"TO DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY": MORMON WOMEN AND THE CREATION OF A USABLE PAST

by

Jennifer Reeder
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
History

Committee:

Director

Department Chairperson
Program Director
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Spring Semester 2013
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Date: April 29, 2013
“To do something extraordinary”: Mormon Women and the Creation of a Usable Past”

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at George Mason University

by

Jennifer Reeder
Master of Arts
New York University, 2006

Director: Paula Petrik, Professor
Department of History

Spring Semester 2013
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
This work is licensed under a creative commons attribution-noderivs 3.0 unported license.
DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the women who created the Relief Society in Nauvoo and in Utah: Emma Smith, Sarah Cleveland, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Eliza R. Snow, Sarah M. Kimball, Zina D.H. Young, Phoebe Woodruff, Mary Isabella Horne, Jane Snyder Richards, Margaret T. Smoot, Emmeline B. Wells, and countless others.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many friends, relatives, and supporters who have made this happen. This was a group effort. My family cheered me on from the Wild West. My dear friends from the Shirlington and Crystal City wards, especially the Relief Society, fed me, rallied around me, listened to me, and loved me through this adventure. Drs. Petrik, Landsberg, Leon, and Bushman were of invaluable help. My scholarly mothers and mentors, Carol Cornwall Madsen and Jill Mulvay Derr, who invited me to join their world, as well as the realm of Mormon historians who mentored and guided me. Finally, thanks go out to my oncologist, Dr. John Feigert, and the wonderful staff of the Virginia Hospital Center who literally preserved my life and gave me blood.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: The Creation of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo and a Usable Past</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Usable Past—Historiography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background—The Mormon Church in American Religious History</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background—The Relief Society as a Woman’s Organization</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Victorian Women as Custodians of Culture and Guardians of Heritage</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book as a Usable Past</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To do something extraordinary”—An Outline</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. “A Kingdom of Priestesses”: Hair Wreaths and an Ancient Past</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauvoo Relief Society: Restoring an Ancient Past</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A pattern of virtue”—Hair Wreaths as Nineteenth-Century Memorials of Refinement</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“On your heads in threads of gray”—Hair Art as Memorials to Death and Hope for Life</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers, Sisters, Wives, Daughters: Memorials of Family, Church, and Sisterhood</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A kingdom of priestesses”—Relief Society Female Religious Authority</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unusable Past—The Demise of the Hair Wreath and Other Lost Pieces</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “Clasped in the hand of fellowship”: Quilts, Charity, and a Textile Usable Past</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A select sewing circle”—Early History of Relief Society Textiles</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilts as Material Culture and Usable Past</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Relief—Quilts and Relief Society Charity</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers in Israel—Quilts and the Family</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Needlework and Silk—Quilting as Demonstration of Refinement</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Clasped in the hands of fellowship”—Quilts and Identities</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quilt Tatters—Preservation and the Unusable Past</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “I now turn the key to you”: Nauvoo’s Red Brick Store, Relief Society Halls, Granaries, and Cooperative stores</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A Place of This Kind”—Historical Background</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The beginning of better days”—Refinement</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That the Society might proceed to business”—Female Autonomy</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“In the name of God”—Spiritual Component of Work</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned—An Unusable Past</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If the eye of the stranger may thereby be opened”—Nineteenth-Century Print Media</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Receiv’d by Vote”—Politics of Respectability</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A pattern of virtue”—Representative Refinement</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Organiz’d according to the law of Heaven”—Refinement and Religion</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“So much remains to be told”—Unusable Past</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <em>Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch</em>: The Creation of a Refined, Literary Utah Past</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chicago World’s Fair: A Crossroads of Women’s Sentimentality and Progress</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Knowledge and intelligence shall flow down”—Education and Literary Prowess</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Like a purifying stream, refreshed every heart”—Influence of Nature and Sacred Space</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Gospel of beauty”—Crafted Presentation and Cultural Refinement</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From “Mother in Israel” to “Mother Pioneer”—Construction of Heritage</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My heart to my Maker with gratitude fills”—Religion at Work</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The female part of the community”—The Work of Gender</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We shall not be barren or unfruitful”—An Unusable Past</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: “Let us boldly Go Forward”</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works Cited</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 0.1. *Woman’s Exponent*, masthead, September 1912 .......................................................... 27
Figure 0.2. Joseph A.F. Everett ........................................................................................................ 27
Figure 0.3. *Relief Society Magazine*, March 1927 ...................................................................... 27
Figure 0.4. Nauvoo Female Relief Society minute book .............................................................. 28
Figure 0.5. Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes .................................................................................... 28
Figure 1.1. Relief Society Building Hair Wreath ............................................................................ 80
Figure 1.2. Manti Temple Hair Wreath ........................................................................................... 81
Figure 1.3. Salt Lake Temple Hair Wreath ..................................................................................... 82
Figure 1.4. Guide, Salt Lake Temple Hair Wreath ........................................................................ 83
Figure 2.1. Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes ................................................................................. 134
Figure 2.2. Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt, 1870 ............................................................. 135
Figure 2.3. page, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes ....................................................................... 136
Figure 2.4. Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward Quilt private possession .................................... 136
Figure 2.5. Salt Lake City Eighth Ward Quilt ............................................................................. 136
Figure 2.6. quilt block, S.C. ............................................................................................................ 136
Figure 2.7. quilt block, Ann Paul .................................................................................................. 137
Figure 2.8. quilt block, Lovina Luff .............................................................................................. 137
Figure 2.9. quilt block, Mary Luff ................................................................................................ 137
Figure 2.10. quilt block, Elizabeth B. Ramsay ............................................................................ 137
Figure 2.11. quilt block, Elizabeth S. Ramsay ............................................................................ 138
Figure 2.12. quilt block, Mary Ann Sansom ................................................................................ 138
Figure 2.13. quilt block, Martha Zina Paul .................................................................................. 138
Figure 2.14. quilt block, Annie K. Smoot .................................................................................... 138
Figure 2.15. quilt block, Margaret T. Smoot, Jr ......................................................................... 139
Figure 2.16. quilt block, Martha Artwell ...................................................................................... 139
Figure 2.17. quilt block, Augusta T. Lewis .................................................................................. 139
Figure 2.18. quilt block, Eliza M. Williams .................................................................................. 139
Figure 2.19. quilt block, Mary Ann Lewis .................................................................................... 140
Figure 2.20. quilt block, Mary Brain ............................................................................................ 140
Figure 2.21. quilt block, Mary A. Brain ........................................................................................ 140
Figure 2.22. quilt block, Jane T. Lynch ........................................................................................ 140
Figure 2.23. quilt block, Emily Dye .............................................................................................. 141
Figure 2.24. quilt block, Mary Davies ........................................................................................... 141
Figure 2.25. quilt block, Susan Schettler ..................................................................................... 141
Figure 2.26. quilt block, Emma P. Toone .................................................................................... 141
Figure 2.27. quilt block, unknown maker ..................................................................................... 142
Figure 4.44. American Baptist Home Mission Societies ........................................................... 258
Figure 4.45. Mary Ann Freeze ................................................................................................... 258
Figure 4.46. Romania Pratt ........................................................................................................... 259
Figure 4.47. Emily Hill Woodmansee ...................................................................................... 259
Figure 4.48. Hannah Tapfield King .......................................................................................... 259
Figure 4.49. Augusta Joyce Crocheron .................................................................................... 259
Figure 4.50. lithograph invitation, Purim Association ............................................................... 260
Figure 4.51. divine rays of light ................................................................................................. 260
Figure 4.52. women blessing ..................................................................................................... 260
Figure 4.53. beehive .................................................................................................................... 260
Figure 4.54. Isaac Watts hymn ................................................................................................. 260
Figure 4.55. Phoebe Woodruff ................................................................................................. 261
Figure 4.56. Joseph Horne’s funeral .......................................................................................... 261
Figure 5.1. cover, *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* ............................................................ 314
Figure 5.2. title page, *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* ....................................................... 314
Figure 5.3. Lucinda Dalton, “The River” .................................................................................. 315
Figure 5.4. Ellen B. Ferguson, “Isabella of Castile” ................................................................. 315
Figure 5.5. Hannah Cornaby, “Truth” ...................................................................................... 316
Figure 5.6. Esther Bennion, “My Heart” .................................................................................. 316
Figure 5.7. Ruth May Fox, “Utah” ............................................................................................ 317
Figure 5.8. Emmeline B. Wells, “At Evening” .......................................................................... 317
Figure 5.9. Sarah Carmichael, “The Stolen Sunbeam” ............................................................... 318
Figure 5.10. Genevieve Lucile Browne, “Ballad of Lilies” ........................................................ 318
Figure 5.11. Nevada V. Davis, “Life in Death” ....................................................................... 319
Figure 5.12. Reba Beebe Pratt, “My Mother’s Flowers” ......................................................... 319
Figure 5.13. Augusta Joyce Crocheron, “Deseret” ................................................................. 320
Figure 5.14. Emily H. Woodmansee, “Western Wilds” ............................................................ 320
Figure 5.15. Lula Greene Richards, “The Sego Lily” ............................................................... 321
Figure 5.16. Syntitha Dickinson, “The National Emblem” ...................................................... 321
Figure 5.17. Rebecca Palfrey Utter, “Memorial Hymn” ............................................................. 322
Figure 5.18. Hannah Tapfield King, “Memorial Day” ............................................................... 322
Figure 5.19. Ellen Jakeman, “The Mother Pioneers” ............................................................... 323
Figure 5.20. Eliza R. Snow, “Invocation” ................................................................................. 323
Figure 5.21. Ruby Lamont, “Sonnets on the Virgin Mary” ..................................................... 324
Figure 5.22. Julia A. McDonald, “Cactus Blossoms” ............................................................... 324
ABSTRACT

“To do something extraordinary”: Mormon Women and the Creation of a Usable Past”

Jennifer Reeder, Ph.D.

George Mason University, 2013

Dissertation Director: Dr. Paula Petrik

On 17 March 1842, twenty-two women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gathered in Nauvoo, Illinois, under the direction of their prophet, Joseph Smith, to organize a female counterpart to priesthood and patriarchal leadership. The women elected lady leaders and established a purpose: to save souls and provide relief to the poor. “We are going to do something extraordinary,” said Emma Smith, first Relief Society president. “We expect pressing calls and extraordinary occasions.” The Relief Society engaged in religious, charitable, economic, political, and cultural activity and initiated a new emphasis on recording, remembering, and retaining the authority of the past.

This dissertation examines the way Mormon women remembered and commemorated the Nauvoo Relief Society for the next fifty years through the lens of material culture. Hair wreaths, quilts, buildings, posters, and hand-painted poetry books illustrate the transition of Mormonism through isolation in Utah to acceptance by mainstream America, based on the
way the women presented their identity and their heritage. They selected the pieces of the past that would appeal to their audience, always maintaining a memory of their Nauvoo roots.
INTRODUCTION: THE CREATION OF THE FEMALE RELIEF SOCIETY OF NAUVOO AND A USABLE PAST

Thursday, 17 March 1842, was a propitious date for women of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS, also known as Mormon).¹ Twenty-two women gathered in Nauvoo, Illinois, under the direction of their prophet, Joseph Smith, to organize a female counterpart to priesthood and patriarchal leadership. The women elected leaders and established a purpose: to save souls and provide relief to the poor. “We are going to do something extraordinary,” said Emma Smith, first president of the Relief Society and the prophet’s wife. “We expect pressing calls,” she continued, “and extraordinary occasions.”²

Officially sanctioned, the Relief Society engaged in religious, charitable, economic, political, and cultural activity and initiated a new emphasis on recording, remembering, and retaining the authority of their organizational creation story.

The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo technically existed only until 1844, but a second iteration in Utah appeared in the 1850s. The memory of the Nauvoo founding permeated the various enterprises of LDS women throughout the nineteenth century. Accounts of the Nauvoo Relief Society appeared in the Deseret News, a Salt Lake City newspaper; the Woman’s Exponent (1872-1914), the “organ” of the Relief Society; and in the

¹ Sarah M. Kimball remembered the date as an “eventful day for Latter-day Saint Women.” Sarah M. Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” 1880-1892, “Fifty Years Past and One Hundred Years Hence,” 168, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
² “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, Church History Library.
Relief Society Magazine (1914-1970). Reference to the founding abounded in Relief Society meetings throughout the West. Posters, exhibits, quilts, books, even buildings reflected the Nauvoo experience. The memory of those three years, with thirty-four meetings, influenced the later organization’s activity for the rest of the century and beyond. Commemoration of the Society’s first day, 17 March 1842, evolved into an annual event. The memory of the Nauvoo Relief Society provided the foundation of the Relief Society’s identity, played out in different forms. The organizational creation story infused the Relief Society with religious authority and supplied women with autonomy to embody founding principles in innovative ways throughout the next fifty years.

See, for example, “The Female Relief Society in the 14th Ward,” Deseret News, May 20, 1857; “The 14th Ward Female Relief Society,” Deseret News, August 5, 1857; “Fifteenth Ward Female Relief Society,” Deseret News, February 10, 1869; L.D. Alder, “Minutes of the 28th Meeting and First Annual Meeting of the Female Relief Society of the 17th Ward, S.L. City,” Deseret News, April 14, 1869; Emmeline B. Wells, “Heartfelt Farewell,” Woman’s Exponent, February 1914; Louise Y. Robison, “A Tribute,” Relief Society Magazine, 1936; Julia A.F. Lund, “Relief Society Conference: Women in Nauvoo,” Relief Society Magazine, 1930. This phrase, “The Organ of the Latter-day Saints’ Woman’s Relief Society” first appeared on the masthead of the Woman’s Exponent in September 1912. In the concluding edition, editor Emmeline B. Wells wrote, “We love the Relief Society—that great organization this little paper has ever sought to represent and build up... The Exponent has striven more than anything else to be the organ of the Relief Society and has published from time to time, reports of ward, stake and general conferences of that organization, their celebrations and their resolutions. Its numbers contain sketches of the lives of Relief Society workers and notices of their deaths. It has surely performed a mission in the midst of Zion for the women of Zion, holding as it does within its leaves the history of their work.”


Instructions written in 1915 from the General Relief Society Presidency included the following direction for activity for annual commemorations on 17 March: “this day has been set apart as an annual festival for all stakes, wards, and for the General Board itself... It is the custom on that day to read a summary of the first minutes of the organization, and to dwell very particularly on the object and aims of the Society, with other historical phases of development. It may be a happy custom for the wards so engaged to prepare historical sketches of their own organizations, and preserve the names of the pioneer women who led out in this work in the local wards and associations. Whatever may be done, the women of this Church should remember the debt they owe to the Prophet of God who opened the door and turned the key for this great and marvelous Relief Society.”

“Circular of Instructions: To Officers and Members of the Relief Society,” Relief Society Magazine 2, no. 3 (March 1915): 141.
A Usable Past—Historiography

The memory of the Nauvoo Relief Society and the material embodiment of its history in various forms illustrate a usable past. The concept of a usable past stems from the manner in which people use their past to situate themselves in the present. The stories they choose to tell, the subjective memories, the erasure of that which is undesirable or unusable at the present—all indicate a concerted exercise or application of the past. For historian Michael Kammen, the usable past included the constantly changing public interest, partisan mobilization of highly selective memories, commercialization of the past, and the invocation of the past to both resist change and achieve innovations. The study of a usable past examines the selection process. Individuals and groups highlight certain events, places, and relationships while others are forgotten. It is important to note that what is not remembered—the less desirable events, people, or situations—are purposefully forgotten, both by historians and their audiences. Many scholars examine the conflict between history and

---


memory. Popular formats for remembering the past also change as technology advances and as social, cultural, political and economic values transform over time.

Nineteenth-century LDS women in the West presented an insightful case study of usable past during the transition from Victorian separate, gendered spheres to progressive female public activity as well as the shift from Mormon isolation to American acculturation. The way in which Mormon women “used” certain segments of their past allowed them to display different identities for different audiences. As historical agents, they stretched and edited their history to meet present needs in progressive and creative ways. As Mormons began to seek cultural acceptance and respect, their narratives differed depending on their audience. They shared their polygamous past with people of their faith, while they highlighted a different past of tenacity and proper citizenship for a larger audience. To maintain the distinct religious authority initially granted to Mormon women by the visionary Joseph Smith, they cited his words. To discount negative stereotypes in the press, they styled themselves as Victorian guardians of history, featuring triumph over challenges of western

---


settlement and refinement of public activity. The selection process illustrates these women as historical agents, choosing the past to frame an identity in the present.

A historiographical survey of Mormon women’s history expounds an extended engagement of the past up to the present.\(^\text{11}\) The study of Mormon women ranges from the celebratory memorial to the academically rigorous. Edward Tulledge venerated nineteenth-century Mormon women in the Victorian style of effusive adoration in his 1877 book *The Women of Mormondom*, as did Augusta Joyce Crocheron’s *Representative Women of Deseret* in 1884.\(^\text{12}\) Biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs filled the pages of the *Woman’s Exponent*, a newspaper written and published by Utah women from 1874 to 1914.\(^\text{13}\) Each piece featured heroic female figures.

Twentieth century writings illustrated an effort to analyze a distinct history. The Daughters of Utah Pioneers published volumes of reminiscences, biographies, and thematic essays commemorating Utah heritage.\(^\text{14}\) Scholars such as Juanita Brooks, Fawn Brodie, and Annie Clark Tanner explored topics previously avoided in the celebratory reconstruction of


\(^{12}\) Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1877); Augusta Joyce Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret, a Book of Biographical Sketches to Accompany the Picture Bearing the Same Title* (Salt Lake City: J. C. Graham, 1884).

\(^{13}\) Emmeline Wells recalled how Brigham Young told her that the *Exponent* “‘will contain the record of their work and a portion of Church history;’ he also added ‘and I give you a mission to write brief sketches of the lives of the leading women of Zion, and publish them.’” Emmeline B. Wells, “The Jubilee Celebration,” *Woman’s Exponent* 20, no. 17 (March 15, 1892): 132. See also Claudia L. Bushman, “Reports from the Field: The World of the Woman’s Exponent,” in *Nearly Everything Imaginable* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1999), 296–313; Sherilyn Cox Bennion, “Sisters Under the Skin: Utah’s Mormon and Non-Mormon Women and Their Publications,” in *Life in Utah: Centennial Selections from BYU Studies* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1996), 200–219.

Mormon historical memory. Starting in the 1950s, economic historian Leonard Arrington introduced an academic interest in Mormon women’s history. He mentored scholars such as Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Jill Mulvay Derr, and Carol Cornwall Madsen, and supported projects of women’s biographies, histories of women’s organizations, and analyses of women’s history. In the 1970s, scholars began to explore Mormon women’s history more deeply, instigating study groups and editing volumes of essays. They examined such political hot topics as polygamy, suffrage, and authority as well as producing documentary editions of women’s writings. Their efforts escalated into The “Life Writings of Frontier Women” series published by Utah State University Press and a series, Women of Faith in the Latter Days, highlighting women’s life experiences in their own words.

---

15 The most well-known of these books are Juanita Brooks, The Mountain Meadows Massacre (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1950); Fawn McKay Brodie, No Man Knows My History: the Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945); Annie Clark Tanner, A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography (Salt Lake City, Utah: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1983).


“To do something extraordinary” draws upon this historiography to situate nineteenth-century Mormon women in their context as American-Victorian women. The overlapping fields of American religious history, material culture, history of the American West, women’s history, public history, and social history provide insight into nineteenth-century Mormon women as both actors and narrators. Gender, religion, and memory intersect in this corner of western America. Just as nineteenth-century Utah women identified themselves within mainstream American culture, so now these scholarly fields should widen their study to include LDS women as historical agents.

Historical Background—The Mormon Church in American Religious History
Religion permeated early American culture. Several scholars have examined colonial confrontations of religion with political and social authority. An expansion of potential land ownership opportunities and multiple populations created a new “pluralistic vastness of America,” altering the social, political, and religious equilibrium both before and after the Revolution and, thereby, dismantling traditional power structures. The Great Awakening and the Second Great Awakening demonstrated surges of spiritual intensity manifested in

20 Michel-Rolph Trouillot considered history an examination of power. “Human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators. He defined this ‘dual participation. In vernacular use, history means both the facts of the matter and a narrative of those facts, both ‘what happened’ and ‘that which is said to have happened.’” Trouillot, Silencing the Past, 2.

new forms of popular religion and ideology. In addition to restructuring ecclesiastical leadership and participation among diverse constructs of gender, race, and class, religious enthusiasts tested both theology and denominational procedures.\textsuperscript{23} Experimentation within new religious communities and worship practices and subsequent competition among the various congregations contributed to tensions between traditional notions of denominational order on the one hand and evolving expectations of democratic participation on the other.

