrence G. Coates, Ricks College, chairman

Seventeenth Annual Meeting: Weber State College, Ogden, Utah, May 7-9, 1982
Contrary to studied and popular conception,¹ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints operated a systematic welfare program during the period between the end of the Great Basin Kingdom and the 1930s. This forgotten charitable activity became even more complex after World War I and during the 1920s, and it formed the launching pad from which the current Church Welfare Plan proceeded.

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¹I use the word "charity" because it was a common term used until the 1930s, both in and out of the church, to represent what we today generally mean by "welfare" or "social welfare." These last two expressions were also regularly employed particularly after World War I. The word "relief" was less common until the early 1930's when it became the most popular welfare expression for four or five years. Its usage was prone to be more specialized referring usually only to funds or goods given. "Social service" tended, though not exclusively, to mean other forms of help such as counseling. "Charity," "welfare," and "social welfare" normally included both kinds of assistance.

¹Betty L. Barton, "Mormon Poor Relief: A Social Welfare Interlude," Brigham Young University Studies 18 (Fall 1977): see especially pp. 76-77, 88; Thomas F. O'Dea, The Mormons (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 216; Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), p. 237. Although Building the City of God focuses on the nineteenth century, there is one chapter on the Welfare Plan of the 1930s, which is presented as a revival of the cooperative spirit within the church after several decades of decline in which social welfare lost its earlier importance; see also B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 6:433, where Roberts presents President Joseph F. Smith's general conference summary of the 1914 statistics on disbursements to the poor which is virtually all Roberts has on this subject for this entire 30 year period.
The welfare program during this earlier period was directed and coordinated by the Presiding Bishopric, with assistance from Relief Society leaders. Essentially in response to special needs, both of these bodies maintained a central program which supplemented the activities conducted by bishops and Relief Society presidents in the wards. Because of the central effort, welfare was more comprehensive in the Salt Lake City area than elsewhere. Also, the Relief Society developed a social services program restricted geographically but analogous to the much later professional church programs.

The standards of care in this early welfare program may appear meager in comparison to present expectations, but the Latter-day Saint effort must be examined in light of the times. Although standards of care inevitably differed, sometimes greatly, from bishop to bishop, these early welfare efforts were usually more elaborate and comprehensive than those of contemporary private or public agencies.

**Church Charity from the 1890s to World War I**

The end of the severe depression of the 1890s did not mean there were no longer people who needed assistance, although the problem of poverty was reduced. Residual unemployment for various reasons, plus old age, sickness and poor health, broken families, and maladjustment have always provided many needy people even in times of prosperity in America, and LDS areas were subject to the same problems. Despite general prosperity even in agriculture after 1900, rural overpopulation remained a significant problem in Mormon country. Very often those without job opportunities moved to urban areas, especially Salt Lake. New Mormon immigrants to Utah also tended to remain there. In addition, LDS unemployed wherever their residence tended to gravitate to church headquarters seeking assistance or new opportunities. Consequently, throughout this entire period welfare problems were much greater in Salt Lake City in total as well as per population than elsewhere in the church.

During the transition in economic affairs from the 1880s to the early part of this century agriculture in Mormon areas became more commercialized. Consequently farmers paid tithing increasingly in cash and less in kind. By 1900, 60 percent of all tithing was paid in cash, and by 1908 this had risen to over 83

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2 *Annual Instructions No. 5 to Presidents of Stakes and ... Bishops and Counselors...* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1903-1904), pp. 13-14. This is one of a consecutively numbered series of handbooks (variously titled) prepared by the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric beginning in 1899, henceforth cited as *Handbook of Instructions*, series number and year of issuance. Also of importance in showing Salt Lake City's welfare problems are *Handbook of Instructions*, No. 11, 1910, pp. 23-24; No. 12, 1913, p. 39; and No. 14, 1928, p. 9. See also statistical references later in this paper illustrating the larger relief problems in Salt Lake City; Circular Letter, Presiding Bishopric to Bishops, 17 June 1927, and “Employment,” Bulletin No. 129, June 1927, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946; “Some Observations Made in the Welfare Department at Relief Society Headquarters,” and Minutes of the Relief Society Presidency meeting with Relief Society presidents of six Salt Lake stakes, 14 May 1930, and Minutes of the Presiding Bishopric meeting with the Presidency and Secretary of the Relief Society, 21 May, 1931, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946, all in the archives of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, henceforth cited Church Archives. See also Richard Sherlock, “Mormon Migration and Settlement after 1875,” *Journal of Mormon History* 2 (1975): 53-68, which illustrates the problem of rural Mormon overpopulation by the latter part of the nineteenth century.
During the year the Presiding Bishopric decided to discontinue the operation of the Bishop’s General Storehouse in Salt Lake City, and requested that ward bishops dispose of tithing in kind locally. During this transition bishops’ tithing offices and granaries also fell into disuse. However, the end of tithing storehouses which had traditionally been the main source of supply for the poor did not end church assistance.

The basic system of relief or welfare during the early part of this century was based primarily on the local bishop. This has been the case from the early days of the church to the present. President Joseph F. Smith made one of the most direct and forceful public statements of this policy in October 1916:

When a man is ordained a bishop ... he becomes a father to the people.... It is his duty to be acquainted with every member of the church in his ward. It is his duty to minister to every member,... It is his duty to look after the poor, the needy, the sick and the afflicted, not that he himself is expected to do everything that is to be done in his ward, not at all; but through the agencies that he may call to his support to perform the duties that are requisite to be performed in the ward.

In 1899 church leaders began sending out periodic handbooks to stake presidents and bishops describing their responsibilities, a practice which has continued to the present. A large section of each booklet gave the bishops detailed instructions on collecting tithing. Since 1900 there has always been a section on charity which has stressed the pivotal role of the bishop in providing for the “worthy poor.”

During this era the women’s Relief Society continued to fill a significant role in helping those in need. The society tended to act rather independently, but gradually instructions from the Presiding Bishopric encouraged closer coordination at the ward level with the bishops. In 1908 the Relief Societies were instructed to furnish their bishop a monthly list of their payments to the poor. In 1910 they were asked to cooperate with the bishoprics in welfare matters so that each body would have a knowledge of the persons being assisted.

Beginning with the 1901 handbook the bishops were instructed to provide some kind of emploment, however small, to those receiving aid if they were capable of working. In 1903 the Presiding Bishopric announced the inauguration of an employment bureau to assist people in finding jobs, and asked bishops and other ward and stake officers to send in employment information on special forms. The bishopric pointed out that this would be especially helpful to new immigrants who were constantly arriving. The bureau,
maintained through this period, was similar to the one operated briefly during the depression of the 1890s. The Presiding Bishopric regularly told the bishops to provide for the poor from fast offerings and Relief Society contributions. If these proved inadequate, bishops could ask the Presiding Bishop for permission to use the ward tithing, and quite often they did so. In the early part of the century, the bishopric tried to increase and regularize the payment of fast offerings which then began to fill a greater percentage of charitable expenditures. The early handbooks reminded ward bishops to ask members for donations at least equal to what they saved by fasting, to collect fast offerings monthly, and to send the surplus to headquarters for use in wards where local sources were inadequate. However, rarely did any ward use less than its members contributed.

During these early years of the century President Smith fostered priesthood reform, and as a consequence the Aaronic Priesthood collected fast offerings each month more consistently than before. By 1908 some bishops were sending out envelopes addressed to themselves in which members could submit their donations. The Presiding Bishopric recommended the practice to all bishops, and it eventually became standard procedure.

As well as giving explicit instructions in published handbooks which they sent to all localities of the church, the Presiding Bishopric kept copious financial records and carefully measured the progress from year to year. This penchant for careful control of finances not only seemed to reflect the reemphasis on tithing started by Lorenzo Snow in 1899, but also the order and efficiency thrusts of the concurrent Progressive Era in American history.

The specific reports of various wards illustrate some aspects of the system. In 1907, for example, the Preston First Ward of the Oneida Stake in Idaho disbursed $148.90 during the year to several people in the ward, mainly because of poverty or sickness. This money was paid from $103.00 received in fast offerings and $45.90 in donations to the Relief Society. The Ephraim Second Ward of South Sanpete Stake used $574.50 for relief, of which $215.95 came from fast offerings, $146.55 from Relief Society donations, $200.00 from tithing, and $12.00 from other sources. Most of the funds were paid out to widows. The Twenty-second Ward in Salt Lake Stake spent $961.47 which came from fast offerings, tithing, and Relief Society donations. The Eighteenth Ward also of the Salt Lake Stake used $1,672.22 for relief of the poor, and again these funds came from several other sources.


11See all the issues of Handbook of Instructions beginning with 1900. Handbook of Instructions, No. 5, 1903-04, p. 12, asked members to donate at least an amount equal to what they saved by fasting. Handbook of Instructions, No. 4, 1902, p. 11, asked bishops to send in surplus fast offerings to the Presiding Bishopric for use in other wards.

12Ward and stake yearly reports, passim, Presiding Bishopric Annual Reports, 1900-1953; ward and stake yearly reports, passim, Presiding Bishopric Financial, Statistical and Historical Reports of Wards, Stakes, and Missions, 1884-1955, Church Archives.


sources. The funds were employed to assist 152 families over the course of the year — some because they were out of work, some because of sickness, others because of old age and blindness.\textsuperscript{15} 

In 1910 the bishop of the Second Ward in Salt Lake reported that the ward paid the hospital and funeral expenses of a nonmember and supported the wife and five small children with money, food, coal, and clothing, and provided them with Christmas. The bishop explained that all needy families in his area were looked after systematically and that suffering could not long continue because the Relief Society visited every family monthly and reported to him all needy cases.\textsuperscript{16}

The Presiding Bishopric kept careful note of the expenditures by the bishops in the wards but did not leave systematic records of central spending except in selected years. A similar incompleteness exists for the charity provided through the church president, the trustee-in-trust account. However, most central expenditures came from tithing. After 1915 the president usually disclosed the total church charity figures each year in general conference. In some years this figure was much greater than the amount accounted for in Presiding Bishopric records. The president may have considered such things as some forms of church employment or certain building expenses or part of mission office upkeep as charity. Church pensions may also have been included, for which there are only scattered references.\textsuperscript{17}

In April conference of 1916 President Smith reported that $3,279,900 had been paid to the poor during the previous fifteen years through all church channels, which was an average of $218,660 per year. He said in spring conference of 1911 that over $200,000 had been used for this purpose during 1910. Presiding Bishopric Office records show that $135,153 was spent directly in the wards during the year. The amount spent in missions for charity plus that expended directly for various kinds of assistance by the Presiding Bishopric came to $28,787, which made a total of $163,951 under the direction of the Presiding Bishopric. The rest must have been paid through the trustee-in-trust account.

Although the number assisted cannot always be ascertained before 1915, generally around 5 or 6 percent of the members received help in any given year, and usually 75 percent or more of them temporarily. In 1907, for example, 14,230 people were assisted in wards out of a population of 288,970 or 4.9 percent. During 1908 a total of 17,784 were aided out of 301,693 members in wards which equals 5.9 percent. In 1915, 19,547 members or 5.2 percent received charitable assistance — 4,497 or 23 percent of these permanently throughout the year.

The per capita welfare expenditure in wards from fast offerings, Relief Society collections, and tithing was about 47 cents in 1891 and a penny less in 1895. Then it dropped to 35 cents for 1900, 38 cents for 1905, and 39 cents in 1910, before rising to 45 cents during 1915, which approximated the depression years of the 1890s. This of course did not include other donations, nor the central

\textsuperscript{15}See appropriate stake and ward annual reports, 1907, Presiding Bishopric Financial ... Reports of Wards ... 1884-1955.
\textsuperscript{16}Journal History of the Church, 5 January, 1911, p. 5, Church Archives.
\textsuperscript{17}Presiding Bishopric Office Journal, No. 1, 31 August 1906, Church Archives; "General Church Charity Account, 1911," Presiding Bishopric Annual Reports 1900-1953.
accounts of the Presiding Bishopric and trustee-in-trust. From the early 1890s to 1901 the fast offering per capita alone varied between 12 and 16 cents. From 1901 to 1909, in keeping with the push in the handbooks and the general prosperity, it rose from 12 to 20 cents and then remained about at that level until it began to rise again after World War I.

As indicated earlier, welfare expenses in Salt Lake City wards were much higher than the rest of the church and more of the funds came from tithing. For example, during 1906 these wards used about 40 percent of the tithing, fast offerings, and Relief Society collections spent by all wards. In 1915 this figure was down to 34 percent. In addition, the bulk of the central funds of the Presiding Bishopric and church president was disbursed for relief assistance in the city. Yet Salt Lake City membership was only about 13 to 14 percent of the total outside of missions.\(^{18}\)

Besides supplying direct relief to the needy, the church also showed concern for the general social welfare and health of its members during these early years of the century. This may be illustrated by such things as Relief Society sponsored boarding homes in Salt Lake for young working women from rural areas, a special Relief Society nurses’ school in operation after 1898, a continuing interest in helping new immigrants make the transition to Zion, the completion of LDS Hospital in 1905 with subsequent free care for the poor, and a three-year nursing program at the hospital in which the church defrayed most of the personal expenses.\(^{19}\)

The church also participated in humanitarian efforts to help the victims of disasters and wars. The biggest efforts were for both the victims of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and World War I. Within several months of the quake nearly $100,000 in cash and several dozen carloads of food and various other supplies had been sent for the needy. Besides assistance sent to Europe for church members, the church sent $110,000 to the European Relief Council and the Near East Relief Committee as late as 1921.\(^{20}\)

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\(^{18}\)Presiding Bishopric Annual Reports, 1900-1953 and Presiding Bishopric Financial . . . Reports of Wards . . . 1884-1955. Both files are voluminous and contain practically countless statistics.


The Relief Society and Social Welfare from World War I to 1930

World War I created a need for the Relief Society to become more involved in social welfare than ever before in its history. This activity carried over into the 1920s and was amplified. When regarded in the broader historical setting, this was rather natural. The United States was rapidly becoming an urban nation; by 1920 for the first time more people lived in what were considered urban areas than on farms and in small towns. Urbanization not only increased social problems but also made them more evident as people crowded into the cities. Additionally, the anonymity of city life meant less neighbor-to-neighbor help. Private social welfare agencies all across the country multiplied during the post-World War I and 1920s era, and they were more involved in the social work of their communities than ever before or since in American history. Although local and state public relief and health and welfare institutions were expanding at the same time, their role was minor to what it was to become during the 1930s with federal government financing and prodding. The national political climate of the 1920s did not foster government expansion of social services, but it did not inhibit and at times encouraged the movement of private institutions into these areas. The Relief Society was a vigorous part of this national process, and inevitably so it seems when one considers the organization’s history of humanitarian concerns and charitable work.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917 the federal government assigned the Red Cross to be responsible for the families of American military personnel who might be in need of assistance. The Relief Society volunteered to do this work for LDS families and the Red Cross agreed, provided the Relief Society would train for the work and meet Red Cross standards. Consequently four LDS women went to the first Home Service course given by the Western Division of the Red Cross which was held in Denver during the autumn of 1917. Upon returning, these four helped direct the Home Service work out of Salt Lake, Ogden, Cache Valley, and Utah Valley.