Mormonism and the Nauvoo Relief Society followed patterns of popular religious activity.

The founding of Mormonism in 1830 by Joseph Smith stemmed from years of religious exploration and experimentation in New York’s Burned Over District during the Second Great Awakening.\textsuperscript{24} Like similar Restorationist groups in reclaiming the primitive church, Smith initiated the institution of a male lay priesthood with prophets, apostles, and teachers, and the translation of ancient American scriptures.\textsuperscript{25} He worked to recreate both Old Testament Israelites and New Testament Christians in a blend of American traditions.\textsuperscript{26}

Mormons gathered at the formal organization of their church first in New York in 1830, then moved to Kirtland, Ohio, a year later. Following their initial efforts to establish a New Jerusalem in Jackson County, Missouri, the Saints moved back east to Nauvoo, Illinois. Thousands of converts streamed from England and other points to the city Mormons constructed on the swampy banks of the Mississippi River. Joseph Smith quietly instituted the practice of plural marriage for a select group at the same time he developed temple

\textsuperscript{23} Bonomi believes that the tension of clerical power, order, and deference of the Great Awakening altered the social and political equilibrium of colonial order. Bonomi, \textit{Under the Cope of Heaven}, 152.
\textsuperscript{26} Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Herbert Balmer, \textit{Religion in American Life: A Short History} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 224.
rituals, incorporating a whole new level of religious activity in proxy for the dead. The creation of a Mormon theocracy with the potential of LDS voting blocs, first in Missouri and then in Illinois, caused concern for neighbors, particularly at a politically tense time leading to the Civil War. Such tension, in addition to anxiety about different Mormon religious practices, led to the murder of Joseph Smith in June 1844.²⁷

While some people believed that the death of Joseph Smith would contribute to the end of Mormonism, the Latter-day Saints continued nonetheless. Despite a succession crisis which split the church into several different factions, including the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (now known as the Community of Christ), Brigham Young stepped forward as the new president. Persecution intensified in Nauvoo, and the Saints left Illinois in 1846, seeking a safe place to practice their religion. They spent a year regrouping in what they called Winter Quarters, near Omaha, Nebraska, before moving to Utah. Young followed in Smith’s footsteps in his own way. He pragmatically masterminded the journey of tens of thousands of Mormons across the plains and the Mormon settlement along the Wasatch Front, the Utah branch of the Rocky Mountains. Under Young’s direction, the practice of polygamy was made public in 1852 and expanded across the area, influencing the development of Mormon families in the nineteenth century.²⁸ He incorporated economic, political, and social practices in Deseret, the title he gave to Utah Territory. Tens of thousands of converts from Scandinavia and England joined the Saints in Utah and built

²⁷ Glen M. Leonard, Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 2002); Bushman, Joseph Smith.
²⁸ Daynes, More Wives Than One.
towns and cooperative efforts throughout the area. They practiced their religion outside of American boundaries according to principles instituted by Smith but developed by Young.  

Following the Mexican-American War, Utah became an official territory. The appointment of federal territorial leaders and the economic opportunities pursued by people of other faiths, led Young to institute policies meant to protect the Saints but that infuriated Congress and the American public. The Mountain Meadows Massacre in 1857 further exacerbated negative perceptions of Mormons in Utah. The Utah War in 1858, although a wash-out, precipitated later anti-polygamy legislation meant to contain Mormon practices. The 1869 completion of the transcontinental railroad in Utah ended any possibility of Mormon isolation in the West. As the century continued, the church, under the direction of John Taylor and later Wilford Woodruff, became more open to interaction with the East. Mormon women led these efforts. Woodruff issued the Manifesto in 1890, ending the practice of plural marriage. Utah became a state in 1896.

Joseph Smith’s efforts leveled the playing field for believers, congregants, and those of other faiths. Brigham Young implemented Smith’s efforts and expanded them as he colonized Utah. Such evangelical activity also introduced paradoxes, welcoming both personal revelation and, at the same time, instituting a firm hierarchy. Tensions between authoritarianism and individualism, certitude and doubt, exile and integration, and patriarchy and matriarchy, contributed to the building of a unique Mormon Zion within an increasingly

---

nationalist and Americanizing culture. These disparate forces molded the LDS church into what has been termed a quintessential American religion.\(^{32}\)

**Historical Background—The Relief Society as a Woman’s Organization**

Like women of other denominations during the Second Great Awakening, LDS women actively participated in the Church from its inception in 1830. Despite exclusion from the evolving order of male priesthood, Mormon women contributed in many ways to the LDS social and cultural community as membership expanded during the Church’s first decade. They received ordinances of baptism, confirmation, and sacrament, and they exhorted, witnessed, and testified. They recorded their experiences in correspondence, diaries, and reminiscences.\(^{33}\) Joseph Smith received a revelation for Emma in 1830, canonized in the LDS Doctrine and Covenants.\(^{34}\) Twelve years later, in 1842, the women formed their own distinct society at Joseph Smith’s behest.\(^{35}\)

---


\(^{33}\) For examples of published accounts, see Janiece Lyn Johnson, “‘Give It All Up and Follow Your Lord’: Mormon Female Religiosity, 1831-1843” (MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 2001); Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, *Women’s Voices*; Carol Cornwall Madsen, ed., *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co, 1994). During the Church’s fifty-year jubilee celebration, over fifty women recorded their biographies and religious experiences to be deposited in a Jubilee Memorial Box time capsule. Fifty years later, these records were distributed to their oldest female descendants. Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” “Fifty Year Memorial Box,” 52–54; Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret*; Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom*. See also the *Woman’s Exponent*.


The Nauvoo Relief Society organized and functioned like countless other female benevolent and moral reform groups of the nineteenth century. Female activity in tea salons, dame schools, female seminaries, churches, and homes abounded in Early America. Women organized and managed benevolent societies with a missionary zeal aimed at “converting American Indians, carrying Christianity to the ‘heathen,’ and evangelizing the frontier.” These groups exhibited common names and purposes: cent societies to raise money for charitable purposes; widows’ societies to aid the poor; tract and bible societies to educate; and reform societies to promote temperance, abolition, and suffrage. Such organizations allowed women to work both within and outside their respective religious denominations in antebellum America. 

The Relief Society in Nauvoo in the 1840s developed well beyond a female auxiliary. Relief Society women thrived in this new public venture, their numbers growing rapidly. Secretary Eliza R. Snow, who would be the Society’s second leader after its official


37 Scott, Making the Invisible Woman Visible, 269. For examples of primary sources, see Baptist Female Benevolent Society of Charlestown, Mass., 1833 (American Antiquarian Society); Concorde Female Charitable Society, 1824 (AAS); Female Cent Institution, New Hampshire Missionary Society, 1813 (AAS); New-Haven Ladies’ Greek Association, 1830 (AAS); Providence Female Domestic Missionary Society, 1843 (AAS); Tatnuck Ladies’ Sewing Circle and Tatnuck Female Benevolent Society, 1847 (AAS); Female Hebrew Benevolent Society of Philadelphia, 1825 (American Jewish Historical Society); Newark Female Charitable Society, 1803 (New-York Historical Society); Society for the Relief of Women and Children, 1797 (NYHS). This is not an exhaustive list, merely a sample of collections of contemporary women’s organizations found at the American Antiquarian Society, Wooster [sic] [Worcester], Massachusetts; American Jewish Historical Society, New York City; and New-York Historical Society, New York City.

38 Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, 281.
reorganization in Utah in the 1860s, vigilantly recorded each name in the minute book. In Nauvoo, not only did the women assist immigrants, widows, and the poor in their communities, but they also provided employment opportunities for women and girls, raised money for temple construction, instructed one another in theological and moral principles, and signed petitions to ensure moral purity and garner political support. They established auxiliary branches in Illinois, Massachusetts, and England. Their network resulted in an increased collaboration of public activity for diverse women.

By 1844, the Nauvoo Female Relief Society encountered both internal turmoil and external pressure. Much of the tension unfolded with concern about plural marriage, a practice occurring quietly among select people in and around Nauvoo, including Joseph Smith and several members of the Relief Society. The discussion disturbed the unity and purpose of the Relief Society. The last recorded Relief Society meeting occurred on 16 

---


March 1844. The death of Joseph Smith in June 1844 and the mounting persecution of Mormons by neighbors in Illinois and Missouri came to a boiling point in the following months. The organization abruptly ceased in the spring of 1845 when Brigham Young, Smith's successor, condemned such a gathering of women. “When I want Sisters or the Wives of the members of the Church to get up Relief Society,” Young proclaimed, “I will summon them to my aid, but until that time let them stay at home & if you see Females huddling together, veto the concern, and if they say Joseph started it all tell them it is a damned lie for I know he never encouraged it.” The same patriarchal authority that established the women’s organization in 1842 effectively shut it down.

The initial decade in the harsh desert and mountain environment of Utah proved difficult. By 1854, scattered groups of women in local congregations spontaneously formed relief societies. Motivated by severe hardship among their own people and among local

---

42 A few sources make reference to scattered gatherings of women, although these meetings are not officially recorded nor referred to in the Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844. For example, when Joseph Smith returned from a May 1844 trial where he was found not guilty, he went to the home of Hezekiah Peck, “where a number of Mormon women had assembled … for the purpose of praying for the deliverance of the prophet.” Peck’s wife, Martha, was an early member of the Relief Society, as was their daughter. “Some of the Remarks of John S. Reed, Esq., as Delivered Before the State Convention,” Times and Seasons 5 (June 1, 1844): 551; Smith and Roberts, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6:395. Zina Huntington Jacobs recorded that she “went to the Masonic hall with the sisters” on 18 June 1844, Zina D.H. Young, “Diary, 1844-1845,”18 June 1845, Church History Library; Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., “All Things Move in Order in the City: The Nauvoo Diary of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs,” BYU Studies 19, no. 3 (Spring 1979): 17. Hosea Stout wrote that on 13 March 1845, he organized women into an association to promote home industry and manufacture, based on “the order which was instituted in Nauvoo.” Juanita Brooks, ed., On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1982), 27.

43 “General Record of the Seventies, 1844-1847,” Church History Library, 9 March 1845.

44 D. Michael Quinn and Maxine Hanks, among other Mormon historians, have argued that early Mormon women did indeed hold the priesthood. Others have clearly argued against that. Quinn, “Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843”; Hanks, Women and Authority; Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant; Dew, “What Joseph Smith Taught Women--And Why It Matters,” 34-86.

45 Eliza R. Snow remembered the year 1855 as when the first Relief Society organization met in Salt Lake City following the exodus west. Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” “First Organisation[ sic.],” 6. See also Matilda Dudley, “Minutes,” holograph, June 24, 1854, Louisa R. Taylor papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Patty Bartlett Sessions, Diary and Account Book, 1868-1888, LDS Church History Library; Patty Bartlett Sessions, Mormon Midwife: The 1846-
Native Americans, the women recreated a western counterpart to the Nauvoo organization to consolidate their relief efforts. Occupation of federal troops in 1857 prompted a temporary disbursement of settlement when federal forces arrived in the Salt Lake Valley to assert territorial order and, as a result, most Relief Society groups ceased to act.\(^{46}\)

By the end of 1866, Young reconsidered the need for Relief Society, particularly to promote home industry to counter Gentile commercial encroachment to the territory. Beginning in 1867, founding Relief Society member Eliza R. Snow, who retained the institutional knowledge to organize proper ward Relief Societies, began traveling around Utah. In July 1869, Relief Society women organized children into the Primary Association to give them proper gospel instruction.\(^{47}\) In November 1869, the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association began to teach teenage girls proper decorum and principles of the Church.\(^{48}\) Relief Society women oversaw these groups, all administered by women.\(^{49}\)


\(^{47}\) Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Staker, Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co, 1979), 1–13.

\(^{48}\) Susa Young Gates, History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), 1–13. The organization started as a junior branch of an auxiliary Relief Society group, the Cooperative Retrenchment Association, but soon morphed into its own distinct organization. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 114–115.

\(^{49}\) “The prodigious productivity of the 1870s had been brought into a workable order. As president over the women’s work, President Snow now had the means whereby to correlate activities, regulate procedures, and keep abreast of local accomplishments of the three organizations.” Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 120.
Looking back, the nineteenth century proved to be pivotal for Mormon women. Joseph Smith had formed the Relief Society in 1842 as a complimentary companion organization to the priesthood. While the women benefited from independence and community-building in Utah under Brigham Young’s colonizing efforts, as the LDS Church expanded, succeeding presidents John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff consolidated central leadership, a squeeze that led to Mormon women’s loss of autonomy. “To do something extraordinary” explores this transition, traced through the efforts of the women to record their own history.

The tenuous organizational trajectory of the Relief Society from Nauvoo to Utah paralleled contemporary women’s associations. While the democratization of culture and religion opened doors for progressive female activity at the beginning of the nineteenth century, industrialization, the market revolution, the formation of the middle class, and the expansion of a pervasive Victorian spirit soon separated men and women’s gendered activity. By mid-century society relegated women to rigid social and cultural restraints. Although the home remained a culturally-sanctioned location for women, involvement in benevolent and charitable societies, usually formed around churches, expanded the domestic circle in socially-appropriate ways and, later, paved the way for abolition and suffrage movements.

---

The Civil War changed the way women operated. The war encouraged the creation of new female social organizations to assist veterans and to promote patriotism and heritage. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, both with multiple chapters, committed to preserving the past, also blossomed in this era.

At the same time, women’s clubs demonstrated secularized female public activity, providing a venue for specialized interests. Temperance organizations and antislavery groups for women confirmed progressive public female activity based on the protection of home and family. Later efforts included women who cleaned up slums, provided acculturation assistance to an influx of immigrants, and sought political voice and suffrage. Many of these groups expanded their influence by drawing on history as an impetus for transformation. Confederate women worked to maintain Southern tradition and heritage based on the Lost Cause. Catholic women mediated between their “Old Faith” and the emergence of the progressive “New Woman,” integrating current American social and

[57] For example, the American Female Moral Reform Society initially organized to embody the ideology of the Victorian “cult of true womanhood.” Over the course of the nineteenth century, the Society’s focus shifted from private home protection to the public world of reform, education, and philanthropy, leading to a controversial program of sexual reform, still in the name of proper moral purity. Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct*, 20–21, 88–89, 109.
political culture in higher education, professionalization, and industrial reform at the same
time they relied on female historical figures. Jewish women utilized their traditional charge
as mothers in Israel to formulate Hebrew Sunday Schools, develop settlement houses and
aid female immigrants, and work toward becoming rabbis, all based on biblical models of the
past. By the end of the nineteenth century, women had broadened their sphere of social
responsibility, initiating social reform at the same time that many looked to the past.

As women’s organizations and clubs secularized, many minority ethnic and religious
women’s groups adapted similar social and cultural principles in an attempt to
“Americanize” or acculturate to social and cultural standards. Reform Jewish women joined
men in synagogues and worked to overcome negative stereotypes in the press. Catholic
women maintained strong religious activity but reinvented themselves in an age of modern
urbanization. African American Baptist women’s groups refined and gentrified their

---

59 Kathleen Cummings discussed this Catholic negotiation “between tradition of Old Faith and the exigencies of a new, industrialized nation.” Cummings, *New Women of the Old Faith*, 12, 7–8, 58.


membership to emulate their white counterparts. Mormon women, too, followed this paradigm as they forged their way into mainstream America.

**American Victorian Women as Custodians of Culture and Guardians of Heritage**

By mid-nineteenth century, American women took on new social memory-managing roles. While Horace Bushnell and Catharine Beecher proclaimed the primary role of women in the domestic sphere, others expanded that sphere to promote a sense of refined culture. The terms “custodians of culture” and “guardians of heritage” reveal a sense of public responsibility for women to remember the past and to teach proper cultural values from it. The phrases suggest a Victorian sentiment which crossed the Atlantic Ocean from England to America, including deliberately compartmentalized gender roles, feminization of religion, elaborate ornamentation, and nostalgia. As historians, women utilized

---


64 These women were viewed as “keepers of memory, as mourners, and as home-based teachers of religious belief.” Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 68.


67 Ann Douglas claimed that nineteenth-century Americans were more Victorian than the British. They “represented a complex and intelligent collaboration of available resources unparalleled in America.” Douglas went on to define the “drive of nineteenth-century American women to gain power through the exploitation of their feminine identity as their society defined it.” Douglas believed that nineteenth century “sentimentalism provided the inevitable rationalization of the economic order.” Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*, 5–12; Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151–174. Carol Madsen believed that “Victorianism offered a value system that found fertile soil in the traditions of rural America and the verities of protestant evangelicalism.” Madsen, *An Advocate for Women*, 5-7.
contemporary practices to commemorate a specific past. Their textual and material records reflected their activities and perceptions of the past.  

Mormon women also acted as memory-keepers to preserve and use their past to negotiate authority and agency in the present. The use of the Relief Society institutional creation story allowed women to act as custodians of culture and guardians of their female Mormon heritage. The link to Smith furnished them with authority. LDS women translated memory of 17 March 1842 according to circumstances in the present.

National trends extended female responsibility. Based on Relief Society organization in Nauvoo, Mormon women continued to look after the poor and contribute to temple building. They also became astute business women. They participated in political causes. They published their own writing and corresponded with international literary women. These women learned to market themselves and their past, incorporating the Nauvoo Relief Society into their public and private efforts, both in principal and in the objects they created or revered. They used the Relief Society creation story in different ways to situate themselves within the broader American culture of the late nineteenth century.

As busy, active women creating western settlements and maintaining proper Victorian decorum, one method that nineteenth-century Mormon women utilized to preserve their past was through their everyday objects. The study of the creation, use, and preservation of particular artifacts exemplifies the notion of a usable past. Attachment to

See also Carol Cornwall Madsen, “A Mormon Woman in Victorian America” (Dissertation, University of Utah, 1985).

68 Catherine A. Brekus noted that nineteenth-century women “left behind a rich legacy of personal memoirs and theological tracts. These women seem to have wanted to be remembered.” Catherine A. Brekus, Strangers & Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 8.

69 Scott, Making the Invisible Woman Visible, 274.
specific events and relationships allows for strategic retelling of the past according to present needs. From early American needlework to the material decor of homes, objects identified class and culture in a stratified society. Popular magazines disseminated nineteenth-century cultural standards across the country, including the West, carrying a culturally refined ideal found in cities, churches, homes, gardens, clothing, and adornments. The preservation of certain artifacts called attention to a particular identity and revealed a democratizing technique used by ethnic, religious, and lower-class minority women to emulate a higher social-economic level. Material objects allowed women to act as historical agents; they determined which items best aligned with socially-accepted norms. The presentation of the past was dictated by present needs.

Analysis of material culture requires cultural context. Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich demonstrated the scholarly explication of an artifact. She carefully examined the environmental, political, religious, cultural, and technological layers of meaning associated with each object. Artifacts, she wrote, “tell us most when they are embedded in the rich texture of local history.” Susan Stabile referred to souvenirs of the past as “material reminders,” or “places for memory storage.” Pierre Nora used the term lieux de mémoire, or

---


74 Stabile, *Memory’s Daughters*, 5, 16.
sites of memory, to define the collapse in time and historical distance between the past and
the present found in historic sites and artifacts.\textsuperscript{75} The use of material memory is a significant
element for a usable past. Material culture literally embodied Mormon women’s past and
functioned as an anchor in the present.

\textbf{The Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book as a Usable Past}

The Nauvoo Relief Society minute book is the single, most important piece of Relief
Society material culture. Willard Richards, apostle and clerk, provided the account book to
secretary Eliza R. Snow for the purpose of keeping a proper record. (Appendix, fig. 0.4) The
ledger was bound in leather with a red spine and a gold tooling design around the edges of
the cover, indicating from the outset a sense of refinement and that set the book apart from
a common store ledger. Alphabetic tabs on the initial twelve leaves with faint blue columns
on the remaining pages provided space and format for accurate record-keeping. During the
Nauvoo Relief Society’s brief existence, at least four women took notes of meetings, later
recording them in this official minute book.\textsuperscript{76}

The Relief Society existed only in the memory of the original members and in the
physical presence of the minute book. Secretary Snow preserved the ledger when she crossed
the plains in 1848, protecting it against buffalo stampedes, inclement weather, and multiple
river crossings. The minute book served as a physical, material link to the past. Snow
relinquished the book temporarily to Brigham Young and the Church Historian’s Office in
1855 as leaders worked to create an institutional history of the Church. Church Historian

\textsuperscript{75} Nora, “Between Memory and History.”
\textsuperscript{76} Jill Mulvay Derr and Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory of the Female Relief
George A. Smith published Joseph Smith’s sermons to women in the *Deseret News*. Although the language was strategically edited, priesthood leaders clearly valued the Relief Society’s within the patriarchal church structure. Young, Smith, and others worked to maintain a sense of institutional order by both including and carefully watching over the women, demonstrating a patriarchal authority common among contemporary groups.

The minute book became a crucial link with the past when Brigham Young called for the Relief Society’s reorganization. He assigned to Snow the task of helping congregations organize their own Societies. Unaccustomed to such a public leadership role, Snow relied upon the record she had preserved. She wrote an editorial for the *Deseret News* based on the minute book and her memory of Nauvoo. She visited settlements, using the book to show women Joseph Smith’s original intentions. Like a holy relic, the presence of the minute

---

77 Joseph Smith, “Joseph Smith’s Addresses to the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, as Revised for Publication in the History of the Church,” *Deseret News Weekly*, September 5, 1855. The lectures continued on 19 September 1855 and 3 October 1855.

78 Brekus discussed the strict social order among genders, removing threats to male leadership with a trend toward consolidation of power. She determined that female preachers and exhorters were “virtually written out of their churches’ histories in the mid-nineteenth century—a silence that has perpetuated ever since.” She believed that “few wanted to pass down these women’s stories to future generations as part of a usable past.” Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims*, 7, 267–306.


80 Although she had served as secretary for the first year of the Relief Society’s existence in Nauvoo, the thought of such public activity caused private anxiety. Snow recorded in her memoir, “Not long after the reorganization of the Relief Society, Pres. Young told me he was going to give me another mission. Without the least intimation of what the mission consisted, I replied, ‘I shall endeavor to fulfill it.’ He said, ‘I want you to instruct the sisters.’ Altho’ my heart went ‘pit a pat’ for the time being, I did not, and could not then form an adequate estimate of the magnitude of the work before me. To carry into effect the President’s requisition, I saw, at once, involved public meetings and public speaking—also travel abroad, as the Branches of the Society of the sisterhood extended at that time, through several Counties in Utah, and ultimately, all the vallies of the mountains.” Snow, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, 35.

81 “Having now in my possession the minutes of the organization and the records of that Society, which is a sample for all others, and also having had considerable experience in that association, perhaps I may communicate a few things that will assist the daughters of Zion in stepping forth in this very important position.” Eliza R. Snow, “Female Relief Society,” *Deseret Evening News*, April 2, 1868.

82 According to Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “Always Sister Snow carried with her the precious minute book, the “Record of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo,” from
book bestowed a veritable link to the past as it traveled along the Wasatch Front corridor. The soft leather and gilded pages bonded women to their Nauvoo roots. At Snow’s death in 1887, the minute book came into the hands of Dr. Romania B. Pratt, general assistant secretary for the Relief Society, who after a number of years gave the ledger to Bathsheba W. Smith when she became general Relief Society president in 1901. Successive general Relief Society presidents Emmeline B. Wells and Amy Brown Lyman created their own copies of the minutes, linking a chain or line of authority to the society’s founding. Relief Society leaders read excerpts from the minutes in women’s conferences and printed them in the Woman’s Exponent, making the words accessible to all members.

The Nauvoo Relief Society minute book produced legitimacy for Utah women. The material connection to their founding established validity within a patriarchal structure, making the group much more than a ladies’ social club. This material connection also established cultural authority within the settlements across Utah. The Nauvoo minutes endowed women with religious authority that elevated women to a partnership with Joseph which she would often read. Her intimate knowledge of that organization and its history, and her guardianship of the volume itself, dictated to her the pattern after which the society must again be established in Utah. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 89. See also Derr and Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory.”

According to Derr and Madsen, “Snow largely created the record; she preserved it; and she used it. She carried it and cited it when she addressed Relief Society women in Utah.” Derr and Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory,” 90.


These manuscripts are both located at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. According to Derr and Madsen, “the numerous brief marginal summaries of Joseph’s words, paragraph by paragraph, and notations of the other talks and activities recorded in the minutes suggest that [Emmeline Wells] made a thorough study of the record.” Derr and Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory,” 106.

Smith’s patriarchal hierarchy. The minute book produced a historical authenticity that transcended time and empowered the women to “do something extraordinary.”

The original Relief Society minute book was not the only physical item reminding women of their past. Mormon women carried pieces of their former lives from Nauvoo and earlier across the plains. Quilts, photographs, letters, and mementos reminded Mormon women of places, relationships, and events; they also reflected efforts to remember the past. Women found additional ways to commemorate the Nauvoo Relief Society with material items, embodying their memory in both old and new ways. As well as maintaining traditional female forms of material commemoration, such as quilts and needlework, these women also constructed buildings to emulate the principles and location of their Nauvoo foundation. They embroidered altar pieces for Utah temples, and they marketed themselves on lithographic posters to display their prominent past in a fashionable presentation to a public audience. Both the creation and the preservation of items reveal important values, particularly a secularized shift from distinctly Mormon religious authority to Victorian American refinement. LDS women adapted and negotiated the transition from social outcasts in the West to a growing political and social force situated within American culture.

“To do something extraordinary”—An Outline

The material culture used to commemorate and embody the Nauvoo Relief Society included hair, silk and cotton, wood and adobe, as well as text and watercolor. In this study each chapter focuses on a particular artifact or format and how that object highlights certain themes in remembering Nauvoo. Chapter one examines hair wreaths used to decorate early Mormon temples and Relief Society buildings; the wreaths exemplified female religious activity and validated women’s connection to an ancient past, revealing a type of collective
memory. Chapter two analyzes a Relief Society quilt demonstrating Mormon women’s domestic and charitable efforts and how those efforts changed over time for women who never experienced Nauvoo, a usable past via a prosthetic memory. The third chapter looks at Relief Society halls, stores, and granaries, showing women’s economic activity and what happened when that story of their past was no longer usable, an example of lieux de mémoire. Chapter four concentrates on a lithographic poster, Representative Women of Deseret, as an exhibition of Relief Society political activity, demonstrating the use of mnemonic codes. The final chapter explores Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch, a hand-painted poetry book. Created for the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, the album highlighted Utah women’s literary and artistic talent and their relationship to a much larger American and global audience. The selections for this album reveal, moreover, an edited use of the past, the shift from a vernacular use of the past to an institutional American past.

Examination of the material mementos of the Nauvoo Relief Society reveals much about the way women viewed their roles as religious women, as activists, as public community activists, as historians, as Victorian guardians of moral value and refinement, and as progressive actors in a changing world. Memories associated with each commemorative piece constitute a strong tie to the past as well as a means of using that past to negotiate an identity in the present. The creation, use, and preservation of Relief Society artifacts attest to Mormon women’s efforts to achieve refinement and respectability in the West. In the process, LDS women battled social stigma, cultural hierarchy, and religious authority to shape their own history.
Appendix 0

Figure 0.1. *Woman’s Exponent*, masthead, September 1912

Figure 0.2. Joseph A.F. Everett

Figure 0.3. *Relief Society Magazine*, March 1927
Figure 0.4. Nauvoo Female Relief Society minute book
LDS Church History Library

Figure 0.5. Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes
24 March 1842, LDS Church History Library
1. “A KINGDOM OF PRIESTESSES”: HAIR WREATHS AND AN ANCIENT PAST

The Nauvoo Relief Society proved to be much more than a casual social group for women. They coordinated service efforts to care for the city’s poor and derelict; they provided aid and comfort to the sick and dying; they raised money to support construction of the temple; and they debated theological issues. These women also involved themselves in LDS religious practice; when Joseph Smith “turned the key” to the women at a meeting on 28 April 1842, he gave them specific authority to act as a proper sisterhood of religious women. He promised the women that “knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time henceforth; this is the beginning of better days to the poor and needy, who shall be made to rejoice and pour forth blessings on your heads.” Smith and the women connected to ancient holy women to create a strong sense of identity.

Years later, and far removed from the Illinois Midwest, Mormon women of Utah remembered their Nauvoo Relief Society roots in a variety of formats. A popular Victorian mode of memory literally came from their heads. A hair wreath, an intertwining of hair into a decorative piece to be hung on a parlor wall, preserved a tangible scene with a very physical sense of the body—human hair. One such hair wreath now hangs in the Relief Society.

---

1 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. In summarizing this speech, George Albert Smith commented that the keys of the kingdom would help the women “detect everything false,” with the promise that “knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time henceforth; this is the beginning of better days to the poor and needy, who shall be made to rejoice and pour forth blessings on your heads.” Joseph Smith and B. H. Roberts, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 1991), 4:604-607.
Building in Salt Lake City in homage to the Nauvoo foundational period. The intricate design of this piece interweaves the hair of many Nauvoo Relief Society founders who later settled in Utah, including Eliza R. Snow, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Zina D.H. Young, Prescendia Kimball, and five others. (Appendix, fig. 1.1)

The three hair wreaths prominently displayed in Mormonism’s finest Victorian parlors in the Manti temple, the Salt Lake temple, and at the Relief Society Building, now hang in museums and in storage, often unnoticed and definitely unvalued. Examination of LDS women’s commemorative hair wreaths demonstrates an important piece of usable past tied to family and female religious authority. The Relief Society hair wreath poses some interesting material culture challenges. Because there is no provenance attached to the piece, the reason for its creation and the date are only speculated. Based on the names of women listed here, the piece was made sometime after Wilmirth East arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in September 1855, and before the East family left the area to help colonize Arizona in 1877. The name M. E. Cook could refer to Margaret Norris Cook [Blanchard], the fabled “Miss Cook,” seamstress for Sarah Granger Kimball in Nauvoo, who was responsible for the idea of creating a sewing society in 1842. Miss Cook, however, disappeared from the historical record. More likely, this M. E. Cook was Mary Elizabeth Cook. In this instance, the hair wreath must have been created some time between the late 1860s and 1877.

---


3 Margaret Cook married John Reed Blanchard in Nauvoo in October 1844. She crossed the plains to Utah and died in Clarkston, Utah, 12 June 1874. Ward, “This Institution Is a Good One,” 115.

4 Mary Elizabeth Cook was a single woman in her mid-thirties who came to Salt Lake City in the late 1860s with her sister Ida from Lafayette, New York. Professionally-trained teachers, the two Miss Cooks worked successfully with the fledgling University of Deseret and throughout Salt Lake, Cache, and Washington counties Jill C. Mulvay [Derr], “Zion’s Schoolmams,” in Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah (Logan, Utah:
Two other significant hair wreaths including Relief Society women provide additional context to the meaning and memory of this particular genre, both of which appeared in nineteenth-century Mormon temples in Utah. In 1888, officers and members of the Manti South Ward Relief Society collected the hair of women in their ward Relief Society. Mary W. Wintch deftly designed and presented the large framed wreath to the Manti Temple.⁵ (Appendix, fig. 1.2) Another equally valuable and interesting hair wreath hung in the Salt Lake Temple, completed in 1893. Made from the hair of eight female Relief Society leaders and twenty-nine male General Authorities, or priesthood leaders, including Joseph Smith, this piece is attributed to Harriet Critchlow Jensen.⁶ This wreath hung in the temple’s main entrance until 1967.⁷ (Appendix, fig. 1.3)

Together these three hair wreaths preserve the memory of the Nauvoo Relief Society for women in Utah. Careful analysis of the three pieces reveals subtle but valuable information about the culture, the ideology, and the use of the past. Hair art reflected the popular trends of the time, marking efforts to display refinement and respectability, something Mormon women employed to put them on equal footing with other American, cultured women. Beyond hanging on temple and Relief Society building walls, these pieces

---

⁵ This large showpiece was placed in a deep, elongated octagon shadow box, measuring 35” high by 29 ¼” wide by 6 ½” deep. The artifact is now owned by the LDS Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City, Utah. See the LDS Church History Museum catalog. See also Mark A. Staker, “‘By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them’: The World View Expressed in Mormon Folk Art,” BYU Studies 35, no. 3 (1996 1995): 74–93.


⁷ Staker, “By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them,” 83. The piece is now owned by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers’ Pioneer Memorial Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah.
embodied a very material manifestation of the physical presence of a person beyond death. The hair art demonstrates a specific Mormon doctrine of resurrection as well as women’s perception of the physical experience and memory of aging, death, and life. These specific values indicate a collective group identity—a type of sisterhood family history, forged from their distinct Mormon female religious authority. Like a family tree depicted by ancestors’ hair, these Relief Society-inspired hair wreaths illustrate a lineage of strong, religious women, based on their collective history. The creation, display, and preservation of these pieces reveal an effort to remember and emulate the religious authority founded in Nauvoo. The intertwining of their hair commemorates their society as holy women as well as their female religious authority stemming from the Relief Society.

**Nauvoo Relief Society: Restoring an Ancient Past**

The three Relief Society hair wreaths demonstrate a collective memory. The influence of a shared “lived” history overrides a “learned” history. The communal reconstruction and refashioning of a shared past promotes group cohesion. The constant recycling of that shared lived history allows participants to accommodate and manipulate their past to fit present needs. The organizational creation story of the Nauvoo Relief Society provided a shared lived history and identity for nineteenth-century Utah Mormon women as they connected with the ancestry of an ancient past of holy women.

---

8 Maurice Halbwachs’s *On Collective Memory* posits that memory can only function in a collective context as groups of individuals collect, share, and collaborate to create meaning from their combined past. He points to communal reconstruction and refashioning of history as a collective creation to promote cohesion. See Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 51, 175, 183.

9 Ibid.

10 Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 1–3.
On 17 March 1842, Joseph Smith declared that Relief Society president Emma Smith had been “ordain’d… and that not she alone, but others may attain to the same blessings.”\(^{11}\) He titled her “an Elect Lady,” linking her to the role referred to by the Apostle John in ancient times.\(^{12}\) John Taylor then laid his hands upon Emma’s head and with apostolic authority, “confirmed upon her all the blessings which have been confer’d on her, that she might be a mother in Israel.”\(^{13}\) Eliza R. Snow then remarked that “as daughters of Zion, we should set an example for all the world, rather than confine ourselves to the course which had been heretofore pursued.”\(^{14}\) These three roles highlighted at the first Relief Society meeting illustrated an association with biblical tradition. As Elect Ladies, Mothers in Israel, and Daughters of Zion, Mormon women demonstrated a distinct sense of female religious authority based on their shared understanding of an ancient past.

The Relief Society mirrored their contemporary counterparts among early American religions in the use of ancient tradition. Religious women of various beliefs drew upon the concept of history or the ancient past for identity, authority, and empowerment. In her study of women in early America, historian Catherine Brekus found that female exhorters and preachers were biblical rather than secular feminists, basing their “claims to female equality on the grounds of scriptural revelation, not natural rights.” Brekus described how these women “longed to recapture the primitive simplicity of the first Christian churches,” and

---

\(^{11}\) Joseph Smith instructed Emma specifically to “expound the scriptures to all; and to teach the female part of the community.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 8.

\(^{12}\) See 2 John 1:1—“The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth.”

\(^{13}\) Taylor went on to define this position: “a pattern of virtue; and possess all the qualifications necessary for her to stand and preside and dignify her Office, to teach the females those principles requisite for their future usefulness.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 9.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 17 March 1842, 12.
they did so by drawing from biblical women.\textsuperscript{15} Eighteenth-century women such as Joanna Southcott and Jemima Wilkinson viewed themselves as Hebrew prophetesses.\textsuperscript{16} By the beginning of the nineteenth century, evangelical women drew upon biblical examples of Phebe, Huldah, and Deborah, calling themselves “Sisters in Christ” and “Mothers in Israel.”\textsuperscript{17} Throughout the nineteenth century, Jewish women drew upon the role of the eshet chayil, the “Woman of Valor” from Proverbs, in the formation of benevolent and philanthropic organizations and in the celebration of sacred Jewish holidays as Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Pesach. Jewish women also emphasized titles and roles of daughters and mothers in contemporary Israel.\textsuperscript{18}

As they converted and received calls to preach, many women wrote about their experiences patterned after spiritual narratives in the Bible. The Bible literally became a usable pattern for these women. They formulated their perceptions of their past to match what was considered genuinely Christian by rescripting and extensively quoting the Bible.\textsuperscript{19} The Relief Society followed similar practices with the use of popular biblical terms Mother in Israel and Daughter of Zion. They practiced biblical gifts of the spirit such as healing and speaking in tongues.\textsuperscript{20} They discussed Paul’s discourses. Thus, the LDS Relief Society

\textsuperscript{15} Brekus, \textit{Strangers and Pilgrims}, 6–7.
\textsuperscript{16} They also emulated the woman sent to prepare the kingdom of God on the earth in the book of Revelation. Juster, \textit{Doomsayers}, 216–217; Brekus, \textit{Strangers and Pilgrims}, 84.
\textsuperscript{17} Brekus, \textit{Strangers and Pilgrims}, 119–120.
\textsuperscript{19} “They crafted stories that speak volumes about how they wanted to be perceived by the American public. On the surface, they belittled themselves as ‘self-effacing, feminine apologists,’ but on a deeper level, they also likened themselves to divinely inspired biblical prophets.” Brekus, \textit{Strangers and Pilgrims}, 172–173.
connection to contemporary religious women and their shared biblical female ancestors paved the beginning of Mormon women’s use of the past even before their own Relief Society history became usable.

One thing that set the Nauvoo Relief Society apart from contemporary religious women’s organizations was a strong sense of female religious authority directed by patriarchal leadership. As a Restorationist faith, Mormon men and women were encouraged to look to such biblical patriarch-matriarch couples as Adam and Eve or Abraham and Sarah.21 Joseph Smith taught the women of the Nauvoo Relief Society at their third meeting that they “should move according to the ancient Priesthood.” He went on to say that “he was going to make of this Society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day—as in Paul’s day.”22 Mormon women considered this ancient identity an important part of their ideology, as a restoration and an embodiment of ancient religious practice. As Sarah Kimball later explained, the Relief Society was established “under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood.”23 This connection to Joseph Smith and the ideals he taught in Nauvoo fueled the women through the temple-building activity in the remainder of the nineteenth century in Utah as they relied on both their recent and the ancient past. These Relief Society hair wreaths become relics of this particular Latter-day Saint sisterhood.

“A pattern of virtue”—Hair Wreaths as Nineteenth-Century Memorials of Refinement

Women of the Nauvoo Relief Society collaborated in their spirit-filled exhortations as well as their practical handwork skills, melding spiritual with temporal activity in material

22 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 30 March 1842, 22.
23 Sarah M. Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” Church History Library.
embodiment. At the 24 March 1842 Relief Society meeting, the women conducted business while braiding palm leaves.\textsuperscript{24} The activity linked the women to their American religious counterparts, drawing on traditions from immigrants and others to commemorate Palm Sunday, preceding Easter on 27 March 1842. A popular American practice, the household industry of palm braiding had occurred earlier among Mormon women, as described in Caroline Barnes Crosby’s memoir in Kirtland.\textsuperscript{25} Contemporary women continued this particular craft of palm leaf weaving until the close of the Civil War in 1865.\textsuperscript{26} Hannah Markham commented at that 24 March meeting in Nauvoo, “it was her aim to walk humbly before God—desired the prayers of the Society that she might be enabled to do whatever the Lord should require at her hands.”\textsuperscript{27} The connection between the spiritual and the physical proved to be very real for these Nauvoo women. The medium of braiding straw then shifted to hair later in Utah as Relief Society members continued the practice of keeping their hands busy. The examination, then, of hand work produced in Relief Society meetings and the name of Relief Society provides material evidence of religious ideology and memory of their past.