Because of this experience the Relief Society leadership and several church leaders became more aware of social welfare philosophy, methods, and problems. Initially receiving strong encouragement from Joseph F. Smith, Amy Brown Lyman led out in this work in the ensuing years, read much of the literature in the field of social work, attended many national social welfare conferences, and served on numerous state and local, public and private welfare boards.

The Social Advisory Committee, made up of the heads of the church auxiliary organizations and Apostle Stephen L Richards, also exerted an influence toward church study and adoption of current social welfare practices.

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Created in November of 1916 by the First Presidency to study and make recommendations on such things as church dress and dance standards, it soon evolved toward study of social problems and their solutions. After attending the National Conference of Social Work in Kansas City during May 1918 Apostle Richards indicated he was impressed with the importance of LDS organizations keeping in touch with social welfare information. He added that "if we are not the leaders in the social work in our communities, strangers come in and take up the work."24

Likewise President Joseph F. Smith exhibited a desire and willingness to learn from advances in the world, and similarly wanted the new-knowledge institutionalized within the faith. He was also disturbed about involvement of outside social welfare agencies with LDS cases. Certainly the heritage of an all-encompassing church did not die with the nineteenth century.

President Smith showed a deep interest in the reports brought back from the Denver Red Cross institute. On several occasions during 1918 he stressed to Amy Brown Lyman the need for a Relief Society social service department, and encouraged her to further her education in social welfare which she did. He felt the church must improve its charity program by adopting some of the newer modern social welfare methods.25 At the close of the war, upon the recommendation of Stephen L. Richards, needy families of LDS military personnel under the Red Cross were turned over to the Relief Society rather than the private Charity Organization Society. With this added responsibility, with increasing demands on church assistance especially in Salt Lake City, and with the growing need to cooperate effectively with other welfare agencies, Relief Society leaders realized it was time to finalize the movement for a social welfare department. Although President Smith died in November 1918 before his plans for such an agency were realized, shortly thereafter in January 1919 Relief Society leaders organized a social service department with Amy Brown Lyman as director. A similar department was organized for Utah Stake in Provo four months later.26

Increasingly during 1919 and throughout the twenties the Relief Society Social Service Department served as a center which cooperated with other private and public welfare agencies in the interest of needy LDS families. This also allowed the society to take a central role in community welfare developments. Almost all of this work was centered in Salt Lake, but there was occasional inter-city communication and cooperation involving large centers even outside of Utah.27

World War I also provided a new stimulus for the Relief Society to augment the wheat storage program it had begun during the 1870s. However, by the


26Ibid.; Relief Society Presidency to the Presiding Bishopric, 21 December 21 1921, pp. 1–2, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871–1946; and Handbook of the Relief Society, 1931, pp. 52–53.

27Lyman, "Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917–1928."
spring of 1918 the federal government wanted to purchase the grain for the war effort. Although hesitant at first, after inferences of disloyalty the society agreed to the sale. By the end of June around two hundred thousand bushels had been sold to the Food Administration, which gained for the church some national publicity as well as cash for all of the participating Relief Society units.28

At the Relief Society semi-annual conference in April 1922 President Clarissa Williams recommended that the wheat fund, now totalling $412,000 with interest, be centralized under the Presiding Bishopric, and that the yearly interest be used by the local units for maternity, health, and child welfare purposes, a plan subsequently carried out.29 In addition the Relief Society general board with its central program in Salt Lake pursued the same kinds of activities, included child welfare study within the weekly lessons for local units, and provided funds and established classes for nursing.30 Also illustrative of the health concerns of the church was the 1922 completion of the Primary Children’s Hospital in Salt Lake City, and its practice of foregoing payment from poorer families.31

The multiplicity of Relief Society social welfare activities, including its programs for mothers and children, in several ways reflected national trends.32 Social work was characterized during the twenties by a subtle change from being primarily preoccupied with preventing social maladies to seeking a more positive, complete, and secure life. This may be illustrated by the change in emphasis from control and prevention of epidemics to well-baby clinics, regular examinations, health education, and instruction in cleanliness and diet.33 All of these things the Relief Society provided either directly or through cooperation with other private or public organizations.

After the war the Relief Society continued to work closely with the Red Cross by doing the case work on LDS families who applied at the Red Cross for assistance or who had lingering war-related claims. During the great influenza epidemic after the war, the Relief Society assisted whenever LDS families were involved, taking over some Red Cross cases completely.34

In August of 1919 a Community Clinic was established in Salt Lake where doctors gave free medical service to people unable to pay for it. The Relief Society Social Service Department was asked to do the investigative work on all LDS

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29A Centenary of Relief Society, pp. 48-49; Lyman, “In Retrospect,” p. 468.
31Children’s Friend 21 (July 1922): 371; and Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Staker Oman, Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), Chapter 4.
32Clark A. Chambers, Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), especially the chapter entitled “The Crusade for Children.” This is the most thorough book to date on voluntary social service associations and social service leaders and movements of the 1920s.
33Ibid., pp. 99-100.
applicants, and continued with follow-up supervision, working closely with the patient’s bishop in virtually all cases. By January of 1929 the Relief Society had been responsible for about 7,300 of the 8,600 patients who received treatment from the clinic.\textsuperscript{35}

After the Relief Society Social Service Department began doing case work for the Red Cross and Community Clinic, the Charity Organization Society (the major private Salt Lake City non-Mormon social service organization) began referring its LDS cases to the Relief Society, which either transferred them to their respective wards or else assisted them directly, especially if they were transients. Soon other private and public agencies were calling upon the church’s social service department for assistance when LDS people were involved.\textsuperscript{36}

In September of 1921 the Presiding Bishopric, which presided over the Relief Society in welfare matters, allowed the society to register certain classes of clients with the community Social Service Exchange: transients, all unemployed, and “unstable families.” The society had created its own church exchange as early as 1918. The purpose of such “exchanges” across the nation was to help coordinate the work of social welfare and prevent duplication of service. The bishopric also authorized the society to meet with other social agencies in monthly conferences which in 1924 led to the formation of the Central Council of Social Agencies in Salt Lake. In the 1921 bishops’ handbook, the Presiding Bishopric encouraged similar cooperation in other cities. In November 1926, when the cooperating Salt Lake agencies decided to formalize their unofficial policy for sharing the case load, the Relief Society said it would assume responsibility for all families in which the head was LDS. The next year the Society accepted families with non-LDS fathers if the homes were culturally Mormon. In the course of its work the Relief Society cooperated and worked with over a dozen private social service agencies.\textsuperscript{37}

Prior to the creation of modern welfare systems during the mid-1930s, much official as well as informal cooperation existed between public and private agencies. This was markedly the case in Mormon Utah, especially in Salt Lake City. In the fall of 1919, upon the request of the judge the Relief Society Social Service Department began assisting the city’s juvenile court with LDS families and individuals. Soon the department was working with other courts and penal institutions in the interest of LDS offenders.\textsuperscript{38} Eventually the Relief Society became involved in helping public institutions in several other significant ways.

Typically across the nation each county had some responsibility, however minor, for assisting the poor. Some of the larger counties maintained hospitals as well as infirmaries for elderly people. During the later Progressive Era most states passed laws requiring either the state or the counties to provide small

\textsuperscript{35}\textsuperscript{35}Ibid.; and Relief Society Presidency to the Presiding Bishopric, 21 December 1921, pp. 2-4.

\textsuperscript{36}\textsuperscript{36}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{37}\textsuperscript{37}Lyman, “Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928,” pp. 5, 15, 21-22, 24; Relief Society Presidency to the Presiding Bishopric, 21 December 1921, pp. 2-4; and Handbook of Instructions, No. 13, 1921.

\textsuperscript{38}\textsuperscript{38}Lyman, “Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928,” pp. 1, 8; and Relief Society Presidency to the Presiding Bishopric, 21 December 1921, p. 4.
pensions to mothers with children who had no means of support. In late fall of that year the Salt Lake County Charity Office asked the Relief Society to investigate and supervise LDS mothers’ pension applicants. Lacking the necessary staff, the society could not comply until September 1921. From that time the social service department of the society also began assisting the county in investigating and supervising numerous other LDS families applying for general county assistance. By 1928 and 1929 the yearly totals amounted to approximately 330 cases, slightly more than a third of LDS cases receiving county aid. During the depths of the early 1920s depression the department also assisted the county by interviewing unemployed LDS applicants seeking work in the temporary county wood yard.

Often the Relief Society worked with relatives of the needy or with local bishops to supplement the usually inadequate mothers’ pensions and general county poor relief budgets for families. The society also got needy LDS elderly people admitted to the county infirmary, and arranged county hospitalization for sick LDS poor. This relieved the problem of overcrowding at LDS Hospital. Additionally the society worked jointly with other public agencies such as the Utah State Department of Health to help Latter-day Saints in need. Relief Society leaders reasoned that public assistance for Latter-day Saints was legitimate since as citizens they paid their fair share of taxes. However, both the Relief Society and the Presiding Bishopric felt the church’s social service department should interview, counsel, and supervise assistance to LDS families. This was only in keeping with the requests from public agencies who requested the administrative help.

The Relief Society endeavored to fill an active role in the general development of social work throughout the community and state, and also worked for favorable welfare legislation. In 1923 as a member of Utah’s House of Representatives Amy Brown Lyman introduced the bill which provided for the acceptance of the provisions of the federal Maternity and Infancy Act. The Relief Society all over Utah, and to a limited extent in several other western states, worked hard to implement this act. In 1925 Mrs. Lyman helped organize the Utah State Conference of Social Work, and the Relief Society became a regular member. She and several others of the Relief Society Social Service Department regularly held important positions in this and other social service organizations such as the Community Chest board. By writing letters, visiting legislators, and submitting petitions containing over twenty-five thousand signatures, the society lobbied to get an institution for the mentally retarded in Utah. As a result the 1929 legislature passed the necessary legislation.
The general board of the Relief Society and the Presiding Bishopric provided funding for the social service department. During 1929 this amounted to almost $17,000, about $12,500 of which was used for paying a staff varying between ten and twelve, plus other minor administrative expenses. The rest was for emergency relief. Although the Relief Society participated in the Community Chest — from 1926 the community central funding agency for private social service organizations — and the church and church members contributed to it, the Relief Society did not receive any monies from this organization.44

The social service department was not a general relief disbursing organization, as may be surmised from the limited amount of its emergency relief fund. Instead, it provided service or relief to special cases such as non-residents or transients in need who seemed to gravitate to Salt Lake City in greater and greater numbers, adding to the already much higher relief needs existing there.45 The Relief Society was also responsible for placing foster children in homes. It helped place boys in the Lund Home supervised and administered by Zion’s Aid Society, a small special organization financed by the First Presidency which endeavored to assist or look after the needs of neglected or delinquent LDS juveniles. The Relief Society also assisted the Presiding Bishopric by inspecting various public and private institutions which served Latter-day Saints. In 1922 the society was given responsibility for placing LDS children for adoption. When the state later required that adoption agencies be licensed, the Relief Society applied for and received the required document in 1927.46 In 1922 a female employment bureau was created as part of the social service department and by the end of 1929 it had placed nearly 12,000 women in jobs.47

The Relief Society Social Service Department cooperated closely with wards in Salt Lake City, and to a much lesser extent with wards elsewhere. From 1920 through 1929 it registered 8,409 cases, which included direct applicants plus referrals from the Presiding Bishopric, other private and public agencies, and ward bishops or Relief Society presidents. In virtually every case the social service department endeavored to work with the local leaders of the applicant in organizing a plan of assistance. As the decade progressed it became more common for wards to refer only their serious or aggravated cases to the social service department, which tried to solve the problem by itself, or in conjunction


45See footnote 2.

46“Child Placing — Relief Society Church Agency For.” Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946; “Report by Hattie James,” 1 March 1929, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence 1871-1946; Lyman to Cannon, 21 February 1930, containing “Relief Society Social Service Department Report,” 1929, pp. 5, 8, 15: see all of CR 4/6, bx 18, fd 11, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence 1871-1946.

with the local leaders, or by utilizing resources in the community.\footnote{Lyman to Cannon, 21 February 1930, containing “Relief Society Social Service Department Report,” 1929, pp. 11-13; Genevieve Thornton, “The Relief Society Social Service Department,” \textit{Relief Society Magazine} 18 (January 1931): 14-17; Lyman, “Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928.”; Presiding Bishopric to Amy Brown Lyman, 23 August 1920, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946; and Relief Society Presidency to the Presiding Bishopric, 21 December 1921, and two pages of case summaries included with the letter.} In this manner the trained and specialized social service department was a precursor to the modern professional LDS Social Services which helps with or takes over completely the difficult and serious social welfare cases of ward bishops.

Although the bulk of direct assistance was disbursed in the wards under local officers, in some cases the social service department provided direct relief.\footnote{Lyman, “In Retrospect,” p. 466; and Lyman, “Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928,” p. 15.}

To supplement its emergency relief fund the Relief Society General Board maintained a storehouse which it took over from the Salt Lake stakes in 1925, just four years after it had been established. Under this new direction, used clothing and furniture were received, renovated and remodeled, and distributed to the needy,\footnote{Relief Society, Minutes of Meetings with the Presiding Bishopric, 1819-1938, 19 September and 26 October 1921, 13 January 1925, Church Archives; Circular Letter, Presiding Bishopric to Relief Society Presidents and Counselors, November 1924, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946; Lyman, “Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928,” pp. 18-20, November 1924, February and October 1925; Mayola Rogers Miltenberger, “Some Aspects of the Welfare Activities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (M.A. thesis, Tulane University, 1938), pp. 39-40; Presiding Bishopric to Relief Society President Louise Robison, 4 February 1930, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946; Lyman to Cannon, 21 February 1930, containing “Relief Society Social Service Department Report,” 1929, p. 1, a mildly sarcastic response to a Presiding Bishopric letter questioning the administration costs of the Relief Society Social Service Department.} making the storehouse somewhat similar to the Deseret Industries of the present church welfare program.

The Presiding Bishopric was leery of the Relief Society social welfare program becoming too centralized and over-staffed, and counseled the society leadership on several occasions to keep the bulk of the church assistance program operating at the ward level and administered by voluntary labor. To fill this intent the bishopric often encouraged the Relief Society to educate the local leaders — the bishops and ward Relief Society presidents and their assistants — in social welfare methods, at the same time preserving the basic Mormon institutional patterns of providing for the poor.\footnote{Lyman to Cannon, 21 February 1930, containing “Relief Society Social Service Department Report,” 1929, pp. 11-13; Genevieve Thornton, “The Relief Society Social Service Department,” \textit{Relief Society Magazine} 18 (January 1931): 14-17; Lyman, “Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928.”; Presiding Bishopric to Amy Brown Lyman, 23 August 1920, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946; and Relief Society Presidency to the Presiding Bishopric, 21 December 1921, and two pages of case summaries included with the letter.}

The Relief Society Social Service Department grew essentially out of the exigencies of World War I and its immediate aftermath, and in this capacity it served primarily Salt Lake City. Its fundamental rationale for existence later became one of education and training for the larger church which, it was felt, could only properly take place if there was a central department where professional workers could get experience with case work methods before these methods were applied to the entire organization. Toward the end of the decade the manager of the department, Amy Brown Lyman, compared it to a university normal school “which is a laboratory for experimental work and training
purposes." She believed that training for nurses must include experience with a variety of patients. Similarly, she argued that to be efficient the social service department needed a case load representing as many social problems as possible. She pointed out that professional education was a necessary part of the process, and as a consequence some of the ladies working in the department obtained training in eastern schools of social work. In 1923 the department began presenting lectures to nurses training in public health at LDS Hospital. This service was expanded to the University of Utah medical school in 1927 at the invitation of the dean, a clear illustration of the department's professional status.\textsuperscript{52}

Beginning in 1919 and continuing throughout the twenties the Relief Society and its social service department became deeply involved in educating local leaders and members in social service ideas and methods. In 1920 they conducted an intensive six-week summer school course in family welfare at BYU at which sixty-five of the eighty-three stakes in the church were represented. By the end of 1930 sixty-three training institutes averaging four weeks each had been conducted in thirty-six localities for 2,985 Relief Society officers and members. Some of these local officers also received additional training and experience in the social service department. Social service topics were also presented in stake and general conferences. Beginning in 1920 one of the lessons every month in ward Relief Society meetings was devoted to various social welfare topics as outlined in the \textit{Relief Society Magazine}.\textsuperscript{53}

\section*{The Regular Church System of Charity during the 1920s}

During the 1920s charity work in the wards continued to be the responsibility of the bishops and Relief Societies. Many of the instructions from the Presiding Bishopric remained the same as earlier, such as funding, use of church hospitals, helping immigrants, etc. However, there were more explicit explanations in the handbooks and some new items were added. In the 1921 handbook of instructions to bishops, the first since 1913, greater stress was placed on the bishop helping members in need to find employment and become self-supporting, and on the bishops making use of the priesthood ward teachers in reporting distress such as sickness or need. The Relief Society was explicitly reminded to visit and comfort the sick and needy and attempt to lift them spiritually. Probably more significant were the instructions to tighten the local administration. In the past the bishops and Relief Society officers had worked rather independently of each other; now under the bishop’s authority they were to meet monthly or oftener to outline well-defined plans for assisting and working with the poor and those in distress. In late 1921 the Relief Society General Board sent a questionnaire to all stakes, and the results indicated a lack of cooperation between ward bishops and Relief Society presidents.\textsuperscript{54} Apparently these new instructions were needed.


\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., pp. 30-33; \textit{Handbook of the Relief Society}, 1931, pp. 53-56.

On the recommendation of Amy Brown Lyman, important changes were also inaugurated in the social welfare role of ward Relief Society visiting teachers. Until the beginning of 1921 they reported on specific cases of need in the regular open meetings. They also decided how much assistance each poor family needed within their districts, and they delivered the cash or commodities themselves. Under the new system the visiting teachers continued to report illness and indications of distress and need, but it was done privately to the ward Relief Society president. The president with the bishop then decided, after investigation, the kinds and amounts of assistance to be given and one or the other personally delivered the help. In wards where the social welfare burden was heavy the Relief Society president was instructed to appoint a special assistant, eventually designated as a social service aid, to help with the problems. These aids then received special training in the general Relief Society education program.

By circular letter and bulletins to all bishops during June 1927, the Presiding Bishopric explained that they had to turn away numerous people seeking employment every day. Consequently, as in the past, they asked ward bishops to keep members in their own communities if possible because unemployment was becoming very serious in large cities, especially in Salt Lake City. They also required each bishop to appoint an employment agent to seek jobs for ward members, and to report any surplus opportunities to the Presiding Bishopric.

In 1928 the Bishopric sent a new handbook to ward bishops. It restated the employment instructions of the previous year, as well as many other instructions contained in previous handbooks. It also pointed out that now worthy needy members requiring hospital care could be sent to non-LDS institutions if they would accept payment from the ward after services had been rendered.

This new set of instructions was by far the most extensive up to that time, reflecting, it seems, the new emphasis in social work. In great detail the handbook outlined how charity work should proceed in the ward. While the traditional responsibility of the bishop and Relief Society officers was not altered, the role of trained though unpaid Relief Society social service workers and their obligation to investigate carefully each case was emphasized.

This change in emphasis reflected the movement among the Relief Society leaders, as already discussed, as well as national trends. There were only five college-level schools of social work in 1915; however, by 1930 there were at least forty, and as the profession developed it became more intensely casework.

55Lyman, "In Retrospect," p. 462; A Centenary of Relief Society, pp. 44-45.
56Handbook of the Relief Society, 1931, p. 54; and Lyman, "Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928," pp. 10, 20; and for an example see Emmaretta G. Brown, "History of Church Welfare Work in Granite Stake, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1929, 1933," unpublished typescript in the files of the History Division.
58Handbook of Instructions, No. 14, 1928, pp. 9, 16, 30-37, 69, 74.
59Ibid., pp. 31-35.
During the economic breakdown of the 1930s a greater awareness gradually developed among social workers that unemployment was different from many other problems causing need, and that it did not require such careful investigation and supervision.

From our present viewpoint, probably the most startling section of the 1928 handbook was instruction on the order of responsibility for charity assistance. The immediate family and close relatives were charged with primary obligation, as they were under public assistance law. Secondly, the county was considered responsible, and thirdly, the church. Earlier official Presiding Bishopric instructions in 1921 had mentioned the responsibility of relatives in conjunction with hospital care, and had advised the bishops to make use of mothers’ pension laws in states where they existed. Also beginning in 1921, as outlined previously, the Relief Society cooperated with county charity officials in Salt Lake in getting aid to some LDS families. However, most needy Latter-day Saints received assistance from the church as this was the established pattern. Even after 1928 public assistance remained minimal, and made no difference in church welfare spending trends until federal relief programs began in 1933.

The percentage of the church population in wards who received some church assistance during the 1920s varied from approximately 4.5 percent in 1920 to about 5.5 percent for most of the decade, approximating the percentage assisted earlier in the century, and then rose to 6.5 in 1930 as the first effects of the Great Depression began to be felt. However, the per capita expenditures for charity in wards during the twenties climbed by approximately a third over the 1890s and mid-teens, and was roughly 60 percent higher than during the first decade of the century. In addition there were various kinds of extra services provided by the Relief Society in the twenties for which monetary value could not be calculated. Fast offerings rose from approximately 20 cents per capita during 1910 through 1918 to 33 cents by 1924, which helped meet the increase, but then it declined to 22 cents toward the end of the decade. Bishops consequently used a greater percentage of tithing as Relief Society charity collections remained fairly stable.

The statistics for the 1920s also illustrate the consistency of Salt Lake stakes in spending much more per capita for welfare than other areas of the church. The wards in these six city stakes claimed between 13 and 14 percent of the church population, but they spent about 38 percent of the total church welfare budget from fast offering, tithing, and Relief Society funds during 1925, or $1.77 per capita compared to about 46 cents per capita for the wards outside of Salt Lake City. In 1930 the comparative figures were virtually identical. Yet in addition the Presiding Bishopric and Relief Society Social Service Department in both 1929 and 1930 spent nearly an extra $100,000 for charity in the city, making a total of $225,000 for 1929, and $240,000 for 1930, including the ward bishops'...
expenditures. This did not include what the trustee-in-trust might have disbursed for charitable purposes in Salt Lake. If President Heber J. Grant was correct when he stated in general conference that total church charity during 1930 amounted to $667,496, then the Salt Lake trustee-in-trust figures would have been considerable.

During this entire period the church charity system operated in the missions under the direction of mission and branch presidents, but the figures are not as complete as they are for stakes and wards. In 1920 missions spent $44,499; by 1929 this had risen to $68,301, and then the amount for mission charity dropped off in 1930 to $56,574. The per capita welfare spending was under the average in all wards for these years, but except for 1930 it was higher than the average of the wards outside of Salt Lake City.

Although welfare standards were generally improving both in the church and country during the first thirty years of this century, they were not nearly as good as they have been in the nation during the past ten to fifteen years. But our society is much wealthier today. The goal of organized charitable assistance during that earlier era was simply to supply only the very basics of need, although some reform-minded people such as certain of the Relief Society leaders, for example, were making efforts, sometimes unsuccessfully, to raise charity above that level. The charity statistics for this period are also somewhat misleading in the sense that there tended to be much more neighbor-to-neighbor giving of goods and services than more recently. This was especially the situation in rural areas where welfare was usually not as well organized as in the cities, both in the church and out. The Relief Society presidency believed this individual charity was one of the reasons why rural relief needs in the church did not appear to be as great as in urban areas.

**CONCLUSION**

Before the introduction of federal relief spending during the 1930s, the church spent much more on charity and assisted many more people in Utah than either the private Community Chest or public charity. Even though the LDS population was not more than 50 percent of Salt Lake County, during 1929 the total of county charity cases was 1,188, while those in the church wards of the

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64 These statistics, unless otherwise footnoted or stated (such as from Conference Reports), were extrapolated from the yearly Presiding Bishopric records contained in Presiding Bishopric Annual Reports, 1900-1953, Presiding Bishopric Financial . . . Reports of Wards . . . 1884-1955.

65 The mission statistics were also taken from these two collections of Presiding Bishopric materials.


67 Minutes of the Relief Society Presidency meeting with Relief Society presidents of six Salt Lake City stakes, 14 May 1930, Presiding Bishopric, General Correspondence Files, 1871-1946.

county totalled more than 7,700 to mention the numbers assisted by the Presiding Bishopric, Relief Society, and trustee-in-trust central funds. Relief Society leaders believed, and the statistics seemed to indicate, that Latter-day Saints generally were more prone to ask for help than non-Mormons, and bishops and Relief Society ward presidents more likely to offer relief than other relief officials whether public or private. In comparison with the rest of the states during the twenties Utah was one of the lowest in public spending for charitable purposes, but much higher than average in expenditures for education and road maintenance.71 Apparently public funds could have been available for more welfare, but in terms of the standards of the time were not needed because the church was shouldering the burden.

In the summer of 1925 a national Red Cross representative visiting Salt Lake City commented to Presiding Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon, “We realize today that one of the greatest problems in the matter of welfare is in the rural districts. I believe the Relief Society of the Mormon Church is in a position to do and is doing more good in that respect than any other organization that I know of.”72 After personally inspecting and observing the church welfare system during the winter of 1929 the field secretary of a national social welfare organization wrote back to John Wells, a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, and declared: “The Church is certainly doing a great deal for its people and I would like to say to you something that I have said ever since my return to New York — I believe that your church group as a whole has the most socialized outlook on welfare matters [of] any other group that I have come in contact with.”73

The vacuum in church care of the needy which presumably existed from the demise of the Great Basin Kingdom to the inauguration of our present welfare program in the 1930s, was in fact no vacuum at all. LDS Church welfare for its poor was alive and progressive.

69“Comparative Charity and Welfare Service — Salt Lake City — 1930” Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence 1871-1946; “Salt Lake County Charity,” vol. 12, 1929 and “Disbursements,” 1929, p. 105, Presiding Bishopric, Financial ... Reports of Wards ... 1884-1955.

70“Salt Lake County Charity,” 1929, p. 1, Minutes of the Relief Society Presidency meeting with Relief Society presidents of six Salt Lake City stakes, 22 April 1930, and Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence, 1871-1946.


72Lyman, “Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928,” pp. 19-20. The quote is from a talk by Presiding Bishop Cannon, and is as he remembered the conversation.

73Ralph Drowne to Bishop John Wells, 29 March 1929, Presiding Bishopric General Correspondence Files, 1871-1946.
Winifred Graham and the Mormon Image in England

By Malcolm R. Thorp

Time has not been kind to Miss Winifred Graham (alias Matilda Graham Cory). Before her death in 1950 she claimed the distinction of having published more books than any other living British authoress. Altogether she produced eighty-eight works, including six anti-Mormon "thrillers," and an emotionally charged popular history of the Latter-day Saints.1 But today her writings are all but forgotten and, except for her role in the various campaigns against Mormonism, there is little in her voluminous tomes to resurrect.

Graham is, however, important to the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in England. As a tireless, anti-Mormon crusader from 1908 to 1924, she became known as the leading figure in the movement to ban Mormon missionaries, much to the exasperation of church leaders. David O. McKay, for instance, wrote of her last efforts against the Saints in 1924: "The activity of the Saints in Britain in tracting is arousing the devil, who is manifesting his evil designs through his co-partner Winifred and her ilk." In the same letter he indicated that chivalry made him reluctant to fight a woman, and therefore implored the Lord to "take her in hand soon!"2 Thus, as a crusader, as well as a

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2David O. McKay to Pres. Heber J. Grant and counselors, 27 February 1924, David O. McKay Scrapbook, vol. 132, Church Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives. For the reaction of other church leaders, see: Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star 74 (7 March 1912): 152-56, (11 April 1912): 282-85, (2
perpetrator of some of the most scurrilous and damaging of anti-Mormon images in England, Graham is a figure who deserves serious attention. It might be true, as one literary critic has asserted, that her anti-Mormon novels are "sensationalism without a realistic basis," but we should remember George Orwell's observation that popular six penny novels (such as Graham wrote) are more important than serious literature in understanding prevailing attitudes.  

I

Winifred Graham was born into an upper middle-class Victorian family in 1874. As was typical for this period, formal education was not squandered on the fair sex, and what training she received was within the confines of the home. Nevertheless, she early displayed a vivid imagination which she put to use in writing romantic stories, eventuating in the publication of her first novel, *On the Downgrade*, in 1896.

While no extensive analysis of her early novels can be attempted here, it can be pointed out that Graham wrote about the fashionable world of high society. No social reformer, she adhered to prevailing values of the upper middle class, with its concern for "respectability." Such virtues as sobriety, generosity, good manners, respect for the law, and chastity provided the moral framework for her fiction.

Graham's religious outlook is also important. Typical of the upper middle class, Winifred was a devout adherent of the Church of England. Aware of the declining influence of Christianity, she believed that her generation stood in desperate need of Christian revival. In her novel *The Vision of Savoy* (1905), Graham admitted the failure of the churches to attract adherents, and even the decline of religion among the upper classes. But, she argued, despite Christianity's obvious faults, the church deserved support: "Why debunk what brings comfort and peace to innumerable multitudes and has done so for centuries? . . . The Church may have faults . . . but without organized religion God knows what would have become of this country." Thus, Graham's novels are permeated with the spirit of revivalism, Christian moralism, as well as the conviction that supernatural forces influence human destiny. Moreover, she displayed intolerance toward religious ideas that conflicted with her own. Graham ridiculed such beliefs as Islam, Zionism, the Catholic Cult of Mary, and the health code of the Christian Scientists. Given her rigid religious outlook,
coupled with her conviction that modern civilization was threatened by growing paganism, it is not difficult to understand her abhorrence for Mormonism. For nearly sixteen years after her initial discovery of the Mormon menace, Graham became a woman with an idée fixe.