No known hair wreaths exist from the Nauvoo period. The Saints’ short stay in Illinois was filled with building the city and the temple, combating disease, settling immigrants, and dealing with internal tension. The practice of hair art was not popular at the time. More important, scrutiny of this form from the later Utah period indicates ideologies

\textsuperscript{24} “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 24 March 1842, 21.
\textsuperscript{25} Caroline Barnes Crosby described how she braided “palmleaf hats for eight months after we came to K-tl-d. Braided near a hundred the first season, which brought me 70 dollars.” Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, \textit{Women’s Voices}, 50.
\textsuperscript{26} Frank Smith, \textit{Narrative History: A History of Dover, Massachusetts, as a Precinct, Parish, District, and Town} (Dover, MA: Town of Dover, Mass, 1897), 282.
\textsuperscript{27} “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 24 March 1842, 21.
and relationships developed in the Nauvoo period. Close analysis of the format of hair art reveals efforts at creating a comparable sense of Victorian refinement with Mormon efforts to emulate the trend.

The origins of hair work in America suggest value as a tool of refinement. Artifacts made of human hair, including pictures, rings, necklaces, brooches, pins, earrings, and wreaths, popularized in Scandinavia, France, Germany, and England in the late eighteenth century and later in the rest of Europe and the United States. One popular magazine noted hair work as a recent importation from Germany, where it was a very popular practice. Perhaps the preponderant Scandinavian population in Sanpete County influenced the inclusion of a hair wreath in the Manti Temple as women worked in their own ways both to participate in a larger culture and to remember based on craft from their native culture.

Western European immigrants carried the practice across the Atlantic in the seventeenth century. Initially, male jewelers and artisans advertised their hair work in newspapers. Over time, apprentices and journeymen learned the trade, transforming the craft to sell in an emerging market. Young ladies began to study hair work in fancywork schools, indicating a significant gender shift. The transition from fashionable jewelry and art created by artisans into a thriving business of sentimentality illustrates the trajectory of nineteenth-century commercialism.

---

Hair work asserted a valuable place in nineteenth-century American culture. Popular women’s magazines, including *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, endorsed hair work in their fashion columns, publishing monthly engravings with new designs and advertisements for products. *Godey’s* also included series of articles such as “The Art of Ornamental Hair-Work,” commencing in February 1859, popularizing the practice.32 The use of the press indicated a growing reputation as well as an effort and desire to emulate this brand of refinement.

Hair wreaths also depicted a sense of class. According to Helen Sheumaker, hair wreaths and hair jewelry demonstrated “a signal of acceptance in white middle-class culture…. The sentimentality that hair work visually and materially represented was a hallmark of being middle-class throughout the nineteenth century.” Sheumaker described the practice of fancywork—the desire to create elegance and beauty from scraps such as shells, dried flowers and leaves, toothpicks, and felt. She wrote, “Objects of fancywork, replete with visible traces of production, testified to a woman’s ingenuity and resourcefulness and stood as a statement of her taste and refinement.”33 For Mormon pioneer women to be involved in such refined work with hair illustrated their efforts to keep up with popular culture and communicated their own cultural prowess.

Refinement also produced professionalization. Professional hair workshops appeared in London, Paris, and New York City in the mid-nineteenth century. Medals, awards, and royal partnerships ensured commercial success and popularity.34 Hair work was formed into bouquets and wreaths and displayed in frames, shadow boxes, glass bell jars, or glass

shades. Hair was also used as material for embroidery and with glue and paint to depict portraits and decorations.

The process of creating hair art provides insight into its mark of refinement. The nineteenth-century fashionable elite considered hair an integral part of ornamental refinement. *Godey’s Lady’s Book* reported in January 1855, “luxuriant and tastefully arranged, hair certainly adds a peculiar degree of style, elegance, and finish.” Another later series addressed “how to promote, preserve, and keep [hair] luxuriant.” An 1856 article on the history of hair stated “the art of arranging and adorning the hair has been an important object of attention from the remotest periods.”

Hair proved to be a very workable material. According to Frances Lichten, “because of its lightness, toughness, and pliability, hair could be fashioned into the most intricate of braided and woven devices.” Artisans first washed the hair with water and baking soda or borax, then hung it to dry. Dividing hair into bunches of strands, they knotted each bunch with a small weight tied together with pack thread. They gummed the ends of the hair together with a mixture of wax and shellac and melted together, then sewed or wove the hair into jewelry or manipulated it into pictures. Artists created designs with a cut-and-paste technique developed in the eighteenth century. They laid strands of hair on gossamer paper,

---

37 Other articles in this *Godey’s Lady’s Book* series included “Modes of Wearing the Hair,” May 1855, p. 435; “Diseases of the Hair, and Directions for Its Management,” February 1855, p. 131; “Favorite Colors of the Hair, Common Modes of Wearing the Hair,” April 1855, p. 341.
38 *Godey’s Lady’s Book* vol. 59 March 1859: 218; July 1859: 343; August 1859: 154; September 1859: 244; and October 1859: 337.
40 Lichten, *Decorative Art of Victoria’s Era*, 192.
then simultaneously separated and glued it with a palette-type instrument or a camel-hair knife. After the hair air-dried, they cut it into the desired shape or design. Popular motifs included flowers, plants, trees, birds, butterflies, and bees. Other jewelry projects required hair weaving, similar to the process of making bobbin lace. Artisans arranged hair in bundles on a circular table with hooks, loops, and weights. Sometimes they curled the hair with a small curling iron, then held it over a candle to heat it into shape. Hair workers then formed the hair into jewelry, placed it in lockets, and even collected it like signatures in friendship albums. Hair wreaths ranged in size from one to four feet in diameter and were often framed in shadow boxes to hold their three-dimensional forms.

Relief Society women recognized the value of properly following legitimate prototypes, both cultural and religious. At the organization meeting of the Nauvoo Relief Society, John Taylor pronounced Emma Smith to be a “pattern of virtue.” As such, she was instructed to “teach the females those principles requisite for their future usefulness.” Emma Smith had counseled the Nauvoo Relief Society “that we should bring our conduct into respectability, here & every where else.” Part of that nineteenth-century sense of decorum required careful attention to social and cultural refinement. Thus Emma Smith herself became a pattern for the women to emulate in later years in Utah.

These women also emulated the patterns prescribed by such cultural institutions as *Godey’s Ladies Book* and *Peterson’s Magazine*. According to historian Stuart Blersch, expanded

---

44 Ibid., 24 March 1842, 15.
45 See, for example, the series “The Art of Ornamental Hair-Work” with receipts (or patterns of instruction) in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, February 1860, p. 165; March 1860, p. 267; April 1860, p. 355; May 1860, p. 458; and June
leisure time for an evolving middle class during the Industrial Age produced a Victorian fascination with handcrafts. By the mid-1800s, mass production of hair jewelry in America increased in popularity, heightening in the 1840s and 1850s and achieving high fashion in the 1860s and 1870s. While originally created by professionals, soon amateurs and many middle class women picked up the practice.

The use of hair demonstrated a sense of pioneer resourcefulness. While the general nineteenth-century population did not have access to photography, even fewer did on the Western frontier. Yet the desire to remember the physical appearance of people proved important. Decorations made of hair retained the memory in the absence of photography.

Because of their ornate quality, women often prominently displayed hair wreaths in fashionable parlors. Mormons were no exception. The placement of hair wreaths in LDS temples, either in the Celestial room or the grand entrance revealed insightful information about temple ideology. According to historian Josh Probert, “the celestial room is, after all, an oversized Victorian parlor. It looks much like what the Rockefellers, Astors, and Vanderbilts were building at the same time on the East Coast.” Refined temple décor provides insight into Mormon efforts to refine.


46 Blersch, “Victorian Jewelry Made of Hair,” 42.
48 According to historian Martha A. Sandweiss, photographs, particularly for settlers of the West, became “substitutes for firsthand experience,” providing visual ties to families and places left behind and contributing to a “new sort of visual memory of one’s own past.” Martha A. Sandweiss, Print the Legend: Photography and the American West (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 3-4.
49 Sheumaker, Love Entwined, 77.
50 Probert, “Mormon Hair Art as Relic,” 3.
LDS temples were sacred space for religious ritual. The location became an exhibition of ideology. Following the ritual worship practice of the Judeo-Christian heritage from the Old Testament era, the temple served as the physical presence of God. As a result, the Mormon material sacrifice of building a magnificent edifice while in abject poverty illustrated a distinct identity. These Restorationist Christians were also a refined people. Because the temple ritual was not written or made public, nineteenth-century Mormons found ways to remember ceremonial procedure and meaning through memory and physical artifacts associated with the temple. Women provided assistance with the construction and décor of the Kirtland temple in the 1830s. The Relief Society formally organized to provide

---


53 While this was a time of poverty among church members in Kirtland, most members committed to assisting the project with whatever resources they had. Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830-1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 143. Women participated in the effort in several ways. One reminiscence recorded “all that was not on Mishons did work all most constant from the time it was commenced till it was completed. Some women and chrelden labord and tended mason. One sister I have forgot the name drove two yoa of cattle and haled rock.” Aroet Lucius Hale, cited in Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, “Sweet Counsel and Seas of Tribulation: The Religious Life of the Women in Kirtland,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 155. Women provided clothing for work men and sewed curtains and carpets for the temple’s interior. Heber C. Kimball recorded: “Our women were engaged in spinning and knitting in order to clothe those who were laboring at the building, and the Lord only knows the scenes of poverty, tribulation, and distress which we passed through in order to accomplish this thing. My wife toiled all summer in lending her aid towards its accomplishment. She had a hundred pounds of wool, which, with the assistance of a girl, she spun in order to furnish clothing for those engaged in the building of the Temple, and although she had the privilege of keeping half the quantity of wool for herself, as a recompense for her labor, she did not reserve even so much as would make her a pair of stockings; but gave it for those who were laboring at the house of the Lord. She spun and wove and got the cloth dressed, and cute and made up into garments, and gave them to those men who labored on the Temple; almost all the sisters in Kirtland labored in knitting, sewing, spinning, &c., for the purpose of forwarding the work of the Lord.” Heber C. Kimball, “Selections from H.C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 7 (April 15, 1845): 867. Lucy Mack Smith noted that Mary Bailey and Agnes Coolbrith “devoted their whole time to making and mending clothes for the brethren who worked on the house. There was but one mainspring to all our thoughts, and that was building the Lord’s house.” Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by his Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 323. Joseph Smith remembered that the women gathered in February 1836 to make the temple veil. “Father Smith presided over them, and gave them much good instruction.” Heber C. Kimball, “Selections from H.C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 7 (April
assistance, both financial and with their handwork, with the construction of the Nauvoo Temple.\textsuperscript{54} They demonstrated a connection with the ancient past through fashionable material culture popular for the time, including hair art. While formats changed from the 1840s, when the Latter-day Saints lived in Nauvoo, through the end of the nineteenth century, when they spread throughout the West, temple builders relied on women as guardians of culture to properly embellish their sacred space. Thus Mormon women acted as proper Victorian custodians for this refined sphere.

The Relief Society was not the only segment of the Mormon population that sought representation and memorialization in the temple. The Logan First Ward Primary children’s association also created “a very nice wreath of hair flowers” to be displayed in the Logan Temple in December 1885.\textsuperscript{55} The Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association of Fillmore, Utah, held a bazaar to raise money for the Manti Temple in August 1886, selling homemade articles such as wax flowers, autograph album quilts, and a hair wreath.\textsuperscript{56} The use of hair art reflected popular nineteenth-century refinement for all ages.

Mormon women in Nauvoo made many strenuous efforts to refine their environment. Such efforts in the temples in particular afforded them with a distinguished

---

\textsuperscript{54} As in Kirtland, the women of Nauvoo worked to financially support the male-directed construction, and women sent money from England. Mercy Fielding Smith and Mary Fielding Thompson initiated a penny fund and encouraged women to contribute money for the window glass. Mercy Fielding Thompson, “Autobiographical Sketch” (Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1880). The women of neighboring towns LaHarpe and Macedonia collected funds to purchase a crane for construction. \textit{Millennial Star} 22 (June 1844): 536. \textit{Times and Seasons} 5:14 (1 August 1844): 596. See Leonard, \textit{Nauvoo}, 251. The women also assisted in the sewing of veils for the upper rooms of the temple, following the pattern initiated by Joseph Smith. Lisle G. Brown, “The Sacred Departments for Temple Work in Nauvoo: The Assembly Room and the Council Chamber,” \textit{BYU Studies} 19 (1979 1978): 370.


\textsuperscript{56} M.A. Greenhalgh, “Y.L.M.I.A. Fair,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 15, no. 7 (September 1, 1886): 54.
position in terms of female religious authority. Utah women embodied this sense of refinement as they decorated and embellished later temples in Salt Lake City, St. George, Manti, and Logan. The display of these three hair wreaths in temples and in the Relief Society building illustrates a material embodiment of refinement associated with memory of the Nauvoo Relief Society and according to the fashionable dictates of the period.

“On your heads in threads of gray”—Hair Art as Memorials to Death and Hope for Life

The creation and preservation of hair wreaths demonstrated a very physical aspect of usable past. Traditionally hair art employed a symbol of mourning, loss, and remembrance. These Relief Society and temple hair wreaths represented the physicality of their situations and the tangible, shared memory of those physical experiences. Relief Society women in Nauvoo dealt with sickness, aging, and death. The hair art also revealed a deeper particular LDS ideology or doctrine concerning the link of the physical and the spiritual.

A fascination with death and mourning, stemming from the 1500s philosophy of memento mori popularized mourning jewelry and hair work as physical reminders of mortality through the nineteenth century.57 One concern with death and mourning stemming from the Middle Ages was whether family members would recognize their loved ones after death. One sentimental solution was to retain a piece of the body, such as a lock of hair.58 Nineteenth-century hair-workers considered the importance of using hair from living people rather than from the dead. This required sense of “live” material insinuated a perpetuation of

animation, affection, and life. Mourning rings containing the plaited hair of the departed in a small locket were often presented to the immediate family and closest friends of the deceased following funerals in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Similarly, mourning pins, composed of hair mounted on ivory with designs featuring weeping willows, tombs, or trees, became quite popular. Queen Victoria wore a bracelet containing a lock of hair from her husband Albert after his death. Wearing jewelry made of a loved one’s hair was a token of memory well before the advent of photography.

The Relief Society Building hair art appears to have been created as a mourning piece; a black grosgrain ribbon adorns the stems of the hair flowers. (Appendix, fig. 1.1) The piece may have been made to commemorate Elizabeth Ann Whitney’s death, as the bow is situated prominently under her penned name at the bottom of the hair wreath. She was the first of this group to pass away on 15 February 1882, and seats were specifically reserved for Relief Society officers at her funeral on the Salt Lake City Assembly Hall. Joseph F. Smith publicly claimed that “henceforth and forever there was laid up for her a crown of glory, a queenly crown for [Whitney].” He went on to say that “women would stand in the presence of the Eternal God crowned with glory and eternal lives, which none living can enjoy but those who are worthy and made this sacrifice.” The association of divine reward based on earthly activity and commitment in this life reveals a typical religious dogma shared by Mormons and their contemporaries.

60 Carlisle, “Hair Work Jewelry,” 416.
Hair art was often created to maintain the memory of a lost loved one, or to preserve relationships from physical separation. According to historian Geoffrey Batchen, hair is a type of synecdoche, or a tangible memorial symbol: “Hair, intimate and yet easily removed, is a convenient and pliable stand-in for the body of the missing, memorialized subject.” He continued: “The hair serves a metonymic memorial function, standing in, as I have noted, for the body of the absent subject.” While hair on a living person changes color and texture over time, cutting and saving locks was a common way to mark the passage from infancy to old age, preserving a specific moment of time much like a photograph. Once detached from the body, hair continued to stand for that individual as a physical marker. Margaret Smoot, whose hair appears in the Salt Lake Relief Society hair wreath, wrote to her husband while he was away on a mission and requested a locket containing his picture and a lock of his hair. She wanted to remember him at that particular moment.

Remembering and mourning the dead expanded a popular practice in nineteenth-century culture. The Manti Temple hair wreath combined a common Victorian floral mourning wreath with a peculiar Mormon temple symbol—the baptismal font on the backs of twelve oxen. The Salt Lake Temple hair wreath was formed in a willow tree design, a common mourning symbol in the Early Modern period. The use of nature imagery was popular in mourning décor; the development of garden-like cemeteries linked death with

---

66 Pointon, “These Fragments I Have Shored Against My Ruins,” 200.
68 “The locket you are to get made for me I want your picture on one side, and some of your hair on the other side. I hope I shall live to see you return and enjoy your society long on the earth and rejoice with you.” In Olive Smoot Bean, “Biographical Sketch of Margaret T. Smoot, Abraham O. Smoot Papers,” ms, n.d., 26, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
69 Pointon, “These Fragments I Have Shored Against My Ruins,” 200.
nature. Nature represented Heaven, and the combination of death, Heaven, and remembrance allowed the living to commemorate their losses. The Industrial Revolution produced emotional strains previously expressed communally, now relegated to hearth and home. The careful preservation of hair often memorialized the loss of a loved one. Certain types of trees also displayed important Victorian melancholy symbolism: a weeping willow, for example, communicated lost love, while a cypress represented mourning.

Because Nauvoo was built on marshy swampland, Mormon settlers there experienced more than the usual share of mid-nineteenth-century disease and death. The rapid influx of immigrants, often in poverty, also carried challenges to the Nauvoo Relief Society women as they dealt with illness. One way that Mormon women exercised efforts to control or respond to the fears and concerns of sickness and death in Nauvoo was through the spiritual gift of healing and speaking in tongues, common practices among contemporary evangelicals. At one Relief Society meeting, Joseph Smith authorized women to heal the sick by the laying on of hands, explaining that “wherein they are ordained, it is the privilege of those set apart to administer in that authority which is conferred upon them.”

Elizabeth Ann Whitney remembered that she was “ordained and set apart under the hand of Joseph

---

72 Bernstein, “Hair Jewelry, Locks of Love,” 100.
73 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842. This followed a series of two Relief Society meetings on 14 April and 19 April 1842 meeting, where Relief Society members gathered and administered in healing blessings. Mrs. Elizabeth Durfee, for example, “bore testimony to the great blessing she received when administered to after the close of the last meeting, by Prest. E. Smith & Councillors Cleveland and Whitney, she said she never realized more benefit thro’ any administration—that she was heal’d, and thought the sisters had more faith than the brethren.” 19 April 1842, 31.
Smith to administer to the sick and comfort the sorrowful.”

Recalling the words of Joseph Smith, Bathsheba W. Smith, a member of the original Nauvoo Relief Society, noted how “he had given the sisters instructions that they could administer to the sick.” Such action sparked very physical, tangible activity involving the human body and allowing women to assert control in situations in which they otherwise had little control.

The physicality of a hair wreath, commemorating a portion of the human body, matched the palpability of spiritual gifts employed by women of the Nauvoo Relief Society. They also practiced glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, an exercise of faith by many American religious women at the time. In fact, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, fondly enshrined at the foot of the Relief Society hair wreath, was remembered as one of the first Latter-day Saints to receive the gift of tongues. At the 19 April 1842 Relief Society meeting, Sarah Cleveland spoke in tongues, with Mrs. Sessions interpreting.

---

76 An obituary memorializing Wilmirth East at her death recognizes an experience she had speaking in tongues in 1851 in Texas, a few years before she joined the LDS Church and later, the Relief Society, in Salt Lake City. Nancy Roberts, “Resolution of Respect.”
77 “Death of Mother Whitney.” “She was designated in the early days of the Church, ‘the sweet songstress of Zion,’ by the Prophet himself. She was among the first members of the Church in this dispensation who received the gift of tongues, which she always exercised in singing. The Prophet Joseph said that the language was pure Adamic, the same that was used in the Garden of Eden, and declared that if she kept the faith the gift would never leave her. It never did and those who have heard her sing will never forget the sweet and holy influence that accompanied her of this heavenly gift.” According to Emmeline B. Wells, “the gift of song which Sister Whitney possessed in such a rare degree was often a comfort to the Prophet in those days of trial and gloom. He would sit as it were spell bound and listen to the rich melody of her magnificent voice for the time so absorbed, as to forget his sorrows. Very early in the Church she received the gift of tongues which manifested itself to her in songs of praise and rejoicing. She possessed a reverential, prophetic and poetic temperament, and the spirit of God strengthened her in all these exalted attributes.” Emmeline B. Wells, “Elizabeth Ann Whitney,” *Woman’s Exponent* 10, no. 20 (March 15, 1882): 152–153.
78 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 19 April 1842, 32. The minutes of the meeting report that Sarah Cleveland “many times felt in her heart, what she could not express in our own language, and as the Prophet had given us liberty to improve the gifts of the gospel in our meetings, and feeling the power resting upon, desired to speak in the gift of tongues, which she did in a powerful manner.” Mrs. Sessions interpreted,
the women also laid hand on each other’s heads to pronounce blessings. Again, the physical touch and use of the mouth, the hand, and the head, demonstrated the value of corporeality. The effort to memorialize events and relationships, as exhibited by a hair wreath, is evident.