In 1906 Winifred married Theodore Cory, the son of a wealthy coal magnate. The following year, during a long stay in France, she and her husband became good friends with Harry de Windt, a well-known traveler and writer. Their conversations profoundly influenced her life for many years to come. As she later recalled:

He fired my imagination with an account of his recent visit to Utah, where he lived among the Mormons and studied their ways. He said he could not write about them himself, having received so much hospitality, but begged me to a propaganda novel, giving away their many secret rites and the polygamist marriages still in vogue, though they had given to the United States their oath to forego plurality of wives. This task I commenced soon after we returned from France. . . .

For something like twelve years I fought the wealthy body of Elders who infested Europe at that time.8

Inspired by de Windt’s exciting reflections and assistance, Winifred by her own account spent most of the next year undertaking the “vast research needed” to write her first anti-Mormon novel. Her task was made easier with the receipt of “fourteen secret books” from Utah which provided detailed accounts of the temple ceremonies. The publication of Ezra the Mormon in 1907 formally launched her literary attacks.9

In 1911 Graham became a leading participant in the crusade against the Saints. As has been argued elsewhere, much of the impetus for this movement came from churchmen and other conservative elements who felt threatened by the “acids of modernity” that were eroding Victorian values. To many, Mormonism came to epitomize societal degeneracy. Originating in Liverpool, the anti-Mormon campaign soon spread to other cities in the north and Midlands, where a number of mass rallies were held in early 1911. Among the leading agitators in this movement was Hans Peter Freece, a Mormon apostate from America, who was brought to England by the Interdenominational Council of Women to warn young girls about the “sex appeal and lying promises” of Mormon elders.10

That April, Graham helped to organize a rally at Holborn Hall, London. She later recorded:

It was a rousing night, for furious Mormons came to try and shout down the voices raised against them. I was the only woman speaker and felt proud to be on the platform with such men as Archdeacon Sinclair, Marshall Hall the great advocate, Prebendary Carlile,

8Graham, That Reminds Me, p. 32.

9Ibid., p. 57. Ezra the Mormon was Graham’s most successful anti-Mormon novel. It was reprinted by Everett and Co. in 1908 and came out in the Newnes Sixpenny Novel series in 1912. George Newnes was one of the leaders in the production of cheap literature that appealed to a mass audience. The novel evidently went through numerous reprints in the Newnes series — the number of which has been impossible to determine. Graham also claimed that Ezra the Mormon was translated into twelve languages. See the Christian Statesman 51 (February 1917): 84.

and a number of M.P.’s, to say nothing of stalwart Bishop Welldon, then Dean of Manchester. . . . The hall was packed and a real flame of earnest feeling spurred the speakers to give their best.\footnote{Graham, That Reminds Me, p. 59.}

In addition, she published a series of articles in the \textit{Daily Express} on such themes as “The Mormon Pass to Slavery,” “Orgies of the Mormons,” and “the blood curdling doctrine of blood atonement.”\footnote{\textit{Daily Express}, 28, 30, and 31 March 1911.} Graham also appeared on the platform as a lecturer for an organization called the British Anti-Mormon League and delivered lectures on topics such as “Mormonism, a Danger to Womanhood.”\footnote{British Anti-Mormon League, \textit{Program of Meetings}, n.d., copy in correspondence and general files of the British Mission, Church Archives.}

On the literary front, her novel, \textit{The Love Story of a Mormon} was published in 1911. The setting of this book was the anti-Mormon crusade of 1911, and many of the characters were actual participants. This was followed by \textit{The Sin of Utah} (which was serialized in the popular magazine \textit{Tit-Bits}, in 1912) and \textit{The Mormons: A Popular History} in 1913. The latter work was certainly not serious history, but it was an effective polemical tract in which the Mormon past was depicted as a continuous story of tyranny.

She later reminisced about her hectic activities during the years of the crusade:

\begin{quote}
It was hard going getting the proselytizing Elders out of England, showing them up at every turn, speaking against them in public and writing still more anti-Mormon novels packed with truth, to rouse the public conscience. But as our good friend Bishop Welldon said, who worked with me against what we considered a form of white slave traffic: “we let in the light.”\footnote{Graham, That Reminds Me, p. 56.}
\end{quote}

In truth, however, the crusade was a failure. In Parliament only a few Conservative MPs supported the effort, and the Home Office, after a thorough investigation of the alleged charges against Mormon missionaries, concluded that there were no grounds for legal action. While the campaign did have an adverse effect on missionary work, the prevailing attitude of toleration was too strong a bulwark for the crusade to overcome.\footnote{Thorp, “The Mormon Peril,” pp. 82-83, 88.}

In 1914 the crusade gradually abated as public attention came to be focused more on crippling domestic unrest, problems in Ireland, and finally the outbreak of war with Germany. During the war, Winifred remained almost the lone agitator against the Saints. In 1916 she published \textit{Judas of Salt Lake}, a rather crude novel that failed to attract public attention. Undaunted, she continued her assaults on the Mormons by claiming that the \textit{Millennial Star} exaggerated the number of church members killed during the conflict.\footnote{The Latter-day Saints’ \textit{Millennial Star} 79 (8 February 1917): 88-95.} Those who had actually died in combat, she argued, were really German Saints who were fighting for the Fatherland.\footnote{“The Mormon Propaganda in Great Britain,” \textit{Christian Statesman} 51 (February 1917): 86.} This latter allegation is especially revealing because Graham was active during the war in efforts to convince the British Government to arrest or
expel all Germans residing in the country.\textsuperscript{18} Her hatred of the Germans was so intense that German and Mormon became synonymous. Winifred then warned “British-born maidens” against “yoking themselves in marriage to American Mormon soldiers and going back with them as wives.”\textsuperscript{19} And, despite the fact that the Mormons had withdrawn most of their missionary contingent from Europe, she asserted that the Saints had made great inroads while the men were away in the trenches:

The war gave the Mormon elders their greatest opportunity for proselytizing. In the absence of the menfolk and because of the deaths of thousands of soldiers, the women of the poorer classes fell easy victims. Secret meetings were held in homes that attracted the neighborhood without attracting suspicion.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1919 Graham received an invitation to be a delegate at the National Reform Association’s third World’s Christian Citizenship Conference at Pittsburgh. Three years earlier she had declined a similar invitation due to the war. With the return of peace, Winifred remained reluctant because of the “hazards” involved in this journey. Not only was she worried by the dangers of the trans-Atlantic voyage, but Graham was frightened by the possibility of Mormon revenge:

My father was convinced I should never return, with so many enemies. In Utah the Mormons said I was “possessed of a devil” and an American who knew Salt Lake City well warned me not to go there for they might — “fix my food.”\textsuperscript{21}

It was largely owing to the persuasion of former Senator Frank J. Cannon of Colorado, a well-known opponent of Mormonism, who contacted Winifred while he was in England, that she finally agreed to accept the invitation. Despite the dangers, she deemed it a duty to represent her country.\textsuperscript{22}

During the week-long conference in November, Graham presided as chairman of the session entitled “World Conference on Mormonism.” In this capacity she delivered a vindictive keynote address in which she charged the Mormon church with perpetrating the worst form of tyranny which threatened the “social, political and economic freedom . . . of this age.” Aiming her remarks at Senator Reed Smoot and his Mormon political colleagues, Graham warned Congress against allowing Mormons to participate, arguing that Saints owed first allegiance to the “Mormon kingdom,” and thus the participation of Mormons was tantamount to allowing emissaries of foreign governments at war with America the right of representation. Even more ominous was Graham’s contention that the church was involved in an insidious conspiracy to overthrow

\textsuperscript{18}Graham, \textit{That Reminds Me}, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Daily Express}, 20 April 1919, reprinted in \textit{Christian Statesman} 53 (June 1919): 236-38. She also complained about the appointment of Elder B. H. Roberts as chaplain in the United States Army. Roberts, she asserted, had been proven unfit to sit in the House of Representatives in 1900, and thus it was a travesty to allow such an immoral man to serve in this capacity; \textit{Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star} 81 (1 May 1919): 180-82.

\textsuperscript{20}Personal Journal of James E. Talmage, vol. 23 (1919-20), p. 85, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

\textsuperscript{21}Graham, \textit{That Reminds Me}, pp. 62-63. In 1911 she had expressed fears that the “Avenging Angels” had been commissioned to murder her. See \textit{John Bull} (11 February 1911): 192.

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 64.
all earthly governments in order to make way for "the kingdom of God on Earth":

Its plans are laid for a generation in advance. And through all the years necessary for the maturing of those plans its priests and people work with a devotion such as Christians might well imitate. No task whose success may inure to its own belief is too large for its patience. It purposes to rule the world. Its success during twenty-five years just past has been such as to give to it every encouragement.

For these reasons, she concluded, the Christian world "so jealously regardful of religious liberty" should reconsider extending such a freedom to a sect that makes "the most destructive and blasphemous attacks on evangelical Christianity."23

According to Winifred's account of the proceedings, her speech had an "electric effect on the audience."24 Yet, it was a speech made by Mrs. Lulu Shephard of Salt Lake City that caught the attention of most reporters.25 She did, however, make a lasting impression on Apostle James E. Talmage, who had been sent to the conference as the church's representative. Talmage attempted to reply to Graham's remarks, but he was shouted down by the partisan audience. He subsequently wrote in his personal journal, "If hatred, bitterness, malicious falsehood and malignity in general can ever be associated with perfection — then we have just about reached the end of a well-nigh perfect day." Winifred Graham, in his opinion, "went far beyond the newspaper accounts of what she was going to say by charging up to us every crime in this category."26

Returning home to England, Graham found an outward calm prevailing in attitudes toward the Mormons. Within the ruling structure, however, headway was at last being made. As I have shown elsewhere, the forces of intolerance had gained supporters in the bureaucracy of the Home Office, and in early 1919 missionaries from Utah were prevented from obtaining visas for the United Kingdom. It was not until May 1920 that this ban was lifted, largely through the diplomatic initiative of Senator Reed Smoot. Predictably, the arrival of new missionaries touched off a new wave of hostility.27

In the vanguard of the new campaign was Winifred Graham, along with three other women writers: Miss Violet Quirk, Miss Agnes Lister, and Mrs. Lulu Shephard.28 They were joined by the Reverend Sir Genille Cave-Browne-Cave, the "Cowboy Baronette," whose travels in western America reputedly made him an expert on Mormonism. From his London pulpit he railed against Mormon elders, claiming that "in Texas and Arizona it is not a crime to shoot a Mormon

24Graham, That Reminds Me, p. 64.
25See Pittsburgh Dispatch, 13 November 1919, and Pittsburgh Post, 13 November 1919. Graham was mentioned in the editorial in the Deseret News, 15 November 1919.
missionary. Here we give them police protection.” In addition, the film *Trapped by the Mormons*, which claimed to reveal graphically the sinister practices of missionaries, was shown in various theatres, including London’s West End.

Graham contributed to the campaign through a series of articles published in the *Daily Express*, and the publication of a new sensational novel, *Sealed Women*. Despite her efforts, however, the crusade of 1922 proved to be a short-lived affair, largely because the public image of the Mormons was undergoing change. As a result, Graham’s lurid accounts of the continued existence of polygamy were no longer readily believed. As Robert Graves and Alan Hodge have written, Mormonism appeared to the public as “a dying, dated faith, which might attract a few cranky adherents of either sex, but had long since abandoned its practice of polygamy, which alone would make it news.” Even the more rational anti-Mormon writers realized this fact. Frank Ballard, for example, denied that the Mormons were practicing polygamy, but argued against the autocratically controlled Mormon commercial and political system, which he believed to be “definitely and forever opposed to modern civilized government.” Other writers saw the Mormon church as being tempered by the times and gradually modifying the repugnant dogmas of the past. In other words, the church was seen as being transformed into just another of the multitudinous sects in America. It was even asserted that younger-generation Mormons were beginning “tacitly, though not openly, to challenge their Church’s concept of life.” No longer, then, were the Saints considered a threat to civilization.

Although these new impressions of Mormonism were gradually changing the public image of the Saints, it was still possible in the 1920s for stump campaigns to wreak havoc with proselyting activities. Thus, in 1924 Graham and her fellow crusaders launched what was to become the last major campaign against Mormonism. In that year she published her final anti-Mormon story, *Eve and the Elders*, which in many ways was the best of her six “thrillers.” Although the plot was similar to her other stories, wherein a beautiful heroine is rescued at the last moment before falling victim to a villainous Mormon polygamist, she did succeed in building characters and creating an atmosphere of suspense. But, as one reviewer noted, “We should want stronger evidence than we find here to convince us that in these days of ordered government and easy communication,

30 Handbill advertisement of the movie *Trapped by the Mormons*, in correspondence and general files of the British Mission, Church Archives.
31 Great Britain, Home Office, 45/234, 822/46 (newspaper clippings on Mormon issue).
32 See *The Times Literary Supplement*, 30 March 1922, p. 214 (review of her book *Sealed Women*).
murder and polygamy would be rampant in any one of these United States."

In other words, the traditional stereotypes employed by Graham in her fiction were no longer thought credible.

Junius S. Romney, a missionary in Nottinghamshire, wrote that as a result of Graham’s latest campaign, missionaries were attacked with sticks and buckets of water by irate housewives in the village of Finningley. But, he added, opposition came primarily from older people who were hampered by tradition, while the younger generation he found to be “more frank and pliable.” Moreover, the British press no longer was receptive to anti-Mormon sensationalism. Lord Beaverbrook, the influential press lord and owner of the Daily Express (the leading newspaper involved in anti-Mormon propaganda since 1910), admitted to Senator Smoot that the campaigns had been unfair to the Mormons and promised to end such harassment in his papers. Largely through the efforts of Apostle James E. Talmage, similar pledges were received from the editors of many of the most influential newspapers in the country. Lacking media support, public crusades were no longer possible.

Although Graham’s novel The Love Story of a Woman was republished in 1932 under the title In the Toils of the Mormons, there is no evidence that she was active against the Saints following the collapse of the 1924 crusade. By this time she had turned her attention to spiritualism, which became the abiding passion of her life until her death in 1950. Indeed, Graham’s fiction continued to be hampered by her reliance on the element of credulity, although her best writings were produced after she turned from the topic of Mormonism. Her most popular books were undoubtedly her “Wolf Net” series, which were stories of unbelievable feats of courage accomplished by a female robber who eventually returned stolen plunder to rightful owners. Winifred believed, however, that her anti-Mormon activities were among her greatest accomplishments. She wrote in her autobiography, “I found it thrilling to fight with voice and pen this mighty kingdom working for self-interest, a vampire in fact, sucking the blood of Europe with its wolf-like emissaries in sheep’s clothing hot on the heels of British womanhood.”

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37 Times Literary Supplement, 6 March 1924, p. 146.
42 In 1922 Winifred’s father died. Shortly afterward she claimed spiritual communications with him. These she subsequently published in My Letters From Heaven (n.p., 1923) and More Letters From Heaven (n.p., 1927). See also her propaganda novel espousing the spiritualist cause: Consummated (London, 1929).
43 Graham, That Reminds Me, p. 53.
44 Ibid., p. 59.
II

Beautiful heroines rescued at the last moment from elders bent on blood
atonement — such is hardly the stuff of which serious literature is made.
Moreover, Graham was not a very original writer; she borrowed heavily from
the stockpile of traditional images, and all seven of the stereotypes identified by
Arrington and Haupt were used profusely in her writings. On the other hand,
with some degree of skill Winifred adapted these images to an English context
and related Mormonism to the concerns of society. As will be shown, in many
ways her writings are typically Edwardian with the fears she displayed for the
abandonment of traditional values, as well as her acceptance of society as it
existed before the Great War. And, it must be said, although Graham was far
from being one of the great writers of her generation, her anti-Mormon novels
are at least better than the typical “6d. dreadful” written on the topic of the
Saints.

While the stereotype elements in her stories concerning the Mormons might
appear to us to be unbelievable, they were probably not impediments to the less
sophisticated readers who avidly devoured her literary outpourings. How she
was able to build upon popular images is seen in this passage written in 1912:

It has been said that the business of English Elders is simply to obtain pretty wives for rich
Mormons in Utah, who can well afford to keep a number. But the girls little know what
they are letting themselves in for, since life out there is entirely different to England, and
some of the farmers are most superstitious, cruel, and wild. Situated perhaps a hundred
miles from the nearest railway station, with revolvers as plentiful as watches, who knows
what may happen, what has happened, and what is happening today among the rough,
hard fellows of the west?

She described the Great Basin as a region entirely closed from the Wasatch
Mountains to the Sierra Nevadas, with the mountain ranges falling off toward
the center, and all rivers flowing toward the middle rather than the sea. Escape
from this desolate land was said to be virtually impossible: the “Wasatch
Mountains — to cross these would prove certain death, as thousands had found
to their cost.” Once a convert entered into Utah, she claimed, there was virtually
no way to leave unless the Mormons willed otherwise.

Similar distortions are evident in her descriptions of Salt Lake City. The
Tabernacle was described as a magnificent building modeled on Solomon’s

45 Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, “Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in
46 Samuel Haynes has described Edwardian England as a time of transition in which the old
Victorian ideas (such as materialism, evangelism, and prudery) dwelt uneasily together with the new
forces of liberation that viewed Victorian conventions as limitations on human freedom and
Press, 1968), pp. 4-12. Graham obviously espoused the former of the two viewpoints, and thus she
can be said to be both Edwardian and Victorian in her outlook.
47 See *Escaped from the Mormons* (London: Holden and Hardingham, n.d.), *Awful Disclosures
of Mormonism* (n.p. [1915]), *In the Grip of the Mormons* (London: Lakeman and Tucker, [1920]), A.
49 Graham, *Sealed Women*, p. 76.
50 Ibid., p. 230.
Temple: "Ebony, marble and alabaster meet the eye at every turn, while precious stones from Mormon converts stud the door." 51

In one of her novels, the setting of which was the 1920s, the Endowment House (which was torn down in 1889) was depicted as a "kind of Westminster Abbey of Mormonism." 52 "When you look around," exclaimed her English heroine, "this seems just like any other city." The streets were said to be crowded, and the city was divided into rich and affluent sections, whereas in other areas there were conditions of abject poverty. 53 Mormon children were portrayed as "coarse of speech, foul-mouthed and impudent; they are a disgrace to civilization." 54 Such descriptions certainly seem closer to England, especially the crowded ghettos, which recall the East End of London more than anything in Utah. Graham's borrowing from her own environment led one critic to remark that "her Salt Lake City might be Huddersfield [an industrial city in Yorkshire]; her elders could attend any chapel in the West Riding [Yorkshire]." 55 Indeed, even that much venerated English social custom, "tea time," somehow found its way into Graham's Mormon setting. 56

Nor does the Englishness of Graham's approach to Mormonism end with her inability to properly describe the physical surroundings in Utah. Her discussion of polygamy, which was the crucial issue in her novels, has nothing to do with freeing American Mormon women from the alleged bonds of servitude, but is directly related to the emancipation issue in England. The question of the female suffrage was a leading issue from about 1905 to 1914 and, as one scholar has recently asserted, women writers could no longer either ignore the issue or remain neutral. 57 Caught in the passions of the moment, Winifred in 1910 published her novel The Enemy of Women, in which she argued that aggressive feminism hardened women's sensibilities and ruined their character. She chastised the suffragette's methods, which frequently ended in the destruction of property, and in her story the militants even plotted to murder the prime minister.

Graham was opposed to efforts to change the position that God had ordained for women in society. This conception of divine order is revealed in her attitude toward marriage. "God," she averred, "had consecrated marriage to such an excellent mystery that in it is signified the spiritual union of Christ and His Church." 58 Typical of the Victorian attitude, 59 the female characters in her

52 Graham, Eve and the Elders, p. 162.
53 Ibid., p. 98.
54 Graham, the Mormons, p. 250.
55 Times Literary Supplement, 6 March 1911, p. 146.
56 Graham, Judas of Salt Lake, p. 247.
58 Graham, That Reminds Me, p. 43.
59 For an excellent discussion of the two kinds of women envisioned by the Victorians, see Peter T. Cominos, "Innocent Femina Sensualis in Unconscious Conflict," in Martha Vicinus, ed., Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 155-72. Cominos's analysis (p. 168) describes Graham's attitudes: "The pure woman was
novels were not liberated, self-reliant, twentieth-century women, but were angelic creatures (paragons of virtue and piety) who needed to be saved by clever gentlemen of quick intelligence and high social standing. The fact that her heroines are British born also made them superior to the dull-witted, bucolic Scandinavian peasant girls, as well as their sexually promiscuous American counterparts.

Graham did not, however, perceive all women as models of virtue. Rather, she believed that women, when not recipients of proper training, were susceptible to irrational behavior, especially sexual desires. Her image of the blackguard Mormon elder, bent on procuring young ladies for Zion, is revealing of her Victorian attitude toward women. "These Saints," she wrote, "with caressing eye and tender touch, [were] experts in plumbing the depths and shallows of female emotions." In another passage Graham wrote of the elders "charging women's batteries" through sexual magnetism. This disparaging attitude toward female weakness finds no better example than in Ziba Wayne, the deceptive Mormon elder in Love Story of a Mormon. He was characterized as being especially adroit in manipulating feminine weaknesses: "He knew his influence with women seldom failed; he had studied hypnotism in the States. The girls he tracked down would need to be armed like Achilles to ward off his attacks." Young girls, brought up in a permissive atmosphere, were easy victims for these highly trained, "oily tongued," female procurors. They had to be protected against their own irrational impulses: Parliament, she proclaimed, must expel these "evil" missionaries.

In Mormonism, Graham saw the reverse of her noble conception of femininity. She wrote of Mormon elders instinctively looking "down on the weaker sex," and she asserted that Mormons believed it was ordained that men should "crush" women, and not be subdued by them "like the petticoat-governed Gentiles in many American cities." The instrument of suppression was the all-powerful priesthood, and even the temple ceremony she believed was created to "unsex the sexes," or, in other words, to degrade women by initiating them into their inferior social roles. Like many anti-Mormon critics, she believed that the temple was the scene of sensuous religious rites. Women were not only disrobed and anointed by debauched priests, but the ceremony was

innocent, inviolate, inspirational and indulged; the impure woman (less than a woman) was doubtful, detected, detestable and destroyed."

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60 Note the fairy-tale ending to Judas of Salt Lake: Ivy Bentley discovers that her rescuer was not only clever but also a man of property. Ivy says, "Do you know I am not to be Mrs. Giles at all? When I found myself actually engaged . . . I asked my lover to tell me his Christian name, for, oddly enough, I thought I had never heard it. To my surprise he said it was not Giles, it is his surname which has been kept from us, and he is Sir Giles Cameron. So I am to marry a baronet! . . . Do you know . . . he has several houses, his favorite is Edgar Hall, a glorious country place. . . . Every benefit that Heaven may shower upon me seems to have fallen into my lap tonight." (p. 298)

61 Ibid., p. 267; Eve and the Elders, p. 160; Sealed Women, p. 214.


63 Graham, Judas of Salt Lake, p. 114.

64 Graham, The Love Story of a Mormon, p. 101; Eve and the Elders, p. 17; Sealed Women, p. 11.


66 Eve and the Elders, p. 162.
highlighted with the impersonation of Eve by a thinly clad female, and climax by secret orgies.\textsuperscript{67} While there is no evidence that such passages freed Graham from the need to confront her “own sexual frustrations directly,”\textsuperscript{68} it is evident that she was attempting to portray Mormons as deviants from established sexual norms.

Mormonism was conceived by her as a patristic society where women were treated no better than beasts of burden. “I may tell you,” she quoted from a Mormon elder, “that wife-whipping is not uncommon in Utah. We have a saying that a man who is good at managing his cattle will be able to manage women.” In this masculine-dominated society conceived by Graham, men reaped the rewards of feminine-dominated society perceived by Graham:

One man he knew, who took contracts for sheep-shearing, armed all his wives with shears, drove them in wagons to the field, and watched them work hard, while he sat, with folded arms, basking in the sun. Then, when sheep-shearing time was over, and they had gathered in the hay for him, and worked themselves nearly to death over the grain harvest, no leisure came with the cessation of outdoor toil. The winter was spent over the spinning-jenny and loom.\textsuperscript{69}

Despite the Manifesto of 1890, she remained convinced that while such notions were no longer widely accepted, polygamy was still secretly practiced in Utah. To her, polygamy was a system of male sexual gratification and one which inevitably led to the breakdown of social values and produced “anarchism.”\textsuperscript{70} Children were raised by mothers who had no time, leisure, or power to inculcate higher cultural values and as a result were subjected to the worst forms of poverty and neglect. “In fact,” she asserted, they lived “in an atmosphere of miserable jealousy, herded together as soon as born like animals in pens.”\textsuperscript{71}

While Graham, writing in the comfortable environs of St. Albans, her fifteenth-century manor house at Hampton Court, could play the role of social critic of conditions in far-away Utah, she failed to come to terms with the relevant social issues of her own society. Like many of her privileged Edwardian contemporaries, Graham exhibited disdain toward social inferiors. What is obvious is that she did not really like the working class — the same people whom she hoped to save from sexually magnetic Mormon procurators. “I am afraid the

\textsuperscript{67}\textit{Daily Express}, 28 March 1911; \textit{Sealed Women}, p. 85; \textit{Sunday Illustrated}, 29 October 1922.

\textsuperscript{68}Charles A. Cannon, “The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign against Mormon Polygamy,” \textit{Pacific Historical Review} 43 (February 1974): 61-82. There is no denying that sexual fantasy was an element in the attack against the Latter-day Saints. But it is difficult to relate Cannon’s conclusions concerning subconscious sexual impulses to individual writers. In only one instance does Graham involve explicit sexual intercourse in her stories (\textit{Judas of Salt Lake}, pp. 196-203), and even here she leaves much to the readers’ imagination. Graham’s use of sex is meant to discredit, not to fulfill her hidden sexual desires. According to A. D. Leavis, authors of Graham’s generation were genuinely preoccupied with ethical problems, “whatever side attractions there may be in the way of unconscious pornography and excuses for day-dreaming.” \textit{Fiction and the Reading Public} (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952), p. 64. Certainly it is impossible to illuminate on Graham’s subliminal sexual desires.

\textsuperscript{69}Graham, \textit{Sealed Women}, p. 176. In this same story it is asserted: “That men had a perfect right to do what they liked in regards to women, was the creed which had been drummed into her ears from earliest childhood.” Ibid., p. 137.

\textsuperscript{70}Graham, \textit{Eve and the Elders}, p. 172.

\textsuperscript{71}Graham, \textit{The Mormons}, p. 122.
working classes are not all that one could desire” — these words were uttered by a disgruntled master in one of her stories, but they reflect Winifred’s attitude well enough. “There is a difference in class,” she wrote, “though one rather hates owning up to it.” “Breeding” was the critical difference that separated common people from persons of quality. The Mayfair Lady was able to size up the former domestic servant (Addie) in only a blink of the eye:

The woman of the world summed up at once the woman of limited experience and poor birth. She saw the vulgar ostentation of cheap finer, the lack of breeding in manner as well as feature, and noted the sudden knowledge which came to Addie, that she was out of her depth in the waters of confusion.

Her stories are built around heroines who come from respectable middle class situations and factor workers and domestic servants whose lack of character prompted their conversion. Working class girls were depicted as appearing “unintelligent and vacant,” the type which seeks after cheap sensations. It is always defects of character — the lure of materialistic promises, disenchantment with hard work, or sexual promiscuity — that explains the attractions of Mormonism. What her victims share in common is the desire to escape “the commonplace,” a phrase pregnant with class bias: the implication is that social inferiors ought to be content with their station in life.

Graham does reveal an awareness as to why “sturdy mill girls from Lancashire and parts of Yorkshire,” as well as servant girls, would find the prospects of a better life in Utah attractive. “It is said,” she wrote, “that these missionaries with indomitable perseverance, appeal to the ‘discontent which is divine’ inherent in all human nature.” The overworked servant, the mill hand, was still the thunderous roar of the looms, and the sweated workers of the Midlands eagerly grasp at brilliant pictures of fresh life midst holy men and women [in Utah],” she added. Even Graham understood that “young weary out servants, tired of soul and cross mistresses,” and young Watford factory girls “working for low wages” could be induced to join the Latter-day Saint religion. Yet, although she seemingly recognized some of the hard realities that working class women were forced to endure, she did not protest against social abuses. Indeed, her novels offer no hope of social improvement for the lower orders. Instead, Miss Graham argued that however gruesome the conditions were in industrial England, life amongst the Mormons was infinitely worse.

III

As we have observed, once converted to the anti-Mormon cause Graham became compulsive in her desire to destroy Mormon influence. In this regard she

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72Graham, Sealed Women, p. 111.
73Graham, Ezra the Mormon, p. 230.
74Ibid., p. 216.
75Graham, Eve and the Elders, p. 22.
76Graham, Judas of Salt Lake, p. 108.
77Graham, The Mormons, p. 203.
78Ibid., p. 264.
79Ibid., p. 204.
was following a familiar pattern established by such Victorian women novelists as George Eliot, Charlotte Bronté, and Elizabeth Gaskell, when confronted by issues they considered to be morally wrong. In Graham's case, she was outraged by polygamy, which she believed to be sexually degrading and ruinous to the sanctity of the home, two issues that also caught the attention of her Victorian predecessors.

While George Eliot considered Mormon missionaries to be “fluent but perfectly uninfluential, grinding the same barren chaff, and never hitting on any topic which could arrest the hearers,” Graham found them to be a threat to British womanhood. In the early 1920s she claimed that Mormon elders had induced no less than twenty thousand (British?) girls to Utah within a ten-year period. Although her figures are grossly distorted, we must ask, Why did the Mormons appear so ominous to Graham, whereas Eliot found them to be ineffectual?