Death and disease were constant companions to those living in Nauvoo, Winter Quarters, on the plains, and in early, unsettled Utah. The women portrayed in the Relief Society hair wreath were familiar with losing loved ones. Phoebe Woodruff lost two infant sons while in Winter Quarters: a one-year-old toddler who died of canker and a premature baby born six weeks early. Three others died within their first year or two of life, totaling five of her nine children who died. Wilmirth East lost five of six children while on route from Texas to the Salt Lake Valley in 1855, as well as the loss of her father and other members of her family of origin. Because of the conditions of the journey, the East family quickly buried their dead at the side of the road. While her husband was on a mission to

“said that God was well pleas’d with this Society.” This may have been Patty Bartlett Sessions, based on her later relationship with Eliza R. Snow and other members of the Nauvoo Relief Society. Patty Bartlett Sessions, *Mormon Midwife: The 1846-1888 Diaries Patty Bartlett Sessions*, ed. Donna Toland Smart (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997), 8, 22, 28, 35, 79.


80 Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal on 4 November 1846 that “Our little boy, Joseph, was taken sick this day. Had taken cold and it settled in his lungs.” On 8 November, “Mrs. Woodruff had to spend the whole time day and night, with Joseph, as he is in a dangerous situation.” By 10 November, “Joseph had the appearance of dying in the afternoon and evening, but revived about 12 o’clock.” Two days later, “Sister Abbott took the main charge of him during the night, as Mrs. Woodruff’s strength was mostly exhausted. He had suffered much from convulsions during his sickness, but he breathed his last and fell asleep this morning, 15 minutes before 6 o’clock, and we took his remains to the grave at 4 o’clock this afternoon.” Less than a month later, on 8 December, “at half past 3 o’clock this morning, Mrs. Woodruff was delivered of a son, which was untimely, 6 weeks before her time. The boy was alive, smart, and active, and yet we cannot expect him to live but a short time. We call his name Ezra. Mrs. Woodruff is doing as well as can be expected.” By 11 December, “We attended to the burial of our child today, being 2 days sold when it died. This is the second son we have buried within a short time. Mrs. Woodruff is quite unwell.” Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 1833-1898*, ed. Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 3:93–97.

81 According to Edward Wallace East’s journal, cholera infiltrated their pioneer camp. “Our little Mary who was a promising and lovely child, died about sundown. She sank away calmly and peacefully as though she were going into a sweet sleep. She was buried on the South side of the road before daylight. A crude board with the initials of her name was set at the head of her grave.” Their son William “was buried in a crude box on the hill
England and she was in Winter Quarters, Jane Snyder Richards had one newborn son die immediately after his birth in July 1846, and a toddler daughter died two months later.  

Each of these women is commemorated in the Relief Society hair wreath. (Appendix, fig. 1.1) This is one reason why the physical memorial found in the hair wreath, a tangible memory of dear relationships, became more valuable after deep and personal loss.

The physical process of aging also affected the women who raised concern about the longevity of family and friendships. At a Nauvoo Relief Society meeting, Lucy Mack Smith, mother of Joseph Smith, “wept—said she was advanc’d in years and could not stay long—hop’d the Lord would bless and aid the Society in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked—that her work was nearly done—felt to pray that the blessings of heaven might rest upon the Society.” As years passed and the Saints spread throughout the West, women gathered often to commemorate birthdays and both celebrate and mourn the passing of time and their inherent aging. At Margaret T. Smoot’s sixty-seventh birthday party, on 16 April 1876, in Provo, Utah, sister-wife Dianna E. Smoot remembered Margaret’s youth and her years of experience: “On your head in threads of gray / Youth has faded from your cheek / but never has your heart grown old / And we love you more the less / Because we see you’re

---

82 According to a biographer of her husband, Franklin Dewey Richards, “his wife Jane, amidst all the privations of the exodus, was lying at the point of death that a son had been born to her, but the child had quietly expired upon its mother’s devoted bosom… Franklin’s little daughter Wealthy had also died, and left his wife heartbroken, childless, and alone.” Andrew Jensen, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History Company, 1901), 1:117.


84 “As cultural curiosities, aged women linked the past and future.” Ibid., 131–153.

growing old.” The inclusion of Margaret’s graying hair in the Relief Society hair wreath and the discussion about it at her birthday party revealed a fascination with this physical format and the way hair communicated age and wisdom. Age, death, and loss prompted women to preserve pieces of themselves and their loved ones in their hair art.

The hair wreaths commemorated the physical experiences of both life and lost relationships. They also depicted the way nineteenth-century Mormons reconciled such experiences. The Manti Temple hair wreath included a frame of floral décor which remained open at the top, another symbol of mourning art. Ruth Gordon has interpreted the horseshoe-shaped mourning symbols of hair art to represent life and serve as family portraits. Mormons believed that while they would inevitably die and their bodies would decay, through religious ritual and faith, they would experience the resurrection promised in the Bible. The message inscribed on the Manti Temple hair wreath insinuated a strong belief in the doctrine of resurrection: “These locks of hair, O Lord, thou hast seen us wear, so now we commit them to Thy Holy Temple’s care.” Read another way, the women yearned to link their physical bodies with a spiritual, eternal hope. The hair wreath encircled a depiction of a baptismal font, an integral part of Mormon temple ritual. According to curator Mark Staker, the center of the piece contained a thin piece of wood cut and painted to look like oxen standing on a tiled floor with an urn on their backs, created by Janne Mattson Sjodhal. When the practice of baptisms for the dead started in 1840, proxy

---

88 Luke 12:17—“Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered”; Luke 21:18—“There shall not an hair of your head perish.”
89 Staker, “By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them,” 84.
baptisms were performed for direct blood ancestors.90 Thus the hair wreath, with the
depiction of the baptismal font, revealed a connection to the kindred or family of the
women working in the temple.

Mothers, Sisters, Wives, Daughters: Memorials of Family, Church, and
Sisterhood

Hair art demonstrated family history and collective memory in physical ways. The
proper Victorian mother, or guardian of the hearth, preserved a strong family identity,
protecting and caring for children and spouse through life fraught with illness and early
mortality. The production of a hair wreath illustrated an effort to record a particular moment
in time. While most hair art represented families, the temple and Relief Society pieces
demonstrated different groupings: Relief Society sisterhood and the comingling of
Priesthood and Relief Society into a proper LDS family hierarchy. These groupings
contributed to a larger institutional “family” with traditional family connections. Viewing
these hair wreaths as family memorials provides insight into LDS family ideology, including
polygamy and celestial marriage. Each typically female family role could be found within the
larger Church family. As Mothers in Israel, Mormon women bore and nurtured offspring
and posterity. As wives, they joined their patriarchal priesthood husbands to work together.
As sisters in a holy order, they cared for each other. As daughters, they developed individual
connections to God. The seeds of these relationships and ideas were planted in Nauvoo.
Hair wreaths commemorated these relationships and produced a material collective memory.

The most common Victorian hair wreaths depicted family. Often hair was woven
into designs to illustrate the particular family construct. A family tree could include a trunk

woven of hair from family elders with branches made of younger descendants. Sometimes hair from the paternal side could comprise half of the scene, while hair from the maternal side filled the other half. Other hair décor consisted of a wreath comprised of hair covering a wire form and decorated with flowers made from different locks of hair. These flowers were sometimes numbered with a genealogical key delineating their contributors. Thus this hair art became in a sense a family history.

The family connection was important in the mid-nineteenth century. Anthropologist Pam Frese explained that “families wanted something tangible by which to remember their deceased loved ones while maintaining their ancestral ties.” According to Edward Tullidge, Mormon women of Utah had “inherited their earnest religious characters from their fathers and mothers,” most of them as “Puritan daughters of New England.” The genealogy of the founding women traced back to Revolutionary War patriots and pilgrims, a distinct badge of pride. These Mormon hair wreaths, commemorated common concepts of family history using a traditional format for the period.

The three hair wreaths displayed certain nuclear family relationships. The Salt Lake temple piece included hair from thirty-nine people, sixteen of whom were related to each other either through blood or marriage. (Appendix, fig. 1.3) Maria Young Dougall, for example, was the daughter of Brigham Young, both of whom have hair displayed in this piece. Zina D. Huntington Young was married to Brigham Young, and when Maria’s mother

---

91 These types of hair wreaths tended to be more popular in America rather than Europe. Navarro, “Hairwork of the Nineteenth Century,” 490.
93 This resulted in a surge in hair work from the 1840s through the 1880s. Ibid., 68.
Clarissa died, her sister-wife Zina raised the young girl. This was an important family connection. Another one appeared close by: Zina’s sister, Prescindia Huntington Kimball also has hair included in this display. These two sisters, daughters of the Watertown, New York Huntington family, also figure prominently in the Relief Society hair wreath. (Appendix, fig. 1.1) Two other sets of spouses appeared in the Salt Lake temple piece: George A. and Bathsheba Smith, and Franklin D. and Jane Snyder Richards. The memorial also included sets of cousins: Joseph Smith and George A. Smith, and Brigham Young and Willard Richards. (Appendix, fig. 1.3)

Untangling the relationships across, around, and through these hair wreaths reveals valuable information about the Mormon family structure: first the practice of polygamy, and second the doctrine of celestial or eternal marriage. Both concepts originated in the Nauvoo period. For example, both Zina and Prescindia were sealed to Joseph Smith, whose hair also appeared on the Salt Lake temple piece. Prescindia later married Heber C. Kimball, whose plural wife Lucy Walker Kimball also had hair in this piece. (Appendix, fig. 1.3) In the Relief Society hair wreath, three of the twelve women included were sister wives, intermarrying within the same families. Nine participated in plural marriage, six as the first wife. These hair wreaths depicted chaotic Mormon family charts in a different structure with a visually esthetic fashion. The artistic rendition displayed the inherent intertwining and organic nature of sister-wives and children in polygamous relationships. Historian Kathryn Daynes

---

95 First wives included Wilmirth East, Mary Isabella Horne, Jane Snyder Richards, Margaret Smoot, Elizabeth Ann Whitney, and Phoebe Woodruff.
96 According to historian Kathryn M. Daynes, “Joseph Smith became the son-in-law of Apostle Heber C. Kimball by marrying his daughter, and he became the brother-in-law of Brigham Young by marrying Young’s sister. Marriage among other Mormons expanded these relationships, such as when Isaac Morley’s daughter became a plural wife of Heber C. Kimball. Morley thus became the father-in-law of the father-in-law of Joseph Smith.” Kathryn M. Daynes, More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840-1910 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 26.
used such descriptions as loyalty, binding, or sealing in her definition of polygamy in Nauvoo. Rather than focus on a romantic, physical, sexual relationship, Joseph Smith introduced a religious construct to plural marriage, promising blessings of exaltation based on membership in a prominent priesthood family. Richard L. Bushman interpreted the practice as a spiritual benefit based on a “close tie to the prophet.” He went on to explain that “like Abraham of old, Joseph yearned for familial plentitude. He did not lust for women so much as he lusted for kin.” Religious doctrine, rather than sex or romance, defined polygamy and informed a restructured institutional family.

In Nauvoo, the practice of plural marriage was kept private although rumors often leaked out, causing persecution and profound confusion. Plural wives did not take their husbands’ last names, nor did they openly cohabit. Acknowledgment of such marriages, or sealings, to use Joseph Smith’s terminology, remained under tight control. A majority of the women involved also participated in the Relief Society. Joseph Smith considered the group to be a controlled membership who had proven their loyalty to him and trusted his teachings. Plural marriage was not made public until August 1852, when Orson Pratt announced and defined the belief in a public speech. By then, polygamy was well-established among the Saints, though its history was unspoken. As a result, the information and memory of the Nauvoo experience existed only in individual and family accounts and in personal and collective memory. According to Daynes, this “memory is not a storehouse of facts but rather a process that, for example, conflates details or shapes a view of the distant past based on intervening events or misunderstandings.” Daynes concluded that an understanding of

---

97 Ibid., 24–27.
the Nauvoo period was “crucial to an understanding of plural marriages.”\textsuperscript{99} These hair wreaths documented relationships stemming from Nauvoo.

Beyond polygamy, the second example of distinct Mormon marriage doctrine is the belief that such relationships, sealed by proper priesthood authority, extended beyond the grave. This ideology combined the hope for resurrection of a physical body, represented by hair, in eternal relationships, represented by its juxtaposition. While the body languished in the grave, the memory, the celestial union, and the intertwined hair locks endured.

One significant connection to the past occurred for Mormon women with family history. Drawing upon the Old Testament prophecy that Elijah the prophet would turn the hearts of the children and the fathers to each other, Joseph Smith taught the necessity of a “chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfills the mission of Elijah.”\textsuperscript{100} The genealogical connection to the family, particularly those deceased, became a significant relationship and activity for Mormon women. The binding or sealing of families occurred in temple ceremonies, making the temple a location of significant power for Mormon women as guardians of history.

As guardians of history, Mormon women considered themselves “Mothers in Israel.” The title revealed a perpetuity, a continuation, of a proper nineteenth-century mother-figure, who acted as a custodian of culture. Mothers in Israel also preserved family relationships with active participation in the patriarchal priesthood chain. Joseph F. Smith publicly named Whitney a “mother in Israel” at her passing.\textsuperscript{101} Margaret T. Smoot passed away shortly after

\textsuperscript{99} Daynes, \textit{More Wives Than One}, 29, 35.
\textsuperscript{101} “Funeral Service of Sister Elizabeth A. Whitney.”
Whitney, in September 1884. Earlier, at her sixty-seventh birthday, a friend called her “one of Israel’s noblest mothers.” Another friend remarked on this collectivity of “Mothers of Patriarchs, Prophets and the nobles of all dispensations, your name shall be enrolled forever; and in the archives of Eternity, as one who assisted to lay the foundation of a kingdom which shall stand forever.” David John then connected this matriarchal lineage back to Eve: “The curse pronounced upon our first Mother, through transgression, has been removed from over your venerable brow, through your obedience to the revelations of Jesus Christ.”

The connection, both of Smoot to Eve and to the other “mothers” in this Relief Society hair art, illustrated their use of the past and their explanation of ancient matriarchal responsibility. Similar examples were used for other women included in this piece, combining hair from a collectivity of Mothers in Israel and holy women.

The Salt Lake Temple hair wreath exhibited an institutional family album designed in the shape of a weeping willow tree. (Appendix, fig. 1.3) A slender trunk bears branches bending back towards the stem. A ring of off-shoots surround the trunk like a fountain of youth. The hair is carefully divided to distinguish each donor, as each branch is comprised of a separate color and type of hair. A map outlines the names of each donor. (Appendix, fig. 1.4) A traditional family tree would illustrate both patrilineal and matrilineal lines. This tree, however, blends together the hair from significant Mormon men and women, not just from the same family of consanguinity, but of church membership and shared collective history.

Each of the four presidents of the LDS Church was represented in the Salt Lake Temple piece: Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and the current president in

---

1893, Wilford Woodruff. (Appendix, fig. 1.3) All members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in 1893 were included in the piece.\textsuperscript{103} The Salt Lake Temple hair wreath also captured a specific moment of hierarchical leadership in 1893 when the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated. The Relief Society general presidency of 1893 included Zina Young, with counselors Batheeba Smith and Jane Richards and secretary Emmeline B. Wells. The Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association presidency was included: Elmina Shepherd Taylor, Maria Young Dougall, and Martha H. Tingey. Lillie T. Freeze represented the Primary general presidency. And both George Q. Cannon and George Goddard stood for the general Sunday School Superintendency. The proximity of Church leadership positions with prominent Mormon families created a singular, almost elite community. Much like Joseph Smith’s “Anointed Quorum” in Nauvoo, the collection of leading men and women in the Salt Lake wreath represented some of the faithful from Nauvoo.\textsuperscript{104} The collection and careful preservation of hair from these people illustrates the significant links between individuals and communities over family as discussed by historian Alison Landsberg. The wreaths represented a form of prosthetic memory, “negotiating a relationship to the past,” particularly to Joseph Smith’s power structure from Nauvoo. The pieces provided a visual representation of what Landsberg termed “collapsing the past into the present, of flattening time.”\textsuperscript{105} The inclusion of hair from both Joseph Smith and B.H. Roberts, a member of the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{103}{Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, George A. Smith, Moses Thatcher, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, George Teasdale, Heber J. Grant, Marriner W. Merrill, and Abraham H. Cannon}
\end{footnotes}
Quorum of the Seventy who was born thirteen years after Smith’s death, illustrated this collision. They were not related, but they were linked together in Church leadership. Smith’s concept of enduring kinship as bonding, welding, or sealing is made visual.106

Another view of the placement illustrated important gender ideology from this period. Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards form the lower branches, and Zina Young and Lucy Kimball make up the trunk of the tree.107 (Appendix, fig. 1.3) The fact that the women had longer hair and could more easily contribute to a lengthy trunk suggested a reason why the tree was set up in this manner. Nonetheless, the inclusion of women with foundational men communicated much about the role they played in the formation of the LDS Church and in the memory of that institutional lineage. Eliza R. Snow commented on the commingling of LDS men and women in Kingdom-building: “We are here to perform duties, and to do our part towards establishing God’s Kingdom. We, my sisters, have as much to do as our brethren have. We are to work in union with them. Every woman who fills her position as a wife, honorably, stands as a counselor to her husband. Not a dictator, a counselor. And what a life it is to live my sisters! What a noble life, to live, so as to fill this position, in which we are blessed, and are honorable as women of God.”108 The order of hair revealed much about nineteenth-century Mormon belief and relationships.

The temple did not merely afford women a separate sense of religious authority; it became a location of interdependent work among men and women. According to Church president and successor to Brigham Young, John Taylor, “the man is not without the

106 Bushman, Joseph Smith, 440.
107 Information based on a description of the hair wreath provided by the DUP.
woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord.” He informed the Juab Stake Relief Society that “the man holds the Priesthood, and is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of the Church. But are the [women] not set apart by the Priesthood to officiate in their callings? Yes…. The sisters, however, can work and do work in their sphere as helps to the brethren. They can do a great deal; they can feed the poor, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, comfort the distressed, and even lay hands on and pray for the sick, and do a large amount of good generally.” He referred to women and men working in the temple: “Our sisters are really one with us, and when the brethren go into the Temples to officiate for the males, the sisters will go in for the females; we operate together for the good of the whole, that we may be united together for time and all eternity.” The Salt Lake Temple hair wreath illustrated this concept of interdependence by interweaving the hair of prominent male and female leaders. Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor’s hair was displayed alongside Zina Young, Jane Richards, and Bathsheba Smith. (Appendix, fig. 1.3)

Analysis of these Relief Society hair wreaths revealed a use of the traditional nineteenth-century format of hair art to memorialize family relationships. Hair work did not only commemorate death or mourning. In fact, men and women often exchanged locks of hair to honor of friendships. Nineteenth-century men and women utilized hair jewelry to commemorate engagements and friendships as fashion accessories. As the century moved on, the use of hair art expanded to watch chains, bracelets, earrings, necklaces, rings, and

---

109 1 Corinthians 11:11, a reference to the ancient apostle Paul.
110 Reported in Amelia Goldsbrugh and Mary Pitchforth, “Relief Society Conference: Juab Stake,” Woman’s Exponent 8, no. 1 (June 1, 1879): 248.
111 Notably missing here is the hair of Eliza R. Snow and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, who both passed away years before the creation of this piece and the completion of the Salt Lake Temple.
112 Leopold, “The Lost Art of Victorian Hair Work: What It Meant to Nineteenth-Century Americans Then... What We Think of It Today,” 69.
People often exchanged hair locks in the nineteenth century as they would later exchange wallet-sized photographs. Jane Blood’s 1880 diary described the gift of a hair wreath to demonstrate love for a dear friend in Kaysville, Utah.