It would appear that the answer to this question can be found in the transformations that were occurring in attitudes toward women, marriage, sex, and the home during the Edwardian age. The historian Edward Hynes has aptly remarked,

The essential fear is far greater . . . than fear of animality; it is a fear that society will change so radically under these liberating pressures as to remove it from the authority of the established order and of the abstractions that that order depended on: property, the family, Christianity, class, the dominance of men.

Conservatives such as Graham deplored such changes. Graham was convinced that the forces of evil — the anti-Christ — were gaining ascendancy in society and that England’s moral influence in the world had correspondingly declined. National recovery, she argued, could only be accomplished through the refurbishment of spiritual life. Graham even borrowed from Milton the idea that England must regain her old supremacy of teaching nations how to live. What is amazing is how much she shared in common with the Saints whom she so despised!

Given Graham’s obvious overreaction to Mormonism, coupled with the alienation that she felt toward modern civilization, we can understand why she

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84 Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, p. 287.

85 Graham, *That Reminds Me*, pp. 51, 70, 89.
viewed the elders as the epitome of degeneracy. In attacking the Saints, she was striking out against a visible enemy which symbolized the encroaching evils apparent in her own society. Her female senses were horrified by her conception of male dominance in Mormon society. But, were the Mormon elders really as bad as she conceived them to be? It is at least plausible that to her the patriarchal, monolithic, Mormon monster was a composite representation of sexual licentiousness, socialism, and paganism. And thus, Mormonism represented mass man at his worst.86

Graham's interpretation of Mormonism cannot be properly understood outside of the environment in which she wrote. Although she borrowed heavily from traditional sources hostile to Mormonism, she blended these with impressions from her own society, thus creating a new synthesis that reflected conservative, middle-class, Edwardian ideals and prejudices. While her interpretation of Mormonism was eventually buried beneath the weight of more reliable information on the Saints in Utah, Winifred was largely instrumental in reinforcing and perpetuating the negative image of Mormonism among her generation. Even today, one can be impressed with her unfailing seriousness and self-conscious assurance, if not her sense of perspective and fairness.

In 1881 Mormon author Emmeline B. Wells expressed her optimism regarding the place of women in history:

History tells us very little about women; judging from its pages one would suppose their lives were insignificant and their opinions worthless. . . . Volumes of unwritten history yet remain, the sequel to the written lives of brave and heroic men. But although the historians of the past have been neglectful of women, and it is the exception if she be mentioned at all, yet the future will deal more generously with womankind, and the historians of the present age will find it very embarrassing to ignore woman in the records of the nineteenth century.¹

In 1922 Arthur Schlesinger noted that “if the silence of the historians is to mean anything, it would appear that one-half of our population have been negligible factors in our country’s history.”²

Until recently, both Wells and Schlesinger have been voices in the wilderness of American historical writing. Fifty-two years after Schlesinger’s comment, another study concluded that things had not changed much and specifically accused American historians of being professional magicians, making women disappear by using their pens as magic wands.³ And as late as

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1968 Leonard Arrington noted that a male bias was one of the major problems that still permeated Mormon historical writing. In many ways, both in American and Mormon historical writing, this neglect has been a function of the historian’s ideas about woman’s historical significance. Until recently historians have studied chiefly the institutions, important personalities, and the major economic and political events of the past. By concentrating on these areas they have reflected an ideology of woman’s “proper” place, a view that assured that she might appear as a footnote, but hardly with a face or an identity. When studies have appeared, most only viewed woman in relationship to others. While her life is usually actualized in the relationships identified by sister, daughter, wife, and mother, she also cries out to be understood and accepted as an individual. By denying her a real place in history, she has been effectively denied an identity and individuality.

In recent years the study of history has moved into an interdisciplinary age, concentrating less on the “big” themes and more on the grass roots of historical experience. This new social history has witnessed the emergence of local and family history which, by its very nature, has focused more and more on woman’s life and contributions. This means that the lives of all people — men, women, and children — are getting a closer look by historians.

Mormon historical writing has been affected by the same forces. Pressures from within the historical profession itself as well as challenges from the culture have led to a new Mormon history. Part of this has led to a new appreciation for the role and significance of women in the Restoration movement.

What follows is an attempt to indicate directions. Much of what is listed here is the beginning of a new effort to document and study woman’s place in Mormon history. While many good studies have appeared in the last decade or so, much work remains to be done. Our concern is primarily with this recent work, and with the documents upon which all work must be based. With some exceptions, we have excluded the large body of literary works (novels, poetry, essays) by Mormon women. We think that these deserve a separate essay. Our work has also focused on the Utah Mormon woman’s experience, but we trust that what we have to say is applicable to women in the larger restoration setting.

7Arrington, “‘The Search for Truth and Meaning in Mormon History,’” also noted the tendency in Mormon historical writing to deal only with the leaders at the top and ignore people below. He called this the “centrifugal bias.” Our concern here should not be taken as a denial of either family or childhood history. We believe that good history must include the whole family, but we believe that the fuller picture is only possible when all the parts are understood.
8A full understanding of Mormon women is only possible within the fuller context of American history. Of the growing works on women in American history, the following are recommended: Joanna Schneider Zangrando, “Women’s Studies in the United States: Approaching Reality,” American Studies 14 (Autumn 1975): 15-56; Mary P. Ryan, Womanhood in America, From Colonial
All libraries in Utah have made a special effort to collect and identify material on women in Mormon history as well as on women in the American West. The best repository for manuscript material on all aspects of the experience of Mormon women is the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. A published guide is available: Christy Best, compiler, Guide to Sources for Studies of Mormon Women in the Church Archives, Church Archives Guide No. 1 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976). This is a forty-four page annotated listing of diaries, letters, notebooks, autobiographies, oral histories, etc., arranged alphabetically by author. An unpublished listing, now being revised and updated, is also available for use in the Historical Department under the title “Latter-day Saint Women: A Selected Bibliography of Non-fictional Published Works in the Historical Department. . . .” This twenty-page listing (indexed by person) was compiled by the staff of the Church Library and is divided into three parts, with very little annotation: (1) monographic works, (2) journal articles, and (3) serial publications. Especially valuable are the two-page listing of the relevant material in the publications of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers and the lists of material in the Woman’s Exponent, the Relief Society Magazine, the Instructor, and the Improvement Era.

The Marriott Library at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, has produced a ten-page listing of material in its collections, Women in Utah, Mormon, and Western History (1975); and the Lee Library at Brigham Young University, Provo, has produced, in addition to an unpublished register, a nine-page listing, Women’s History Archives (which introduces its growing collection), and a sixteen-page annotated listing, Women in History: A Guide to Selected Holdings of the Women’s History Archives.

In addition to the manuscript material in the possession of the Utah State Historical Society in Salt Lake City, there is the Oral History Project, primarily the work of Marilyn Warenksi, “Status of Women in Mormon Culture” (transcribed 1974–1978), which is of great importance for contemporary history. There is also material in the Utah State Archives and of particular value are the files of the “Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women in Utah,” much of which was used in the preparation of the 1966 report, Women in Utah.

The Daughters of Utah Pioneers maintains a museum and library-archives in buildings located near the State Capitol in Salt Lake City. While the museum is open to the public, the use of the manuscripts in their possession is restricted.

Brigham Young University Press, 1976). It is indexed and provides a concise summary of the record as well as the location of the original and known copies or printed editions. Of the 2,894 entries, 506, or approximately 18 percent of the listings, represent women authors.

Of tremendous aid is Andrea Hinding and Clarke A. Chambers, eds., *Women's History Sources* (New York: Bowher Press, 1979). This work contains a thorough survey of libraries in the United States regarding their holdings on women's history, both Mormon and non-Mormon.

Publications by and/or for Mormon women are also important sources of information. They are *The Young Woman's Journal*, published monthly from October 1889 to October 1929; *The Woman's Exponent*, published semi-monthly from June 1872 to February 1914; and *The Relief Society Magazine*, published monthly from January 1914 to December 1970. Also valuable are the various publications of the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, beginning on a monthly basis in 1939 and continuing to date. A more recent effort is *Exponent II*, published by Mormon women in the Boston area. Its philosophy and goals are revealed in a short note in *Dialogue* 11 (Spring 1978): 96-99. Few historical studies have examined these publications, but two offer valuable insights: see Sherilyn Cox Bennion, "*The Woman's Exponent*: Forty-two Years of Speaking for Women," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 44 (Summer 1976): 222-39; and Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Remember the Women of Zion: A Study of the Editorial Content of the Woman's Exponent, A Mormon Woman's Journal" (M.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1977). See also Leonard J. Arrington, “Louisa Lula Greene Richards: Woman Journalist of the Early West,” *Improvement Era* 73 (May 1969): 28-32.

**GENERAL SURVEYS AND INTERPRETIVE WORKS**

Specific period and geographical studies are provided in the following:

An interpretive study by Leonard Arrington, “Persons for All Seasons: Women in Mormon History,” is scheduled to appear in BYU Studies. Also valuable is the recent study by Julie Roy Jeffrey, “‘If Polygamy is the Lord’s Order, We Must Carry it Out,’” which appears as chapter six in her Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), pp. 147-78.

Professional periodicals have published special issues on Mormon women: Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 6 (Summer 1971); and Utah Historical Quarterly 38 (Winter 1970) and 46 (Spring 1978). While the subject of Mormon women by no means commands an equal share of professional attention with other topics, interest is observably growing.

Two published essay collections bring together a variety of authors and topics on Mormon women. The first to appear was Claudia L. Bushman, ed., Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah (Cambridge, Mass.: Emmeline Press Limited, 1976). With two exceptions, its essays are topical in approach, and it provides good introductions to the major areas of a woman’s life and experiences in pioneer Utah, but it is of uneven quality and generally fails to provide contextual material. Its value is enhanced by a chronological table and a bibliography on Mormon women. Though out of print, a new printing will soon be issued by Olympus Publishing Co., Salt Lake City.

The second collection is Vicky Burgess- Olson, ed., Sister Saints, volume five in the series Studies in Mormon History (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978). This is a collection of twenty-four biographical essays, mainly on nineteenth-century Mormon women. The essays recount a variety of interests, contributions to the Mormon Kingdom, and accommodations to the demands and expectations of Mormonism. Also of somewhat uneven quality because of the varied backgrounds and styles of the contributors, the book nevertheless brings together one of the most complete and well documented collections of biographical sketches presently available. While its value lies in its coverage of a wide range of female experiences, it is doubtful if most of the women studied are
representative of the larger experiences of Mormon women. The book lacks introductory material to each of the subjects giving them context and relationship with each other in terms of their place in Mormon history. It is also flawed by poor editing. But all-in-all, in view of the dearth of full-length studies on Mormon women, this book provides a substantial reference source.

**Biographies and Autobiographies**

The large number of biographical works that fill library shelves might well suggest that Mormon biography is flourishing. But numbers can be deceiving. Most of these books, which range from bound typescripts to printed volumes, are family-written biographies, printed in limited editions for family consumption. Many were written before the surge of interest in women’s studies and reflect a familial rather than a gender-oriented purpose in recapturing the past. Their numbers suggest an enduring interest in preserving the lives of noble, often long-suffering and self-sacrificing mothers and grandmothers and consist of adulatory life-sketches of women making personal adjustments to their times and circumstances. Indeed, these works comprise a genre of their own, being more than casual Book-of-Remembrance-type histories, but something less than scholarly, analytic and interpretive studies of women whose lives both influenced and were influenced by the times in which they lived.

One will search in vain for a splendid biography of a significant (or even lesser known) Mormon woman that approximates the high quality of Juanita Brooks’s life of John D. Lee. The fact is that writers with such proven skills have not yet applied them to any significant extent to the great wealth of material resting in archives which capable hands could effectively use in reconstructing the lives of Mormon women.

Most of the biographies now on library shelves were written by authors generally unacquainted with the nature of the biographical task. Their books are descriptive rather than interpretative, often providing little more than a narrative of faith-promoting events and experiences. Many are truly delightful reading, however, and a few representative books will be considered here.

*Little Gold Pieces* by Juliaetta Bateman Jensen (Salt Lake City: Stanway Printing Company, 1948) is one of them. Set in West Jordan, a community southwest of Salt Lake City, it is a daughter’s sympathetic account of the sorrows and struggles of her mother’s life in polygamy and the activities of her father, who served as a body guard and nurse to John Taylor and other church leaders during the period of the underground. The historical facts are neatly and effectively woven into the thread of the story. Portraying her mother’s experiences within the richly detailed framework of late nineteenth century Mormonism, Mrs. Jensen has movingly told the story of one woman’s accommodation to the events that encircled and defined her life.

*Emma Lee*, by Juanita Brooks (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1975), while not written by a loving daughter, was nevertheless written by a sympathetic historian in much the same style as *Little Gold Pieces*. This offering of Juanita Brooks measures only fairly well against her other historical writings, undoubtedly due to a paucity of material and a poor editing job, but it is an attempt to bring unity to the three lives of one woman: Emma Batchelor, who became Emma Batchelor Lee, who became Emma Batchelor Lee French. With a
historian’s eye for detail and authenticity and a novelist’s gift for story telling, Mrs. Brooks has written a brief but compelling narrative about the extraordinary adventures of one of the wives of John D. Lee, drawing heavily from his diaries. With the absence of footnotes or interpretation, it reads like a novel and provides an interesting addendum to the Lee biography.9

Apostle John A. Widtsoe honored his mother’s memory by writing a biographical tribute, In the Gospel Net: The Story of Anna Karine Gaarden Widtsoe (1941; reprint, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966). Elder Widtsoe relates, without any embellishing literary flair, the personal struggles of his widowed mother who gave up life in her native Norway for the sake of the gospel and emigrated to Utah. Her saga offers insight into the nature of the conversion experience and the attendant disruption and re-establishment of values and life patterns.

At the request of the Alice Louise Reynolds Club of Provo, Utah, Amy Brown Lyman, good friend and professional associate of Alice Louise Reynolds, agreed to memorialize her life in a brief eighty-two-page life sketch, A Lighter of Lamps (Provo: ALR Club, 1947). Because Miss Reynolds, professor of English at Brigham Young University, from 1894 to 1938, left only a brief autobiography and a diary of just the last two years of her life, Mrs. Lyman relied primarily on her own memory and personal association with her subject as the major source of information. However brief, the book recounts the rich life of one of Utah’s earliest twentieth-century professional women.

Tender Apples (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965) is another account of an early twentieth-century Mormon woman whose life was dedicated to teaching and later to the rehabilitation of disadvantaged and delinquent youths in the Los Angeles area. Ora Pate Stewart has brought together the facts of Ettie Lee’s life, including her struggle to overcome the onus of being a granddaughter of John D. Lee, in a pleasing and well-told story.

The Life of Emily Almira Cozens Rich, by Ezra Poulsen (1871; reprint, Salt Lake City: Granite Publishing Company, 1954) documents the life of a prominent Ogden woman whose activities in Republican politics in twentieth-century Utah suggest some of the interest and involvement of Mormon women in Utah politics during the first half of this century.

Other biographies are romanticized or fictionalized stories written by descendants whose literary proclivities took them beyond a mere narrative of facts to an interpolation of conversations, feelings, motives and sometimes contrived events to help them weave an interesting tale. From Malaga to the Mountain (Las Vegas: Jones and Holt, 1971), which the author, Robert E. Jones, calls a biographical novel, is fairly typical. It tells the story of Matilda McFarland, born in Spain of English parents, her conversion to the Mormon church against her father's wishes, her emigration to Utah and her eventual reunion with her father through their correspondence (authentic). Based primarily on family folklore and reminiscences, the book suggests the literary possibilities of the dramatic events that became commonplace among Mormon immigrants.

The Winds of Doctrine by Katherine K. Thurston (New York: Exposition Press, 1952) is another novelistic biography. It depicts the life story of Sarah Diantha Gardner Curtis and her part in the colonization of the San Pedro Valley in southern Arizona. Richly detailed, the book provides a graphic glimpse of a distant Mormon settlement in the late nineteenth century and the kind of life it imposed upon its settlers.

A well-written story which might be called a group biography, Glimpses in the Life of a Mormon Family (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1968) by Frances G. Bennett, tells the story of the Heber J. Grant family, consisting of three wives and ten daughters (two sons died as children). Told from the perspective of the youngest daughter, it is a charming and honest account of a prominent Mormon family meeting the often trying circumstances that a church president's family would experience. It is especially informative in depicting its characters against the dramatic changes that distinguished the twentieth-century Mormon church.

Three works suggest the value of a comprehensive study of the lives of the original Smith women. Lucy Mack Smith's biography of her son Joseph (Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations [Liverpool: Orson Pratt, 1853]) is in effect her own autobiography, also offering insight into the lives of her sons' wives. A small biography of the wife of Samuel Smith draws heavily from this book. Entitled Mary Bailey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954), it was written by Ruby K. Smith, a descendant, and recounts the brief life of Mary Bailey Smith, who died in Nauvoo in 1841, three years before the Martyrdom and the subsequent death of her husband, Samuel. Besides the Lucy Mack Smith biography, the author uses other sources, notably Joseph Smith's History of the Church. In addition, however, she has utilized the reminiscences of Mary's daughter and her only son, who followed the church to Utah. While largely pieced together, the book is important not only for the information it gives about this branch of the Smith family, but for the interest it creates in researching more about this woman and the lives of the other Smith women who were so inextricably caught up in the events of the early days of the church.

Mary Fielding Smith, the wife of Hyrum, has fared better than some of the other Smith women, largely because both her son, Joseph F., and her grandson, Joseph Fielding, have written accounts of her life. Don C. Corbett, a descendant and biographer of Hyrum Smith, has utilized these accounts with other documents in his biography, Mary Fielding Smith, Daughter of Britain (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966). It is the nearest attempt toward a full-length documented biography yet available of any early Mormon woman, but its dependence on secondary and generally well-known information plus the relatively quiet, unrecorded and brief life of its subject have denied the book a sense of substance and penetrating insight.

The Pilgrimage of Temperance Mack, by John and Audrey Cumming (Mount Pleasant, Mich.: John Cumming 1967), is the story of Temperance Bond Mack and her daughter Almira Mack Covey, aunt and cousin to Joseph Smith, as revealed through their letters to family members after their conversion to Mormonism. Converted by Lucy Mack Smith, Temperance and Almira moved from Michigan to Kirtland and followed the westward movement of the Saints.
Their letters show the deep commitment and religious enthusiasm demonstrated during the early conversion years of the church. Background and transitional material have been added by the authors to place the letters in context.10

Several collections offer biographical material about a number of Mormon women. One of the first was *Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877) by Edward W. Tullidge. On one level a flamboyant apologia for polygamy, it also presents incidents in the lives of some of the earliest women converts to the church and puts them in perspective to women's growing participation in church affairs. Much of the biographical information was provided by the women themselves. Nearly a decade later came Augusta Joyce Crocheron's *Representative Women of Deseret* (Salt Lake City: J. C. Graham and Co., 1884). Also gathering much of her material from the subjects of her book, Crocheron combines general facts with anecdotal information based on her personal acquaintance and association with the women she includes. Orson F. Whitney's *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1892-1904) and the four volumes of Andrew Jenson's *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-1936) are other printed sources for the life stories of early Mormon women. Many of these accounts duplicate each other, the same source (often Crocheron) evidently providing information for them all. Another compilation of brief biographical sketches with accompanying photographs of early Mormon pioneer women is *Album: "Daughters of the Utah Pioneers and Their Mothers"* (n.p.: Western Album Publishing Company, n.d.) by James T. Jakeman.

The *Noble Women's Lives* series, published by the *Juvenile Instructor* in Salt Lake City in 1883 and 1884 includes *Lydia Knight's History* in volume 1, written in the ebullient, adulatory style of Susa Young Gates, and in volume 2, *Heroines of "Mormondom,"
 are sketches of Mary Fielding Smith, written by her son Joseph F. Smith; Mary Dunster Chittenden, also written by Susa Young Gates (under the pseudonym "Homespun"); and Amanda Smith, a victim of Haun's Mill, written by Warren Smith.

Robert Flint Clayton has compiled and published brief life sketches of nearly two hundred Arizona women, filling 720 pages in a softbound volume entitled *Pioneer Women of Arizona* ([Mesa, Ariz., 1969]). Most of the sketches were written by descendants of the women included in the volume. The sketches are arranged indiscriminately without a table of contents but with a name index.


To review the biographical works extant on Mormon women is to come to the disappointing conclusion that few if any genuine biographies are yet available. There is hope for the future. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher is working

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10A brief article on the lives of these women, by Archibald F. Bennett, is in the *Instructor Magazine* 90 (October 1955): 294-95.
on a scholarly study of Eliza R. Snow, and Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery are completing a biography of Emma Hale Smith. Jean Bickmore white is working on a biography of Martha Hughes Cannon, nineteenth-century Mormon doctor and first woman state senator. There may be others in process. The field is open and hopefully will ultimately yield some worthy efforts.

If good interpretive biographical studies on Mormon women are scarce, autobiographical works are abundant. Like the biographies, they range in form from the casual typescripts of unedited diaries and reminiscences to professionally published autobiographies, all of which attest the popularity of committing one's life to the permanence of print. Being a conscious effort to make a personal record in some kind of comprehensive, unified form, autobiography generally reflects the specific purpose of the author-subject and implies, if not announces, the audience to whom it is addressed. That so many prefaces of these books indicate that they were written in response to request suggests that few were written with deliberate intent toward self-discovery, which in many cases may have been a gratuitous by-product.

Recollections of a Handcart Pioneer of 1860 (Colorado: Privately Published, 1938), is a typical account. “My children and grandchildren have for some years urged me to write something of my experiences,” Mary Ann Hafen explains in the preface of her small volume. Then she tells the story of pioneer life in Bunkerville, Nevada, a life pitted against the harsh dreariness and daily uncertainties of a new settlement. Like others of this genre, it was written to “give encouragement” to her descendants and to leave in print a record of a spiritual strength and conviction that gave significance to relentless hardship. Any librarian could pull a dozen such books from the shelf — interesting, inspiring, and often movingly written accounts of hard-won successes and strength-building failures — books of remembrance for family libraries.

Some autobiographical pieces take the form of spiritual odysseys, recording the discovery of faith and the trials of keeping it. A Black Mormon Tells Her Story (Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing Co., 1972) relates the spiritual quest of Wynetta Willis Martin who “finds the answer to her search for truth in the Mormon Church.” Written in 1972, the book may have had more relevance when written than it does now as a record of a courageous act of commitment, but it clearly shows the intent of the author to record for posterity the particulars of that search and the then controversial decision to which it led.

The challenge of keeping one’s faith in spite of adversity is dealt with in two other contemporary autobiographies. Each Day a Bonus by Louise Lake (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), reviews the author’s adjustment to life in a wheelchair occasioned by polio and her travels and work in behalf of the physically handicapped. The other, My Six Lives by May N. A. Burk (New York: Vantage Press, 1971), is a spirited sketch of the author’s six marriages and the illnesses, accidents, and other sorrows and disappointments that plagued her life. While touching on the troubling spiritual and emotional effects of their respective afflictions, both authors primarily emphasize the rehabilitation process.

Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1969) chronicles a different type of personal quest. Dictated to Louisa Udall at her request, it is the story of Helen Sekaquaptewa, a Hopi
Indian, written in the unembellished, straightforward style in which it was undoubtedly recited. It tells the life story of a young Indian woman of Arizona, educated for more than thirteen years in the white culture, unable to return to her native way of life. The book details her painful transition from a life circumscribed by the traditional practices of her Indian culture to one determined by white customs, including the peculiar practices of Mormonism. The book is revelatory by underscoring the enormous efforts required to bridge cultures as well as faiths.

Amy Brown Lyman's autobiography, *In Retrospect* (Salt Lake City: General Board of the Relief Society, 1945), suggests another approach to personal documentation. Written by request of the organization which the author headed for five years and worked in for thirty-four, the book chronicles the diminishing distinction between Amy Lyman's private and public life as her public responsibilities broadened beyond the boundaries of the church. Because of her long association with the Relief Society and her marriage to Richard R. Lyman, an apostle, her autobiography provides interesting insights into significant pieces of church history while it tells the story of a prominent twentieth-century Mormon woman.

Intent is significant in understanding and evaluating autobiography. But there are other considerations. Personal narratives are usually incomplete and often imbalanced. The autobiographer generally uses her license for selectivity freely. The tendency to omit what might seem ordinary and concentrate on the unusual gives the false impression of a life contoured by unbroken peaks without support of the broad plateaus that surround and sustain them. Moreover, memory can often be as inventive as genius, and truth in reminiscence may well lie somewhere between wishful thinking and hazy recollection.

The edited diary in large measure circumvents this potential weakness. Daily observations and responses, while still highly subjective, are more immediate and less susceptible to the vagaries of distant recollection. Moreover, the addition of an editor's annotations and explanations can offset the imbalance and omissions and render the account more whole. A good example of a well-written diary is that of Martha Spence Heywood, *Not By Bread Alone* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1978). The diary presents a literate, intense, and honest account of a woman's struggle to merge her individualism into the measured cadence of early Mormon life. Edited by Juanita Brooks, the journal, which covers the years 1850 to 1856, recounts its author's efforts to adjust to the requisites of a new life — at age forty — as Mormon, plural wife, mother. Her observations of the Mormon settling process and Salt Lake City society in the 1850s are perceptive and illuminating. This volume is one of very few professionally edited journals of Mormon women presently published.

Another published diary is the *Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood Autobiography and Abridged Diary* (Logan: J.P. Smith Printing, 1966), edited and compiled by Ivy Hooper Blood Hill, a daughter. The autobiographical sketch covers the years 1845-79, and the abridged diary begins in 1880 and ends in 1898. The book lacks annotations, but the diarist, the mother of Henry H. Blood, a governor of Utah, is unusually precise in her entries, and places and people are generally well identified. It is not as introspective as some diaries but it depicts the life of an active, vigorous, and intelligent woman whose experiences encompassed many
of the unique issues of her day: polygamy, woman's suffrage, Mormon politics, and phrenology. In many published diaries, particularly those prepared by a relative, the editing unfortunately consists of more deletion than annotation. While much that was considered repetitious in this volume was omitted, it does contain a listing of significant diary references and a number of charts, illustrations, and some commentary by the editor.

*The Autobiography and Early Diary of Ellis Reynolds Shipp* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1962) is another family-edited volume, this one compiled by Ellis Shipp Musser, a daughter of Dr. Shipp. The book includes a brief introduction by Mrs. Musser and a number of illustrations but unfortunately no other explanatory notes. Nevertheless, it represents some of the best of Mormon autobiographical literature and chronicles both the inner and outer life and struggles of an unusual woman, one of Utah's early doctors. Throughout the diary, Ellis Shipp meets the reader as a woman desperately trying to come to terms with the circumstances of her life — the early loss of a beloved mother, a lack of education, her ambivalence toward polygamy, her decision to study medicine, and the deaths of five of her children. Hers is a life that begs for illumination in the context of a well-written biography, utilizing the additional letters and original manuscripts housed in the Utah State Historical Society, which could give it proportion and perspective.

A distinctive characteristic of Mormon autobiography is the religious framework in which it is written. The Mormon memoir often depicts a type of spiritual topography in which the rituals of mortality — birth, marriage, conversion, illness, aging, and death — are rooted and defined in a spiritual context. Even the homely details of domestic life and everyday living resonate with sacred overtones. The essence of conversion for the convert was total commitment, and every act of life assumed a spiritual dimension. Building a home, settling a community, rearing a family were not unrelated, individual, or isolated experiences but significant segments of the whole Mormon scene, replicated wherever the Mormon community took root. The individual record-keeper preserved a microcosm of the whole, and through the collection of such individual experiences a broad pattern of Mormon life emerges.

It is within these daily diaries, personal journals, and reminiscences that the best of Mormon women's history can be found. Most are honest renderings of an ordinary life made extraordinary not only because it has undergone the distilling process that turning experience into words inevitably provides, but because however isolated or independent the individual life may seem to be, it is set against the unique Mormon background and partakes of the vitality of a dynamic historic movement.

None better illustrates the dichotomies and paradoxes of a life caught within the configurations of Mormon expectations and realities than the autobiography of Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1969). From the relentless convolutions of her outer world were molded the shape and substance of the inner woman. Her autobiography is less a narrative of external happenings than a dramatic unfolding of the character — and more than that — the spirit of a remarkable woman. Her unassuming tone and articulate but unpretentious expression make the book a model of personal narrative. It is her skillful weaving together of
the bright threads of her life with the gray ones that gives her story vibrance and rich texture. Of such is the nature, if not always the form, of most of the personal histories that constitute this "unpretentious Mormon subliterature," as William Mulder has characterized it. In it, he writes, "we find something of the daily living and dying of men and women both weak and valiant. Their story is not epic except as life and many days together give it sweep — it is the sweep of daily existence, the great movement that is the result of countless little movements." When the journals of Mary Jane Mount Tanner, Lucy Hannah White Flake, Martha Cragun Cox, and Emmeline B. Wells are finally published (all are at some point in the editing process), they will add their voices to the "collective experience in which Mormon literature makes its greatest impact," as Mulder observed. While one pattern seemed invariably stamped on nineteenth-century Mormon women, it was cut to many different sizes and shapes. Therein lies the vitality of their stories. Mary Jane, Lucy, Martha, Emmeline, and Annie all embraced the common denominators of Mormonism, but the substance of their lives was different and their responses bore the mark of their individuality. Another work, Dear Ellen: Two Mormon Women and Their Letters (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1974) edited by S. George Ellsworth, also illustrates the remarkable diversity of experience within a common Mormon framework. This slim and beautifully edited and published volume is an excellent example of how interlocking documents, in this case an exchange of letters, can illuminate a period in time in which a life or lives can be glimpsed, unadorned by public self-consciousness. With detailed annotations and biographical material supplied by Dr. Ellsworth, the letters juxtapose the lives of the two Ellens, Ellen Pratt and Ellen Spencer, friends since Nauvoo days, who have long since separated but have briefly come together again through a series of letters written just prior to and during the early years of their marriages in the 1850s. Some of these letters had appeared earlier in Western Humanities Review 13 (Spring 1959): 201-19. At present the Nicholas G. Morgan publication, Eliza R. Snow, An Immortal: Selected Writings (Salt Lake City: Nicholas G. Morgan, Sr., Foundation, 1957) is the best compilation of the personal writings of Mormondom's most prominent woman. This volume includes her "Sketch of

— revisited


My Life,” part of her Pioneer Diary, poetry of the plains, an autograph album, and a large selection of poetry. Some explanatory notes are included. Her Nauvoo journal, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, was published in BYU Studies 15 (Summer 1974): 391-416, and the Pioneer Diary was originally printed in the Improvement Era 46-47 (March 1943 - February 1944). Soon to be published is a book drawing on the storehouse of personal documents in several repositories. Edited by Jill Mulvay Derr and Kenneth W. and Audrey Godfrey, Within the Household of Faith: Selected Writings of Mormon Women contains excerpts organized chronologically to cover church history to 1900. With an introduction to each historical period as well as an introduction to each writer, the book will offer a varied sampling of letters and journal entries that illustrate the diverse style, experiences, and personalities of their authors. The book will be church history from a highly personal perspective.