In a Relief Society setting, commemorative hair wreaths demonstrated a similar family-kin network among members, particularly those who shared a common Relief Society lineage from Nauvoo. The Relief Society collectivity became a matrilineal pedigree, united through their LDS religious belief and community of sisters and founded on their faith in and connection to Jesus Christ. The fact that two pieces, the Relief Society piece and the Salt Lake Temple piece, are carefully labeled as to who produced which strands of hair, revealed a clear placement of the individual within the larger framework of the group.

This sisterhood or matriarchal lineage originated in Nauvoo when Joseph Smith named Presidentess Emma Smith an “elect lady,” and John Taylor confirmed her as a “mother in Israel.” Emma Smith maintained the role of president, acting often to correct improper activity and provide proper instruction. Sarah Cleveland commented that the Relief Society “was organiz’d after the order of heav’n.” Each of the women depicted in the Relief Society hair wreath joined the Nauvoo Relief Society, except for Mary Elizabeth

---

113 Navarro, “Hairwork of the Nineteenth Century,” 485.
115 7 October 1880: “Eliza Ann Burton has been visiting here. I made a wreath of hair flowers for her.” Blood “was adept in all the home-crafts of the day. She learned and later taught the art of making wax fruit and flowers, as well as flowers from dyed wool and from hair. Some of these arrangements were framed and others were placed on wooden trays that were fitted with glass domes. Several pieces of her embroidery that have been preserved are models of perfection. She was never satisfied after seeing a new kind of handwork until she had learned how to do it. This desire to learn new things prompted her to go into the silk industry.” Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood, Jane Wilkie Hooper Blood Autobiography and Abridged Diary, ed. Ivy Hooper Blood Hill (Logan, Utah: J.P. Smith, 1965), 35.
117 Ibid., 19 April 1842, 31.
Cook and Wilmirth East. (Appendix, fig. 1.1) Phoebe Woodruff and Elizabeth Ann Whitney left behind their parents and families of origin to join the Latter-day Saints. The Nauvoo Relief Society provided a new matriarchal order or family for women who shared their collective experiences in Utah.

Another way to interpret the relationships in this hair wreath is by looking at their proximity. A typical family hair wreath presented a type of family tree. The Relief Society hair wreath demonstrated a distinct hierarchy. (Appendix, fig. 1.1) With Eliza R. Snow at the head and Elizabeth Ann Whitney at the root, and the other women branching out of each side, this collectivity of Relief Society women became an intermediary family, a sisterhood. The hierarchy is clear: Eliza R. Snow, who served as the Secretary in Nauvoo, stood in Utah at the head as the Utah Relief Society morphed into its own form. The embodiment of roles established in the Nauvoo matriarchy remained clear in the Utah Societies. Their memories of relationships, particularly with their mothers, influenced their friendships with each other and their families. In contrast, the Manti Relief Society hair art illustrated an anonymous mixture of hair; personal identity dissolved into the larger collective. (Appendix, fig. 1.2) A handwritten message on the Manti piece revealed the maker as Mary W. Wintch and donors

118 Mary Cook arrived in Salt Lake City in the late 1860s, where she taught school and later became the Salt Lake County Superintendent of Schools. She joined the echelon of Relief Society women by serving as the general Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association secretary from 1889 to 1891, when she announced that she would be moving back East. Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), 128, 133, 135. Wilmirth East moved to Utah in 1855 from Texas, where she and her husband joined the Church. The East family moved to Arizona in 1877. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher considered East as a member of the second echelon based on her relationship with women in the “inner core.” Beecher, “The ‘Leading Sisters.’”

as members of the Manti South Relief Society. The interwoven locks affixed bonds among Relief Society women that lasted beyond their own mortality.

Hair wreaths demonstrated this sense of collectivity or unity. Unlike hair jewelry, hair wreaths rarely displayed the hair from only one person. The Mormon temple hair wreath artists often combined hair from church leaders and members of the Relief Society. According to Mark Staker, “hair from these individuals was brought together in one common image to create unity from individuality.” The Manti Temple hair wreath included a tight collection of flowers, woven from the locks of hair of different individuals. While a handwritten attribution of the creator appears at the bottom of the piece, no indication reveals what hair belonged to whom. The fact that different colors of hair locks are woven together without identity demonstrates a sense of collectivity.

This union was the idea that Emma Smith presented at a Relief Society meeting in Nauvoo on 24 March 1842. She counseled that “Every member should be held in full fellowship—as a society, hop’d they would divest themselves of every jealousy and evil feeling toward each other, if any such existed—that we should bring our conduct into respectability, here & every where else.” Along these lines, at the death of Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Smith’s counselor in Nauvoo, Emmeline B. Wells, said of her friend and co-worker in Relief Society: “The tenderly beloved, the angelic peacemaker, the sweet Songstress of Zion, has left us to join the innumerable, invisible company who wait just the other side of the vail [sic.] to see God’s purposes fulfilled, that they may return again to enjoy a full

---

120 “This bouquet and wreath was made from hair of the officers and members of the Manti South Ward Relief Society by Sister Mary W. Wintch of Manti and was presented by her to the Manti Temple.” See catalog number 85-244-2, LDS Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.
121 Staker, “By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them,” 85.
fruition of glory celestial.” The intermingling of Whitney’s hair with those of her Relief Society compatriots revealed a unity that transcended death. Careful examination of the design of these three hair wreaths exposed valuable information about relationships—those stemming from Nauvoo and those developed in Salt Lake City. The format of the hair wreath as material culture traditionally commemorated family and friendship. Understanding the history of the practice of polygamy and the LDS doctrine of celestial family provides additional meaning to this material collective memory. The hair wreaths exhibited hierarchies and communities as a form of memory or usable past in ways that texts could not record.

“A kingdom of priestesses”—Relief Society Female Religious Authority

Nineteenth-century Mormon women decorated their homes, temples, and Relief Society buildings with hair wreaths the same way contemporary women did: to showcase their refinement, to retain a physical symbol of an age fraught with imminent mortality, and to remember relationships. This also displays making something out of nothing when silk thread would be unavailable. Scrutiny of this particular format of material culture exposes a sense of female religious authority inherent in these interpretations. By beautifying sacred spaces, LDS women contributed to the biblical injunction to make the desert blossom as a rose. By seeking to combat physical ailments and provide relief, they received the charge from Joseph Smith to bless each other and their families by the laying on of hands. By remembering both family relationships and recognizing leadership positions in the Church hierarchy, they gained administrative skills and practices. As a holy sisterhood, Relief Society

123 “Mother Whitney has gone to rest. Yea, she has gone to that rest that remains to a Saint of God. She has passed the ordeal that ushers the pure spirit into another and higher state of being.” Wells, “In Memoriam: Elizabeth Ann Whitney.”

124 Isaiah 35:1 “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.”
women negotiated female religious authority based on an ancient usable past, exercised leadership roles in Relief Society, in the temple, and in the home, and developed individual connections to God.

The context of contemporaries proved important. According to Blersch, the use of hair commemoration occurred as early as Charlemagne, who, according to legend, was buried at Aix-la-Chapelle wearing an amulet containing the hair of the Virgin Mary along with pieces of the True Cross. Early female exhorters, according to Brekus, drew on biblical heroines, classifying themselves with these “elect” with such titles as “Mothers in Israel” and “Sisters in Christ.” Nineteenth-century female evangelical preachers linked themselves to their spiritual foremothers based on their faith in the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Mid-nineteenth century Catholic devotions focused on the incarnation and passion of Jesus. The Way and the Sign of the Cross and the Mass created opportunities for Catholics to unite symbolically with Jesus. The rosary, miraculous medal, and Sacred Heart of Mary served as tangible evidence of Marian devotion. Historian Colleen McDannell suggested that the relationship between domestic artifacts and Christian belief expanded in the nineteenth century particularly due to commercialism and distribution.

---

125 Charlemagne’s amulet reappeared when Empress Josephine wore it to her coronation in 1804. Blersch, “Victorian Jewelry Made of Hair,” 42.
126 Brekus, Strangers and Pilgrims, 52, 180.
Many religious traditions considered hair as sacred. Orthodox Jewish women covered their hair with wigs or scarves. As part of the conversion process, Shakers cut their hair short and women wore distinctive caps as a means to set them. In three hair wreaths, LDS women displayed their hair as spiritual power, unveiled and remembered. For Mormon women, the use of hair as a medium provided a link to spiritual power.

Mormon women also looked to the ancient past and the Bible for female religious authority. At the Nauvoo Relief Society, Joseph Smith claimed to restore an ancient organization for women. The Nauvoo transplants to Salt Lake City recalled their female religious authority in conjunction with Relief Society service. Bathsheba Smith remembered how Joseph Smith “wanted to make us, as the women were in Paul’s day, ‘A kingdom of priestesses.’ We have the ceremony in our endowments as Joseph taught.” Eliza R. Snow taught Relief Society women in Ogden, Utah, that “Paul the Apostle anciently spoke of holy women. It is the duty of each one of us to be a holy woman. We shall have elevated aims, if we are holy women. We shall feel that we are called to perform important duties. No one is exempt from them. There is no sister so isolated, and her sphere so narrow, but what she can do a great deal towards establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth.” Snow reminded the women of their ancient female religious authority: “You, my sisters, if you are

129 1 Corinthians 11:15—”if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.” Mary washed the feet of Jesus with her hair in an intimate act of adoration. See Luke 7:33; John 12:3. Samson, known for his physical strength, became debilitated when his hair was cut according to Nazarene tradition. See Judges 16:17. Under the Levitical law, men were required to shave off all the hair on their heads as part of the purification process, including their beards and eyebrows. See Leviticus 14:9. Isaiah cursed the daughters of Zion for their excessive attention to their hair (Isaiah 3:24).


131 At a meeting of the Pioneer Stake Relief Society in Salt Lake City, Utah, on 9 June 1905, Bathsheba Smith remembered having received her temple endowment in Nauvoo from Emma and Joseph Smith. “I have always been pleased that I had my endowments when the Prophet lived. He taught us the true order of prayer.” Clawson, “Pioneer Stake,” 14.
faithful will become Queens of Queens, and Priestesses unto the Most High God. These are your callings.”

Mormon women developed a religious authority steeped in ancient tradition with leadership opportunities in the Relief Society, the temple, and the home.

The Nauvoo Relief Society provided women with an opportunity to serve as leaders. The election of president Emma Smith, with counselors Sarah Cleveland and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, and secretary Eliza R. Snow, formulated a presidency that asserted a new sense of female religious authority based on their leadership. Their leadership skills came from their stereotypical feminine qualities as dictated by nineteenth-century culture. At the passing of Elizabeth Ann Whitney in 1882 in Salt Lake City, biographer and Relief Society colleague Emmeline Wells wrote, remembering the Nauvoo organization, “When the Relief Society was organized in Nauvoo [Whitney] was chosen and ordained First Counselor to the President, Emma Smith, and being possessed of the greatest genuine sympathy and benevolence she was well adapted to the position, and filled it with honor and credit, gaining the love and gratitude of all to whom she was called through circumstances to minister, ever bestowing favors and blessings in the most unostentatious manner. Sister Whitney has always been possessed of great, yea, mighty faith in administering to the sick and afflicted.”

The layout of the Nauvoo-Utah Relief Society hierarchy was evident in the Relief Society hair wreath. (Appendix, fig. 1.1)

The women included in the Relief Society hair wreath all held significant Relief Society leadership roles. One of them, Presendia Kimball, had lived in an outlying settlement distant from Nauvoo at the time of the Relief Society organization. Having heard about the

---

133 Wells, “Elizabeth Ann Whitney.”
group (her sister Zina Jacobs [Young] had recently joined), she traveled in to town and the women gathered for a spontaneous meeting. The minutes record that she “rejoiced in the opportunity—that she considered it a great privilege she felt the spirit of the Lord was with the Society, and rejoic’d to become a member.” Eliza R. Snow commented that “as the spirit of a person pervades every member of the body, so shall the Spirit of the Lord which pervades this Society be with [Prescendia]—she shall feel it and rejoice—she shall be blest wherever she is, and the Lord shall open the way and she shall be instrumental in doing much.”

134 In the hair wreath and in Salt Lake City, Prescindia Kimball was an integral part of the group to which she belonged only marginally in Nauvoo because of her distant location.

In Utah, as Mormon colonization efforts expanded under Brigham Young and his successors, the female power structure spread. Jane Richards moved to Ogden in 1869, and in 1877 she was made the first stake Relief Society president over the Weber Stake.

135 Margaret T. Smoot left her post as president of the Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Relief Society and followed her husband to Provo in October 1872.

136 Wilmirth East moved to southeastern Arizona with her husband on a colonizing mission in 1877. She served as president of the Gila Valley Stake Relief Society president until 1882, when a transfer moved the family to nearby St. Joseph, Arizona, where she served again as stake Relief Society president.

134 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 19 April 1842, 31–32.
135 James T. Jakeman, Daughters of Utah Pioneers and Their Mothers (Salt Lake City: Western Album Publishing Company, 1915), 136.
136 In describing her Relief Society work, Olive Smoot Bean wrote that in this position, she “[fulfilled] her duties with honor and dignity and her loss was keenly felt by the society, and the sisters with whom she was more closely associated. After her arrival in Provo, she was called to fill numerous positions at various times…. In Sep of 1878 she was chosen as Stake President of the Relief Society of Utah County which she held until her death.” Bean, “Biographical Sketch of Margaret T. Smoot, Abraham O. Smoot Papers.”
president. While the women were geographically spread across the map, they were united in one place with their hair wreath, a sort of metonymy of their relationships.

Mormon women had assisted with the construction and worship of the Kirtland Temple, ten years before the Nauvoo temple and formal organization of the Relief Society in 1842. Commenting on their work, Joseph Smith said: “Well, sisters, you are always on hand. The sisters are always first and foremost in all good works.” He then made the connection to ancient women, a practice these women soon followed: “Mary was first at the resurrection; and the sisters are now the first to work on the inside of the temple.” Only men attended the School of the Prophets and participated in the priesthood ordinances of washing and anointing with oil introduced by Joseph Smith. Women, however, attended dedication ceremonies and worship services. In a letter to her sister, Mary Fielding Smith wrote Mercy Fielding Thompson about powerful Pentecostal-like experiences, including speaking in tongues, interpretation, and prophecy. Such religious experiences became touchstones for the women, who remembered them and told about them in Nauvoo and in Utah.

137 “Resolution of Respect to the Memory of Wilmirth Greer East, Daughter of Nathanial H. and Nancy Greer (Nancy Ann Terry Roberts).”
138 Edward Tulledge quoted Polly Angell, wife of Truman O. Angell, the church architect. Tulledge then interpreted Smith’s words: “Tis but a simple incident, but full of significance. It showed Joseph’s instinctive appreciation of woman and her mission. Her place was inside the temple, and he was about to put her there—a high priestess of Jehovah, to whose name he was building temples. And wonderfully suggestive was his prompting, that woman was the first woman of the resurrection.” Tulledge, The Women of Mormondom, 76.
139 George A. Smith noted that “that almost made the women mad, and they said, as they were not admitted into the Temple while this washing was being performed, that some mischief was going on, and some of them were right huffy about it.” George A. Smith, speech, “Gathering and Sanctification of the People of God,” 18 March 1855, in Brigham Young, ed., Journal of Discourses (Liverpool: F.D. Richards, 1855), 2:215.
140 “Our thursday meeting was again better than any former one. The hearts of the people were melted and the Spirit & power of God rested down upon us in a remarkable manner. Many spake in tongues & prophesied & interpreted. It has been said by many who have lived in Kirtland a great while that such a time of love & refreshing has never been known. Some of the Sisters while engaging in conversing in tounges their countenences beaming with joy, clasped each others hands & kissed in the most affectionate manner. They were describing in this way the love and felicities of the Celestial World.” Mary Fielding Smith, “Mary Fielding
Five of the women pictured on the Relief Society hair wreath were in Kirtland. (Appendix, fig. 1.1) Eight experienced temple worship in Nauvoo. At the same time women organized the Nauvoo Relief Society, Joseph Smith worked to develop the temple ordinances and rituals, including women in significant religious ritual, based on an ancient usable past, linking them to Eve, Sarah, Rebecca, and other holy women from scriptures. Smith’s plan, according to Andrew Ehat’s close study of his sermons to the Relief Society, included women in roles of significant religious authority.¹⁴¹

The inclusion of Relief Society in the development of the temple illustrated an important brand of Mormon female religious authority. Ever since Joseph Smith had introduced the temple ordinances in Nauvoo in the same location, the upper room of his red brick store, where the Relief Society also met, the relationship between the physical location of the Relief Society and the temple was strong. When Emma Smith received the temple endowment from her husband Joseph, she then passed the ritual on to other chosen women, many of them having proved themselves as members of the Nauvoo Relief Society.¹⁴² While Emma became disaffected with the leadership of the Church following Joseph’s death, other women close to her in the Relief Society carried out the ordinances with proper priesthood authority in Nauvoo, including Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Eliza R. Snow, and Mercy Fielding Smith to Mercy Fielding Thompson,” July 8, 1837, Church History Library; Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, *Women’s Voices*, 61.


¹⁴² A comparison of a list of women belonging to the “Anointed Quorum,” who participated in temple rituals while Joseph Smith was still alive, compared to a list of women belonging to the Nauvoo Relief Society, revealed fifteen women who did not belong to the Relief Society, including Harriet Adams, Ruth Clayton, Lucy Decker, Lydia Dibble, Hannah Fielding, Helen Mar Kimball [Whitney], Permelia Lott, Lucy Morley, Fanny Murray, Mary Page, Mary Ann Frost Pratt, Sarah Pratt, Rhoda Richards, and Mary Ann Young. For lists, see Ibid., 102–103; Ward, “This Institution Is a Good One.”
Thompson. Once the temple in Nauvoo was completed, Mary Ann Young, wife of Brigham Young; Vilate Kimball, wife of Heber C. Kimball; and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, wife of Newel K. Whitney, were the first women to both receive and perform the sacred ordinances, as well as Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the prophet Joseph Smith. Presendia Kimball and Elizabeth Ann Whitney, both having participated in temple rituals in Nauvoo, were called by Brigham Young to “officiate in the ordinances of the House of the Lord” in Salt Lake City when temple work was performed in the Council House. Kimball reminisced: “We both enjoyed the labor very much for we loved the work and the Lord blest us with His Spirit. We seemed to live above everything earthly or trivial while engaged in those spiritual duties, and we had many comforting dreams as well as other manifestations that the Lord approved of our ministrations.”

As Emma Smith headed women’s work in Nauvoo officially as the Elect Lady, so other women were chosen to lead the work for women in other temples. Three other women also officially presided over Relief Society and female temple ordinance workers: Eliza R. Snow (1880-1887), Zina Young (1888-1901), and Bathsheba Smith (1901-1910). Thus these women became representative temple leaders for the women in Utah. Young, for example, helped start the women’s work in the Logan Temple. According to one report, “while there she received many manifestations of healing and the power of God.”

143 Historian Andrew F. Ehat surmised that had Joseph survived, he and Emma would have officiated over temple ordinances in the Nauvoo Temple. Ehat, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question,” 238–239.

144 According to historian Carol Cornwall Madsen, some thirty-six women officiated as “priestesses” as members of the original Holy Order. Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Mormon Women and the Temple: Toward a New Understanding,” in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 87. Mary Ann Young was not a member of the Nauvoo Relief Society.


146 Madsen, “Mormon Women and the Temple: Toward a New Understanding,” 86.
Significantly, Young had experienced powerful spiritual manifestations at the Kirtland Temple. She witnessed other significant demonstrations with the Manti Temple and the Logan Temple. This testimony gave her authority among her peers.\textsuperscript{147} Eliza R. Snow and Zina Young’s hair appeared in the Salt Lake Relief Society hair wreath, while Young and Bathsheba Smith’s hair appear in the Salt Lake Temple hair wreath.

Nearly all the women whose hair appeared in the Relief Society hair wreath were temple workers in Utah temples, continuing the pattern of female religious authority established in Nauvoo. Elizabeth Ann Whitney was among the first women to participate in the temple endowment ceremony in Nauvoo.\textsuperscript{148} According to Emmeline B. Wells, she “officiate[d] as a Priestess in holy places … where hundreds of the daughters of Eve were blest under her hands.” Years later, when temple work started again in earnest in the Salt Lake Valley, Wells reported that “President Young called upon Sister Whitney to take charge of the woman’s department…. She went day after day to bless the daughters of Zion, and continued in this holy calling for many years.”\textsuperscript{149} Understanding the temple, the location for two hair wreaths, illuminated development of Mormon women’s religious authority.

Beyond the Relief Society and the temple, another example of significant female religious authority occurred in the family. Joseph Smith recruited and initiated husbands and wives into the order he called “Abraham’s patriarchal priesthood.”\textsuperscript{150} The inclusion of

\textsuperscript{147} Susa Young Gates, “Temple Workers,” \textit{Young Woman’s Journal} 4, no. 7 (April 1893): 302.
\textsuperscript{148} Elizabeth Ann Whitney “was the second of her sex that received the endowments, being a High Priestess in the House of the Lord, in which capacity she officiated until lately, when she was constrained to relinquish her labors on account of failing health. In her position it was her privilege to bless hundreds, and it might be made to say thousands of the daughters of Zion.” “Death of Mother Whitney,” \textit{Deseret Evening News}, February 16, 1882.
\textsuperscript{149} Wells, “Elizabeth Ann Whitney.”
\textsuperscript{150} Leonard, \textit{Nauvoo}, 260. The group was also known as the Holy Order and the Anointed Quorum.
women was not only accepted, but was also necessary. To form a truly “patriarchal”
priesthood required matriarchs. The Nauvoo Relief Society provided a ready forum of
women, trained by Joseph Smith to take their places next to their husbands. The Relief
Society, while providing women with the opportunity to lead each other in their holy
sisterhood, also enabled them to return to their homes and families, empowered in their
marriage relationships. The Salt Lake temple hair wreath manifested this comingling of the
sexes to produce eternal posterity.

Last, these hair wreaths communicated an individual relationship with God,
consummating a direct sense of female religious authority. As hair wreaths allowed people to
connect to their families by literally entwining their hair, the same execution facilitated a link
for individuals directly with Deity. The Manti Temple hair wreath included a handwritten
verse inscribed on the font on the backs of the oxen: “These locks of hair, O Lord, thou
hast seen us wear, so now we commit them to Thy Holy Temple’s Care.” (Appendix, fig.
1.2) The message, intended for a divine audience, revealed an intimate relationship between
the Relief Society women and God. They assumed a godly knowledge and understanding of
their individual appearances as well as their actions, desires, and thoughts. This divine
relationship allowed women to maintain an identity linked to God and to each other. The
Relief Society women of Manti viewed the temple as an opportunity for them to tap

---

151 Newel K. Whitney taught the Relief Society, “In the beginning God created man male and female and
bestow’d upon man certain blessings peculiar to a man of God, of which woman partook, so that without the
female all things cannot be restor’d to the earth—it takes all to restore the Priesthood. It [this restoration] is the
intent of the Society, by humility and faithfulness, in connexion with those husbands that are found worthy.
Rejoice while contemplating the blessing which will be pour’d out on the heads of the saints. God has many
precious things to bestow, even to our astonishment if we are faithful…. I rejoice that God has given us means
whereby we may get intelligence and instruction. It is our privilege to stand in an attitude to get testimony for
ourselves—it is as much our privilege as that of the ancient saints. We must prove all things and hold fast that
which is good.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 27 May 1842, 58–59.
individually and personally into a divine relationship and authority not found elsewhere. They participated in sacred temple rituals for themselves, making individual covenants with God involving what they believed to be their own eternal salvation. Thus they became agents in their own exaltation. And acting as proxy for deceased women, they became delegates for the dead, men performing work for men and women for women.¹⁵²

The theme of female religious authority permeated these three hair wreaths. Examination of their location, both in temples and in the Relief Society building, evinced a strong connection between the Relief Society and the temple in décor and in ritual worship. Their divine right connected to women of the Bible illustrated an ancient usable past. Utah women drew on their shared Nauvoo past to assert an identity and a purpose in Utah.

Unusable Past—The Demise of the Hair Wreath and Other Lost Pieces

Collective memory loses its hold when it is no longer used. Edward Linenthal described the process of shared identification as a graphic revelation of what is not actually present.¹⁵³ The study of Mormon hair wreaths indicates a significant change in the popular perception of hair art. Questions about provenance provide problematic historical analysis. The decline of female religious authority suggests additional ideological questions about the identity of Mormon women.

The popularity and use of hair art proved to be fleeting; the practice began to decline following the Civil War. The Industrial Revolution encouraged the manufacture of goods. As a result, the popular practice of amateur artists waned and the production of hair work,

¹⁵² According to LDS belief, based in scripture from the New Testament, spirits of people who have passed away have the choice whether to accept proxy baptism for the dead or reject the ordinance. “For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.” 1 Peter 4:6. See Burton and Stendahl, “Baptism for the Dead,” 95–97.

¹⁵³ Linenthal, Preserving Memory, 107.
rather than being automated, was left to a few professional artists. Suspicions arose about professional artists not actually using the family members’ hair they had been commissioned to use. Instead, hair was purchased from convents or extremely poor women, causing distress about the lack of integrity of the product. As well, the fear of disease and spread of germs through human hair contributed to its demise. Then as photography became more accessible to the general public and the technology of transportation and communication improved, hair work diminished altogether. By the late nineteenth century, the format was no longer “usable” as a popular commemorative artifact. Styles changed; the dark, fussy ornaments appeared awkward and weighty compared to new light, sheer twentieth-century modern fashions. The hair wreath illustrates a segment of popular memory that became unusable and virtually forgotten.

Despite the loss of popular format, these hair wreaths provide important insight in the examination of what many have termed the loss of female religious autonomy. Following Joseph Smith’s presidency, under the leadership of first Brigham Young, then John Taylor, and finally Wilford Woodruff, Mormon women apparently lost many of the privileges granted them by Joseph Smith. Close analysis of the development of women and temple worship over the turn of the century reveals varying degrees of loss of autonomy. Historian Carol Cornwall Madsen traced the participation of women in prayer circles, starting with the

---

155 Navarro, “Hairwork of the Nineteenth Century,” 491, 486.
156 Gordon, “Victorian Hairwork,” 38. Access to new technology, including photography made possible by Kodak cameras beginning in the early 1890s, relegated old-fashioned forms of memory to attics and trunks. Martha A. Sandweiss considers photography as a manner of helping westerners “reconceive their relationships to the people and places from whom they were separated by great distances, surely they also reshaped the way they (like all Americans) reimagined themselves, their family histories, and their relationships to the passing of time.” Sandweiss, Print the Legend, 6, 11.
157 Sheumaker, Love Entwined, viii.
Holy Order under the direction of Joseph Smith in Nauvoo in the 1840s, and ending by
degrees in Utah by the end of the century.\footnote{Madsen, “Mormon Women and the Temple: Toward a New Understanding,” 93–95.} According to historian Peggy Pascoe, the Relief Society members lost their significant influence at the close of the nineteenth century. Their female religious authority came not from the keys given them by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo in 1842 but from increased submission to male priesthood leaders. Pascoe surmised that the Relief Society spent much of the twentieth century “in a defensive posture, trying to protect themselves from male church leaders’ attempts to gain control over Relief Society enterprises.”\footnote{Peggy Pascoe, “A History of Two Stories,” \textit{Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought} 27, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 241–243.} This loss occurred both in Nauvoo and in Utah, but it is not a part of the well-known Relief Society past repeated at anniversary events and in institutional histories.

The Utah branches of Relief Society claimed to follow their Nauvoo charter of union as prescribed by Emma Smith. They did not, however, tell the whole story of their predecessors. While Presidentess Smith promoted unity, her acerbic reaction to her husband’s practice of plural marriage produced such divisiveness that prompted Brigham Young to quickly dismantle the Nauvoo Relief Society.\footnote{“General Record of the Seventies, 1844-1847,” 9 March 1845, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.} Not every member of the original organization joined the pioneer trek across the plains to Utah. The untimely death of Joseph Smith in 1844 raised questions of succession and produced a division, resulting in several splinter groups claiming authority of leadership. Some Nauvoo Relief Society women remained in the Midwest, while others returned East.\footnote{For example, see Maureen Carr Ward’s catalog of Nauvoo Relief Society members, including marriage and death dates and locations. It is evident that significant numbers remained in the Midwest or returned to the East. Ward, “This Institution Is a Good One.”}
Not every Nauvoo Relief Society sister who came to Utah maintained her former enthusiasm when the new Relief Societies were organized, starting in the 1850s and 1860s. Significant figures from the Nauvoo Relief Society who came to Utah and helped organize Relief Society there and who imbibed Emma’s principle of unity do not appear in these hair wreaths. Sarah Kimball, for example, whose idea it was to start the Relief Society in Nauvoo, and who later served as Eliza R. Snow’s secretary in the general Relief Society presidency, is absent, as is Bathsheba Smith, who figured prominently both in Nauvoo and in Salt Lake City as the third general Relief Society president. Also missing is Emmeline B. Wells, a pivotal figure in linking the past of Nauvoo to the present of late nineteenth-century Salt Lake City. The lacunae of missing women present a challenge to understanding the scope and purpose of this particular piece.

The female religious authority based on a connection to the past became tenuous for other women both religious and secular. Pascoe defined a “pattern which characterized most women’s organizations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a dynamic I think of as the search for female moral authority.”162 As twentieth century women, however, turned to social reform and suffrage, interest in domesticity and morality waned. For example, historian Jeanne E. Abrams noted the challenge of nineteenth-century Jewish women, particularly in the West, who struggled to balance their religious traditions with reform in their modern world. Abrams concluded that one way in which women negotiated a balance was through involvement with philanthropic and benevolent societies, allowing them to maintain a distinct Jewish female identity.163 Spiritualist women sometimes

163 Abrams, Jewish Women Pioneering the Frontier Trail, 108.
separated themselves from a religious past when it served their needs. For example, Spiritualist women flooded the lecture circuit as trance speakers in the mid-1850s, ignoring criticism citing Paul’s injunction to the Corinthians that women should keep silent.164

In conclusion, the three hair wreaths present an effort to reclaim and utilize the past. By today’s standards, these hair wreaths may appear to be Victorian treacle for the walls of an outdated relic hall. Certainly popular cultural formats have changed over time and even with a concerted suspension of twenty-first century aesthetic standards, problems exist with these particular commemorative pieces. The lack of information about provenance can lead to speculation, a potentially dangerous line in historical analysis. But careful scrutiny of the information about the design, creation, and display of these three hair wreaths focuses on four ways in which nineteenth-century hair art connected women to the past: the display of refinement, the commemoration of the very physical experiences of mortality and resurrection, the memory of relationships across family, church, and sisterhood lines, and the communication of female religious authority.

Most important, observation of the Relief Society hair wreath, the Manti temple hair wreath, and the Salt Lake temple hair wreath leads to understanding of Mormon women’s role within a patriarchal religion and cultural system. In remembering Nauvoo and the Nauvoo Relief Society, nineteenth-century Mormon women remembered Smith’s definition of patriarchy. They saw themselves as matriarchs alongside their patriarchal husbands, thereby defining “patriarchal priesthood” and including women in its definition. This

patriarchal priesthood as outlined by Joseph Smith occurred in sacred temple ritual, where women participated equally with men. The locations of these hair wreaths, in temples and in the Relief Society Building, further cemented this connection to each other as holy women.

The experience of the Nauvoo Relief Society created a new female sisterhood for Mormon women. The bond they shared due to the periods of strain and tension in Nauvoo continued as they suffered through the Winter Quarters period in Nebraska, then crossing the plains to build new settlements in Utah. They did it together. Years of isolation in the West produced a powerful collective identity. These hair wreaths illustrate the collective memory as individual women collected, shared, and collaborated efforts to create meaning from their combined past.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, 51, 175, 183.
Appendix 1

Figure 1.1. Relief Society Building Hair Wreath
Salt Lake City, Utah
Figure 1.2. Manti Temple Hair Wreath created by the Manti South Relief Society. Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah
Figure 1.3. Salt Lake Temple Hair Wreath
International Museum of Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah
Figure 1.4. Guide, Salt Lake Temple Hair Wreath
International Museum of Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Salt Lake City, Utah
2. “CLASPED IN THE HAND OF FELLOWSHIP”: QUILTS, CHARITY, AND A TEXTILE USABLE PAST

The Nauvoo Relief Society minute book opened with a Masonic prayer: “O, Lord! help our widows, and fatherless children! So mote it be. Amen. With the sword, and the word of truth, defend thou them. So mote it be. Amen.”\(^1\) (Appendix, fig. 2.1) The charge to provide relief for needy people stemmed from the “grand principles” of Masonry.\(^2\) At that first meeting on 17 March 1842, president Emma Smith rallied Relief Society members to extraordinary measures of charity: “when a boat is stuck on the rapids with a multitude of Mormons on board we shall consider that a loud call for relief—we expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls.”\(^3\) This call to benevolent service permeated the mission of the Nauvoo Relief Society and the work of the subsequent Relief Societies in Utah over the next fifty years as manifested in the material object of quilts.

The Nauvoo Relief Society minutes also contained the records of female charitable efforts from 1842 to 1844. The list of donations includes mention of several quilts as well as other items associated with handwork, including clothing, cloth and sundries, sheets, and pillow cases. The commodification of quilts and handwork allowed the women to quantify

---

1 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 4, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.


3 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 12.
their charitable service. The number of blankets and quilts the women provided their neighbors and each other accounted for their time and energy and also covered and warmed souls, drawing them into the religious fold of Relief Society. Handwork contributed to the cause. The minute book account justified the Relief Society as a viable service institution.

The quilt became an important commemorative form for the Relief Society as it extended into Utah. Beyond utilitarian quilts for the needy, many local ward organizations created album or friendship quilts to remember their band of members. The women worked together to care for the poor among their congregations and neighbors as had been instructed at their Nauvoo founding, but they also came together to find ways to care for their families, to sharpen their skills and exhibit refinement, and to express their identity, both collectively and individually. The Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Relief Society members constructed such an endeavor in an album quilt in 1870. (Appendix, fig. 2.2) The women dedicated the quilt to their president Margaret M. T. Smoot when she moved to Provo and was released as their leader. Fifty-six blocks demonstrate a variety of cultural backgrounds, political and theological beliefs, and a shared Relief Society history. This quilt, among many others, commemorated their founding, an embodiment of Nauvoo charitable efforts, and manifested a desire for refinement and both individual and collective identity.

“A select sewing circle”—Early History of Relief Society Textiles

LDS women produced textiles explicitly for the Church and its members since the Church’s early days in Kirtland. The men provided the physical labor in constructing the temple while the women worked to provide shirts for them.4 Polly Angell remembered

4 “At this time the brethren were laboring night and day building the house of the Lord. Our women were engaged in spinning and knitting in order to clothe those who were laboring at the building, and the Lord only
sewing veils for the Kirtland temple along with other women. Like contemporary women of other faiths, Mormon women participated in religious ritual and exhortation; they also shouldered the physical labors of Kingdom-building. By the 1830s, industrialization and the beginning of a market economy suggested a separation of gendered labor. Lori Ginzberg noted that female auxiliaries as early as 1790 mirrored societies founded by male relatives and neighbors to provide “relief and to create a Christian nation.” Women and men worked in their own separate yet coordinated ways to meet local needs.

Construction on the temple in Nauvoo began in 1841 and continued slowly as money, supplies, and energy allowed over the next five years. Many men donated every tenth working day to temple construction as a tithe and families donated money and goods to pay hired workmen. In early March 1842, Margaret A. Cook, a seamstress, and one of her prominent clients, Sarah M. Kimball, discussed ways in which they as women could support the temple project. Cook proposed donating her sewing skills if Kimball would contribute fabric to make shirts for workmen. Kimball wondered if her neighbors would be willing to do the same. She wrote, “We then agitated the subject of organizing a Sewing Society.”

knows the scenes of poverty, tribulation, and distress which we passed through in order to accomplish this thing.... almost all the sisters in Kirtland labored in knitting, sewing, spinning, &c., for the purpose of forwarding the work of the Lord.” Heber C. Kimball, “Selections from H.C. Kimball’s Journal,” Times and Seasons 6 (April 15, 1845): 867.

5 Tullidge, The Women of Mormondom, 76.
6 See Brekus, Strangers and Pilgrims.
dozen women gathered the following week in Kimball’s parlor, intent on organizing according to the pattern of sewing circles common in America since the early nineteenth century. The women submitted their sewing circle constitution to Joseph Smith, who gratefully accepted their offering of support for the temple. He planned, however, to include the women’s organization in a much larger way within church structure. What started as a spontaneous sewing circle soon grew into an integral part of the theological, hierarchical, and cultural Church structure. The women continued to sew; even a year after the formation of the Relief Society, they pledged to sew clothing for men working on the Nauvoo Temple.

The Nauvoo Relief Society minutes were filled with the accounts of female labor and donations. The ledger listed needs and how those needs were met. (Appendix, fig. 2.3) The women not only provided physical articles, but they also recognized the value of work. Some women were destitute and relied on hand work and other skills for financial support. The Relief Society became a location for the exchange of trade, allowing women to provide physical items of charity as well as opportunities to work, much like a fraternal lodge. On the first day the Society opened, for example, Mrs. Agnes Smith “solicited the patronage of the Society as a Milliner and Dressmaker. Prest. Smith said we should assist each other in this


12 Joseph Smith told Eliza R. Snow, who had written the sewing circle constitution, that it was “the best he had ever seen. 'But,' he said, 'this is not what you want. Tell the sisters their offering is accepted of the Lord, and he has something better for them than a written Constitution.... I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood.” Sarah M. Kimball, “Auto-biography,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 7 (September 1, 1883): 83.

13 “Mrs. Smith propos’d getting wool and furnish old ladies with yarn to knit socks to supply the workmen on the Temple next winder.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 16 June 1843, 91.
way—said Mrs. Solome Chapman was in want of work, knitting, sewing &c." 14 A month later, “Mrs. Mary Smith recommended Elizabeth Eaton to the patronage of the Society, as a person skilful in needlework.” 15 The following year, “Sis. Pratt recommended an English family, mostly females, who wished the influence of the Society in supplying them with work—can do millinery—fine washing &c.” 16 According to historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, “Such shuffling and reshuffling of workers was part of the larger system of neighborly exchange.” The Nauvoo Relief Society demonstrated the household production and neighborly trade centered around textiles. 17

Mormon women continued to quilt and sew for the needy and for each other as they emigrated across the plains and settled in Utah. 18 The need for warmth and cover was of course evident in pioneering settlements, but the collective work of the Relief Society, disbanded in Illinois in 1844 by Brigham Young, recurred in the 1850s as women noticed the needs of local Indian women and gathered once more officially in the name of Relief Society. 19 Incoming handcart groups also demonstrated immediate need. Lucy Meserve

---

14 Ibid., 17 March 1842, 12.
15 Ibid., 19 April 1842, 33.
16 Ibid., 7 July 1843, 94.
17 In her examination of an eighteenth-century New England midwife, Ulrich demonstrated a close examination of “the operation of a female-managed economy.” She noted that women’s production of cloth was an integral part of the larger community economy. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 82, 77, 33, 75–76.
19 Matilda Dudley organized a group of women in Salt Lake City as early as January 1854, “for the purpose of making clothing for Indian women and children.” Matilda Dudley, “Minutes,” holograph, 1854, Louisa R. Taylor papers, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Patty Bartlett Sessions recorded in her diary on 10 June 1854: “went to the ward meeting of the sisters
Smith recorded her reaction to Brigham Young’s sermon about the Martin and Willey Handcart Companies, trapped in snowy Wyoming valleys in November 1856. “Prayer is good,” he stated, “but when baked potatoes and pudding and milk are needed, prayer will not supply their place on this occasion; give every duty its proper time and place.” Young’s words induced immediate action; Smith stood up immediately and stripped off her petticoats. She later went door to door in several feet of snow, collecting quilts and other necessities for the handcart emigrants. Obviously at this point the women did not sit down to quilt; rather, they collected utilitarian supplies on hand for immediate delivery.