It is curious that so few of the more notable Mormon women of the last century, many of whom left extensive diaries and journals, have been the subjects of biography or edited autobiographies. Emmeline B. Wells, Zina D. H. Young, Bathsheba W. Smith, Mary Ann Burnham Freeze, and Susa Young Gates are only a few who left not only personal records but years of documented public service that offer the biographer fertile material for development. Nor is there a dearth of information about twentieth-century Mormon women. Adele Cannon Howells, fourth general president of the Primary Association, left seven volumes of five-year diaries chronicling her diverse interests and activities. A search in libraries and archives will reveal the records of many other well known and lesser known Mormon women. All of the numerous autobiographical writings of both nineteenth- and twentieth-century Mormon women could not be reviewed here, but libraries and archives, particularly in Utah, hold an abundance of personal documents of women representing different periods of church history and reflecting different kinds of Mormon experiences.

While the historian uses facts to lead him to the truth, the novelist often leads the facts toward the truth he wishes to convey. Thus, autobiography in the hands of a novelist is packaged somewhat differently than in the hands of the historian. The intent of fictionalized autobiography is not necessarily to portray truth as it is but as it can best be understood, by combining the authentic with the contrived to create the essence of experience and emotion. Virginia Sorenson and Emma Lou Thayne have used their literary talents to turn autobiographical facts into delightful fictionalized history (or is it historical fiction?). Sorenson’s Where Nothing Is Long Ago: Memories of a Mormon Childhood (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963) and Thayne’s Never Past the Gate (Layton, Utah: Peregrine Smith, 1975) both reach into their authors’ pasts to find incidents and


**Specialized Studies**

*Women in Mormon Thought.* An early, but still valuable study is Ileen Ann Waspe LeCheminant, “The Status of Woman in the Philosophy of Mormonism from 1830 to 1845” (M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1942). She points out that Mormon thinking about women has been determined by two major forces: the scriptures of the church and their interpretation by church leaders, and by the actual historical situation at various points in the church’s history. In many real ways these two factors have not always agreed and have created a tension that continues in contemporary Mormonism. A more recent study, which stresses the first at the exclusion of the second, is Mildred Chandler Austin, “The Lord’s Definition of Woman’s Role as He Has Revealed It to His Prophets of the Latter Days,” (M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972). Another perspective is provided in “Changing Views and Status of Women: Implications with the Church and the Professions,” *Journal of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists* 2 (Fall 1976): 28-40, which reports a symposium participated in by J. Joel Moss, Moyne Oviatt, Jan L. Tyler, and Victor B. Cline. The perceptions Mormon women have of themselves and views by others has been the subject of several recent studies. An excellent work is Gail Farr Casterline, “’In the Toils’ or ‘Onward for Zion’: Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852-1890,” (M. A. thesis, Utah State University, 1974). Cartoons and drawings are the subject of Davis Bitton and Gary L. Bunker, “Double Jeopardy: Visual Images of Mormon Women to 1914,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Spring 1978): 184-202. Also valuable, but yet unpublished are Adele B. McCullom, “Doctrinal Images and Lived Experiences: Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon)” (paper delivered to the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, 29 October 1976, St. Louis, Mo.); and Maureen U. Beecher, “Pioneer Women of the Mormon Frontier” (1976). The position of women in the RLDS church is studied in three works available in the RLDS Archives, Independence, Mo.: Judy Ann Gibbs, “A Study of the Status of Mormon and Reorganized Mormon Women” (seminar paper, Graceland College, May 1973); L. Madelon Brunson, “Women’s Groups in the RLDS Church, 1852-1914,” (Fall 1977); and Paul W. Booth, Lois Brady, Frederick A. Kunz, Barbara Potts, Geoffrey Spencer, and Marjorie Troeh, “Report of the Committee on the Role of Women in the Church” (submitted to the First Presidency, 13 September 1973). Also valuable is Carolyn Edwards, “Women in the Early Church: Who Were They? Can We Know?” *Saints’ Herald* 124 (March 1977): 27-30.

An early study is Susa Young Gates, *Utah Women in Politics* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1913).


*Education*. Education has always been valued by the Mormons, and from the beginning Mormon sisters sought to obtain their share and have worked to assure that others, young and old, did too. No complete account of their educational attainments or contributions has yet appeared, but the following studies provide a starting place: Jill Mulvay Derr, “The Two Miss Cooks: Pioneer Professionals for Utah Schools,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43 (Fall 1975): 396–409; Phylis Ann Roundy, “An Analysis of BYU 1963 Women Graduates’ Present Status as Mothers in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” (M.R.E. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970); Shauna McLatchy Adix, “Differential Treatment of Women at the University of Utah, from 1850 to 1915” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1976); Jan Tyler, “Teaching Women’s Studies at BYU,” *Exponent II* 3 (September 1976): 14; and Shauna Adix, “Education for Women: The Utah Legacy,” *Journal of Education* 159 (August 1977): 38–49.
Several works are presently available which provide overviews of the history of Mormon women's organizations. Three histories have been written of the Relief Society, although none are in-depth studies. *A Centenary of Relief Society, 1842-1942* (Salt Lake City, 1942) and *History of the Relief Society, 1842-1966* (Salt Lake City, 1966) were published by the General Board of the Relief Society and cover the essential programs and highlights in the development of this organization. A brief pamphlet published by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers (Salt Lake City, 1970) gives additional information about the organization of Relief Societies in the various counties of Utah and adjoining states.


Three works attempt to relate the story of the Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association. The earliest, *History of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association: November 1869 to June 1910* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1911), was written by Susa Young Gates, founder and editor of the *Young Woman’s Journal*, organ of the YWMIA. It contains brief biographical sketches of a number of the earliest workers in the YWMIA along with historical details of the organization's first forty-one years. Marba C. Josephson, long-time associate editor of the *Improvement Era*, brought the story up to date in 1955 when her book *History of the Y. W.M.I.A.* was published by the auxiliary. In 1969 the General Board of the YWMIA published a chronological pictorial collage entitled *A Century of Sisterhood*, produced in commemoration of the centennial of that organization.

Until this year (1979) the only history of the Primary Association has been the personal record of Aurelia Spencer Rogers, founder, contained in her autobiographical work, *Life Sketches of Orson Spencer and Others, and History of Primary Work* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, Printers, 1898). Deseret Book Company is preparing for publication the manuscript of *Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary* by Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Oman. Using the manuscripts housed in the LDS Church Archives, the authors have attempted to write a thorough history aimed at a general readership. An article-length overview of the Primary is Jill Mulvay Derr's “Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Mormon Primaries,” *Task Papers in LDS History*, no. 20 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978). An interesting cross-section of women in top church leadership is provided in Dixie Snow Huefner, “Survey of Women General Board Members,” *Dialogue* 6 (Summer 1971): 60-70.

*Culture.* The life of the mind, like the life of the spirit, is intangible and thus much harder for the historian to capture or measure. Women's contributions to the arts, drama, theatre, music, thought, literature, and poetry in Mormon history are immense. Mormon social and cultural history is just becoming an item on the agenda of scholars, and it is sure that this agenda will force historians to deal with the lives and talents of Mormonism's women. Studies that have


Domesticity. The Mormon family has yet to be studied in depth. Plural marriage surely created alternate lifestyles for many, but the vast numbers of
marriages were monogamous. In both, however, women found their greatest time and energy consumed by domestic duties. While much study has yet to be done on both plural and monogamous families, the following point out the directions historians can move: Vicky Burgess-Olson, "Family Structure and Dynamics in Early Utah Mormon Families, 1847-1885" (Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1975, is limited in usefulness by a small sampling of families. Kimball Young, Isn't One Wife Enough? (New York: Holt and Co., 1954), contains material on plural marriage households, relations of the wives, courting practices, and related material by a trained sociologist. His research notes are now in the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California. An excellent guide to further material on plural marriage is Davis Bitton, "Mormon Polygamy: A Review Article," Journal of Mormon History 4 (1977): 101-18. A sketch of the life of Lucy Bigelow Young, a wife of Brigham Young, written by her daughter Susa Young Gates, appears in Miriam Murphy, ed., "From Impulsive Girl to Patient Wife: Lucy Bigelow Young," Utah Historical Quarterly 45 (Summer 1977): 270-88. An interesting essay on pioneer dress is Fairfax Proudfit Walkup, "The Sunbonnet Women: Fashions in Utah Pioneer Costume," Utah Humanities Review 1 (July 1947): 201-22.


Even less has been done on Mormon women, but a start is Orval F. Baldwin II, "A Mormon Bride in The Great Migration." *Nebraska History* 58 (Spring 1977): 53–72.

**Missionary Work.** Much work is yet to be done on women as missionaries. An early article is Joseph W. McMurrin, "Lady Missionaries," *Young Woman's Journal* 15 (December 1904): 539–41; more recent, but lacking in interpretation, is Calvin S. Kunz, "A History of Female Missionary Activity in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1898" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976).

**Ethnic Studies.** A serious gap in woman's biographies is the lack of studies outside the dominant white culture. This problem is especially serious as the church moves into an international setting. Such studies could reveal the larger strains of women's experiences and roles. One study deserves mention: Henry J. Wolfinger, "A Test of Faith: Jane Elizabeth James and the Origins of the Utah Black Community," in Clark Knowlton, ed., *Social Accommodation in Utah* (Salt Lake City: American West Center, University of Utah, 1975), pp. 126–72. See also Helen Z. Papanikolas, ed., *The Peoples of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1976).

**Outside Perceptions.** Few works published by women who observed Mormonism from the outside are trustworthy. Two of the better works are Ray R. Canning and Beverly Beeton, eds., *The Genteel Gentile: Letters of Elizabeth Cumming, 1857-1858* (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1977), and Elizabeth Wood Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes* (1874), now available in an excellently edited edition by Everett L. Cooley (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1974). The writings of women who left the church can also provide valuable sources for the historian, but most must be approached cautiously. Works by Fanny Stenhouse and Ann Eliza Young cannot be ignored by historians, but their value is mixed. Material on Fanny Stenhouse is presented in Ronald W. Walker, "The Stenhouses and the Making of a Mormon Image," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): 51–72. The pertinent works by the two authors are: Fanny Stenhouse, "Tell it All": *The Story of a Life's Experiences in Mormonism . . .*, introduced by Harriet Beecher Stowe (Hartford: A. D. Worthington and Co., 1874); and Ann Eliza Webb Dee Young, *Wife No. 19; or, The Story of a Life in Bondage . . .*, introductory notes by John B. Gough and Mary A. Livermore (Hartford: Dustin, Gilman and Co., 1875).

**Research Needs**

The above compilation suggests that women's studies are emerging as an important part of the study of Mormon history. This list of works reveals that few book-length studies have yet appeared and that most of the important works are to be found primarily in the periodical literature. With few exceptions, much of the work so far has concentrated on the "leading sisters" of Mormonism. This

tendency threatens to perpetuate the historical imbalance historians today are trying to move away from. Few of these studies attempt to place Mormon women into the larger context of American history and some even fail to do the same in Mormon history. New comprehensive institutional histories are appearing but more are needed to build on the foundation of earlier works. Shelves of documents still cry out for historians.

More study is needed on the family as a unit in LDS history. For example, it appears that the infant mortality rate in nineteenth-century Utah was much higher than the national average. How did families cope? How did the mothers?

What was the "information environment" of the Mormon woman? What do the contents of Mormon women's publications tell us about their reading habits? Have they changed fundamentally over the years?

What will demographic and land-holding studies reveal about the legal and economic rights of women? Was there a significant amount of property controlled by Mormon women?

What can the lives of Mormon women like Lucinda Dalton (see Sister Saints, pp. 141-71) tell us about the general stresses and strains of the Mormon female experience?

A fundamental yet seldom considered area is that of the theological questions, the answers to which often determine our approaches to other areas. For example, is there a Mormon philosophy of sex and sexuality? Parley P. Pratt suggested early in Mormon history that sex was an eternal attribute of spirit matter (intelligence), and by 1857 John Taylor was discussing a Mother-in-Heaven, an idea some have traced back to Joseph Smith. Neither of these ideas has been pursued to their logical conclusions, nor have the implications of male-dominated scriptures which provide few, if any, real models for women in the church.

What has been the impact of urbanization and secularization on the role of women in LDS communities? Was it less because these women were greatly involved in the social and economic activities of the community in which they lived?

Are women's studies providing vicarious "liberation" to LDS women historians today?

Can we ignore plural marriage any more as a central part of the Mormon woman's experience?

What about senior women?

Obviously, much is yet to be done. It would, in fact, appear that the whole field is open for a closer look — an investigation that encourages broader understanding rather than judgment. Emmeline B. Wells, author of over forty diaries and innumerable letters and essays encouraged an honest look at women in history, but reminded us to be open and fair:

How utterly unable are we to judge one another, none of us being constituted exactly alike; how can we define each other's sentiments truly, how discriminate fairly and justly

---

in those peculiarly nice points of distinction which are determined by the emotions agitating the human heart in its variety of phases, or under, perhaps, exceptional circumstances.\textsuperscript{16}

She thus reminds us that each person is unique and that any study that generalizes or ignores the rich heritage that women have given to us will fail to be history or biography in the fullest sense. Women surely deserve better than they have received from the pens of historians, and to “remember the women of Zion” should be a major goal of those who study Mormon history.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Woman’s Exponent} 4 (1 July 1875): 24.

\textsuperscript{17}This was the plea of the \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 40 (July 1911): 4. The specific plea was that the \textit{Exponent} could “furnish good material for future historians who will, it is ardently hoped, remember the women of Zion when compiling the history of this Western land.”
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