By 1867, Brigham Young officially called on women to gather in Relief Societies to provide for the poor. “We have many talented women among us, and we wish their help… you will find that the sisters will be the mainspring of the movement.” As Relief Societies were organized throughout the Mormon settlements, women gathered to sew for their local organised a benevolent society to clothe the Indians & squaws.” On 19 January 1855, she noted: “I have been to see the Bishop he told me he would apoint a meeting for the sisters next week as the Presd had caled on us to do somting for the poor said we had clothed the squaws “and children” firstrate now we must look after the poor in each ward.” Patty Bartlett Sessions recorded similar activity. Sessions, Mormon Midwife, 10 June 1854, 205; Richard L. Jensen, “Forgotten Relief Societies, 1844-67,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 16 (Spring 1983): 105-125.

Brigham Young went on to say, “Works have been most noble when they were needed; we put works to our faith, and in this case we realize that our faith alone would have been perfectly dead and useless, would have been of no avail, in saving our brethren that were in the snow, but by putting works with faith we have been already blest in rescuing many and bringing them to where we can now do them more good. Some you will find with their feet frozen to their ankles; some are frozen to their knees and some have their hands frosted. They want good nursing.”


“Just as the session of our Oct. Conference news came where these Hand Cart Co’s were. President Young and others were excited and anxious for fear those Co’s would be caught in the snow in the mountains. They could not go on with the Conference. The Pres’t called for men teams clothing. Lucy Meserve Smith, “Historical Sketches of my Great Grandfathers,” Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Brigham Young went on to say “They will find rooms for the poor, and obtain the means for supporting them ten times quicker than even the Bishop could… let a sister appeal for the relief of suffering and poverty, and she is almost sure to be successful. If you take this course you will relieve the wants of the poor a great deal better than they are now dealt with. We recommend these Female Relief Societies to be organized immediately.” 8 December 1867. Young, Journal of Discourses, 12:115.
needy. Sewing patchwork and rag rugs also allowed the fledgling Societies to self-fund.\textsuperscript{23} These organizations later echoed the Nauvoo Relief Society by holding similar work meetings. For example, at the third meeting of the Relief Society in Centerville, Utah, in 1869, women made quilt blocks and donated money, thread, material, carpet rags, and yarn.\textsuperscript{24} When general president Eliza R. Snow visited southern Utah in 1880-1881, she attended the sewing meeting of the Kanab Relief Society.\textsuperscript{25} These were certainly working meetings and not just social occasions for ladies of leisure.

Utah Relief Societies also sewed to showcase their skills and to commemorate their charitable efforts in a form that would be preserved rather than used and discarded. The Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Relief Society was one of many Relief Societies who created group quilts. (Appendix, fig. 2.2) The Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward created an intricately-stitched album quilt in 1852. The quilt was raffled to raise money.\textsuperscript{26} (Appendix, fig. 2.4) The Salt Lake City Eighth Ward Relief Society sewed an album quilt for their bishop in 1872.\textsuperscript{27} (Appendix, fig. 2.5) These collective efforts illustrated two things: the quilts manifested individual personalities in a collective entity and they demonstrated a commemorative form of charity in remembering the Nauvoo Relief Society. The quilt also presented a snapshot of

\textsuperscript{23} Snow recorded: “At the time of its organization in Salt Lake City, the Saints were very poor, and the funds of the Society were raised by contributions of carpet rags, pieces for patchwork, etc., which were converged into carpets, quilts, etc; of carded, spun, and knitted into socks and stockings, by the industry of the members, who met together, sometimes weekly, at others, once in two weeks, to work the crude material into wearing and saleable articles.” Eliza R. Snow, “Sketch of My Life,” in \textit{The Personal Writings of Eliza R. Snow}, ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2000), 36.


\textsuperscript{25} M. Elizabeth Little, “Kanab Relief Society,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 9, no. 21 (April 1, 1881): 166.

\textsuperscript{26} See Carol Holindrake Nielson, \textit{The Salt Lake City 14th Ward Album Quilt, 1857: Stories of the Relief Society Women and Their Quilt} (University of Utah Press, 2004).

the women who created it as well as their perception of their role in the Relief Society and the presence of the Nauvoo Relief Society past.

**Quilts as Material Culture and Usable Past**

On 13 May 1842, Sabra Granger Gribble donated a bed quilt to the Nauvoo Relief Society, valued at two dollars. Little more is known about Gribble, other than her vital statistics. She moved to Nauvoo with her husband John Gribble and joined the Relief Society on 24 March 1842. By 1845 she had separated from her husband and later lived with the Newel K. Whitney family in Winter Quarters in 1847. She died in 1849. Did she miss that bed quilt? Or was she happy to be rid of it? She left no personal writings and had no children. The quilt she donated to the Relief Society no longer exists. Even the tattered remnants could provide clues into her life.

Sabra Gribble’s quilt notation provides As material artifacts, scholars consider quilts as “layered textile sandwiches.” Each layer can provide valuable information about the maker and the recipient. While it seems that a quilt is simply comprised of fabric, batting, thread, and binding, careful examination finds much more than pieces of patchwork. Literary scholar Judy Elsley considered the semiotic value of a quilt: “A quilt is a text. It speaks its maker’s desires and beliefs, hopes, and fears, sometimes in a language any reader can understand, but often in an obscure language available only to the initiated. Quilts and texts are inseparable.” Curator L. Thomas Frye noted that “quilts serve as documents, no less

---

28 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 13 May 1842, 46.
than diaries, manuscripts and letters. Yet to read them, we must examine every shred of
evidence, both physical and associational, and look for the larger connections quilts had as
functional material culture.”\(^{32}\) As with any artifact of material culture, careful examination
and analysis of a quilt reveal valuable information.

The quilt as a physical artifact contains valuable details about its construction, its
technology, and its media. Examination of the taxonomy (pattern), morphology (fabric,
battling), and ecology of each textile piece provides insight into both creation and use.\(^{33}\)
Although little is known about Sabra Gribble, the fact that she donated a quilt in 1842
suggests her relative wealth in owning extra coverings with a charitable desire to help others.

Quilts communicate the historical context of their creation. Curator Adrienne Hood
explained that mid to late nineteenth-century quilts were not necessarily fine pieces of folk
art; they also reflected the effects of the industrial revolution. Mass media, such as *Godey’s
Lady’s Book*, reached homes all across the country, distributing patterns and patchwork
instructions as early as 1835.\(^{34}\) The availability of different types of fabrics and colors as well
as the popularity of certain patterns can date quilts and connect them to their contemporary
quilt culture. According to Mary Reecy Fitzgerald, the popularity of certain quilt patterns
“developed in response to particular economic, technological, political, and social
developments in American history,” providing additional insight to a larger context.\(^{35}\)


Album quilts such as the Twentieth Ward quilt originated in Maryland during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, peaking in the 1840s. Different than the repetitive pattern usually displayed on quilts, each block of an album quilt consists of a different design, often with some sort of unifying element. Quilt historians Gloria Seaman Allen and Nancy Gibson Tuckhorn examined the background of the movement with the flourishing of decorative arts in Baltimore in the early half of the century. Album quiltmakers at that time were influenced by elaborate designs on silver, furniture, dishes, and rugs, and imitated the fancy designs in the form of fabric. These early album quilters were the wives of farmers, blacksmiths, sailors, cabinetmakers, and storekeepers. Friendship album quilts were often presented as tokens of remembrance to family and friends moving away or as memorials to ministers, teachers, and public figures. A few decades later, Mormon women in the West copied the efforts of eastern popular culture.

A quilt is more than analysis of its technology and creation; the accompanying narrative describing the story of the quilt’s purpose, design, and use provides valuable insight into a quilt. Quilt historians John Forrest and Deborah Blincoe considered the “life cycle” of a quilt from conception, creation, function, and death. Historian Mary Murphy analyzed the memory of a quilt: “Quilts are bearers of remembrance, often produced or presented in order to commemorate significant rites of passage in people’s lives: births, christenings, graduations, engagements, marriages, anniversaries, departures, illnesses, bereavements, and deaths. They become palpable reminders of events that are frequently blurred interludes of

37 Patricia Cox Crews, *A Flowering of Quilts* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 36.
38 Forrest and Blincoe, *The Natural History of the Traditional Quilt*, 97.
joy or grief.” Quilts commemorate family and social relationships in the larger community. Such fabric records the social geography of the location in question. Analysis of the physical artifact, therefore, also requires interpretation of the associated memory.

Examination of the provenance of quilts reveals much about the quilt makers and the quilt users and preservers. Families, however, tended to carefully preserve the fancy decorative quilts rather than the utilitarian ones. Valuable information comes from the chain of ownership, or how families preserved their heirloom quilts. For example, historian Carol Holindrake Nielson inherited half a quilt from her husband’s great-great-grandfather, Richard Stephen Horne. His wife, Mary Isabella Horne, along with other women in the Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward Relief Society, made the quilt in 1857, then put it up for a raffle to raise money. Horne had the winning ticket. When Horne died, his oldest daughters cut the quilt in half and passed it down to their respective descendants. Upon investigation, Nielson found the other half with a distant cousin. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich offered additional meaning behind an artifact’s provenance: “Material objects were not only markers of wealth but devices for building relationships and lineages over time, and it helps us to understand the cultural framework within which ordinary women became creators as well as custodians of household goods.” The quilt made by the Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward Relief Society holds stories of creation as well as provenance. (Appendix, fig. 2.4)

41 Nielson, The Salt Lake City 14th Ward Album Quilt, 7–11.
42 Ulrich, The Age of Homespun, 111.
Quilt patterns illustrate different historical relationships and purposes. Album quilts, popular in the 1840s and 1850s, often contained blocks with different designs and allowed for the contribution of several different people. According to Ulrich, "quilts of this sort are a treasure trove for historians. Signatures reveal local networks. Mottoes and images connect the quilters to a repertoire of national values, while place names and dates situate them in a specific setting." Signature quilts contained blocks with the signatures, either in ink or thread, of the several women participating in the quilt-making. This format, popular in the Delaware River Valley of eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware from the 1840s to 1850s, was often stitched as a presentation quilt to gift to someone. Material culture specialist Katherine A. Hunt provided insight into the social history found in a signature quilt: “The popularity of signature quilts reflects broader trends in the nineteenth century that emphasized the romantic and sentimental aspects of friendship. This sentimentality also appears in signature albums, books that contained friends’ signatures, poetry, and drawings. The signature quilt is a natural extension of the popular signature album onto textiles that were used in the home.” The Relief Society album and signature quilts demonstrate the social nature and relationships of the women who made them. (Appendix, figs. 2.2, 2.4, 2.5)

Quilting served as a popular social practice for church groups and secular women’s groups. According to Ronda Allen, Methodist women in Baltimore played a substantial role in developing and popularizing the Baltimore album quilt style. Jewish-American women’s quiltmaking allowed German immigrants in Baltimore to participate in the popular activity

---

within their own distinct community. By the mid-nineteenth century, Quaker women had utilized the popular form of signature quilts. Amish and Mennonite women reveled in the act of quilting, and their very traditional work soon came to represent a pure American folk art. During the Civil War, women joined forces under the U.S. Sanitary Commission to quilt for their soldier sons and husbands, and to raise money for soldiers’ welfare. According to one source, Northern women stitched 250,000 quilts over the course of the war. Female missionaries taught American Indian women how to sew and quilt as training in domestic work. These women’s groups left their identifying mark in their charitable textile efforts.

Historians and curators of textiles have deliberately analyzed quilts as a significant form of material culture. Technology, fabric, patterns, creation, and provenance provide important information. Quilt makers and quilt keepers together present clues for the creation of a usable past.

**Providing Relief—Quilts and Relief Society Charity**

One of the principal purposes of the Nauvoo Relief Society was to provide charitable assistance to the poor. At the first meeting, a disagreement occurred regarding the appropriate term for their name, *benevolent* or *relief*. Based on negative connotations associated with purported corrupt activity in benevolent societies in the East, the founding

---

48 Murphy, “Remember Me,” 17–18.
49 Murphy refers to both missionaries teaching Indian women and women's church groups in the East sending barrels of fabric for Indian women to sew as early as 1871. Murphy, “Remember Me,” 9.
50 Eliza R. Snow commented that “the Lord shall open the way and she shall be instrumental in doing much,— thro’ her own exertions by the instrumentality of others, she shall be enabled to contribute much to the fund of the Society—she shall warm up the hearts of those who are cold and dormant, and shall be instrumental in doing much good.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 19 April 1842, 32.
group decided to focus on relief in order to set this group apart from contemporary benevolent societies. Second counselor Sarah Cleveland remarked, “We design to act in the name of the Lord—to relieve the wants of the distressed, and do all the good we can.”

When Joseph Smith taught the Relief Society women of Nauvoo about charity, he spoke with spiritual significance. He believed that providing relief, or charity, was naturally suited to women, a common gendered distinction from this time period. On 28 April 1842, he taught the women, “The charitable Society—this is according to your natures—it is natural for females to have feelings of charity—you are now plac’d in a situation where you can act according to those sympathies which God has planted in your bosoms. If you live up to these principles how great and glorious!—if you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrain’d from being your associates—females, if they are pure and innocent can come into the presence of God.” The act of feeding, clothing, housing, and warming their needy neighbors infused these women with spiritual power and likened them to Jesus Christ, placing them in company with the divine. Also their charitable acts, Smith proposed, would “provoke the brethren to good works in looking to the wants of the poor—searching after objects of charity, and in administering to their wants.”

51 The Nauvoo Relief Society minutes record that “The Washingtonian Benevolent Society which was one of the most corrupt Institutions of the day.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 11. Martha Washingtonian societies were comprised of women who sought to reform inebriates and succor their families. They may have been criticized as corrupt because they were “willing to accept previously intemperate women into their ranks as full members, believing that even an utterly degraded woman might be identified with, comforted, and redeemed.” Ruth M. Alexander, “‘We Are Engaged as a Band of Sisters’: Class and Domesticity in the Washingtonian Temperance Movement, 1840-1850,” Journal of American History 75, 3 (1988): 771. Hundreds of women’s societies for temperance, benevolence, and moral reform existed in the United States during this era. Some of them had been organized before 1800 and many of them were affiliated with churches. The topic has been studied widely by such scholars as Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence.

52 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 12.

53 Ibid., 28 April 1842, 38.

54 Ibid., 17 March 1842, 7.
them within the theology of the Church, placed them in the company of angels, and gave them influence over men. Charity became the organizational hallmark.

Margaret T. Smoot was a member of the original Nauvoo Female Relief Society. Upon hearing the counsel of Joseph Smith, she embodied the principles he taught. At her eighty-sixth birthday party, sister-wife and fellow quilter Anna Smoot noted that upon her arrival to Utah from Norway, Margaret welcomed her warmly and taught her English: “You have ever been willing to let me share in all the blessings of a comfortable home. And inasmuch as you have ever been ready to give the homeless a home, the hungry food, the naked clothing, and good counsel to all; my sincere wish is, that you nor your child, nor his children, or children’s children, even down to the last generation, may never want for any such blessings.” Margaret’s biographer called her a “ministering angel to the afflicted.” Smoot’s desire to love continued the cycle of charity taught in Nauvoo.

At the founding of the Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Relief Society, Smoot echoed the principles she had learned in Nauvoo from Joseph Smith and others. The minutes record, “The Presidentess then arose & said She felt we were taking an important mission that we would aid, in taking care of the sick & poor.” A month later, she instructed: “This Society is not formed expressly for the benefit of the poor, but for our own good also. We all have a mission to perform.”

The quilt served as an appropriate symbol for the institutional mission of Relief Society, providing relief by warming the needy but also with a location for women to come together and find their own sense of relief from the drudgery and difficulty of daily life. Five

56 Ensign Stake Twentieth Ward, “Relief Society Minutes and Records,” vol. 1 (Salt Lake City, 1877 1868), 22 April 1868; 22 May 1868, LDS Church History Library.
blocks on the Twentieth Ward quilt referred to love or charity; many of the women certainly provided for and relied on each other. A block by “S.C.” included “a figure representing charity” with Paul’s famous verse from 1 Corinthians 13, “Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels have not charity.”57 (Appendix, fig. 2.6) Joseph Smith had discoursed on this scripture on 28 April 1842. On this occasion he stated, “You must enlarge your souls towards others if you’d like do like Jesus, and carry your fellow creatures to Abram’s bosom.”58 Ann Paul’s quilt block featured an anchor with the words, “faith, hope, and charity.” (Appendix, fig. 2.7) Paul needed an anchor to counter a chaotic life marked by the loss of seven children, five as newborn babies, one as a toddler, and one at the age of seven. She had recently delivered one baby, Frank Orson Paul, on 26 September 1870, so she must have been pregnant as she stitched her block.59 Lavina Luff’s block stated, “Let sisterly love continue.” (Appendix, fig. 2.8) An immigrant from England, she experienced the support of women around her, especially her mother-in-law Mary Luff, whose nearby block stated simply, “God is love.” (Appendix, fig. 2.9) Elizabeth B. Ramsay, the treasurer of the Twentieth Ward Relief Society, sewed an eagle with the phrase “charity and faith gifts of God.” (Appendix, fig. 2.10) The women partnered with Jesus in taking care of each other.

The quilt is not the only method of expressing charity. Two Relief Society banners also depicted this institutional mission at the same time they commemorated the Nauvoo

57 Bean, “Biographical Sketch of Margaret T. Smoot, Abraham O. Smoot Papers.” 1 Corinthians 13 continues, “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up… rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth.”
58 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 39.
59 According to familysearch.org, Priscilla Paul was born 6 January 1868 and died 23 January 1868; twins Edmund Young Paul and Sarah Irvin Paul were born 22 March 1869, Edmund died two days later on 24 March 1869 and Sarah the next day, 25 March 1869; another set of unnamed twins, a girl and boy, were born and died on 14 January 1875; and Minnie Susan Paul was born 10 July 1873 and died on 5 January 1880.
Relief Society. The Bountiful Relief Society sewed a banner with two doves and the phrase: “A friend to the poor may they ever find relief in time of need.” In 1872 the Provo Second Ward Relief Society created a banner on canvas with oil paint with the title, “Holiness to the Lord,” along with a human eye and yellow rays of light beams. The phrase, “He that Giveth to the Poor Lendeth to the Lord” and a green garland of leaves and stems adorn this banner.\(^{60}\) The quilts and banners represented charity both in design and function.

**Mothers in Israel—Quilts and the Family**

The quilt naturally became a viable symbol of the home and the domestic role of women during the nineteenth century. Especially as settlers organized homes, outposts, and communities in the West, the quilt served as an artifact of domestication. The quilt proved an appropriate artifact to commemorate family in addition to charitable efforts. When John Taylor told Nauvoo Relief Society president Emma Smith that “she might be a mother in Israel and look to the wants of the needy,” he linked the founding principles of charity with motherhood or family.\(^{61}\) The Salt Lake Twentieth Ward quilt demonstrated both traditional family ideology as well as distinct nineteenth-century Mormon family or plural marriage.

The act of quilting or sewing proved the skills of a refined nineteenth-century housewife. According to Murphy, “world, state, and county fairs and expositions were other venues that encouraged the display of quilts,” hinting at the culture of rewarding refinement.\(^{62}\) Margaret Smoot’s biographer described her as “quite taken up with home affairs, spinning and the weaving of the cloth for the family use, which she had the oversight

\(^{60}\) Both of these banners belong the Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City.


\(^{62}\) In Montana, these fairs seemed to start in 1874 in preparation for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, although the Montana Agricultural, Mineral and Mechanical Association’s first fair in 1870 included cash prizes for worked, patchwork, and white quilts. Murphy, “Remember Me,” 6.
of as well as doing a share of the work herself. She was considered a good judge of home
made cloth, and was often one of the awarding committee on women’s work at the fairs.”
Smoot won awards for her needlework at the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing
Society. Her awards and abilities certainly proved her to be a proper woman.

The Twentieth Ward quilt celebrated home and family relationships. Elizabeth S.
Ramsay’s block showcased a vine of leaves and flowers with the inscription “Our Mountain
Home.” (Appendix, fig. 11) Born in England, Elizabeth Stokes immigrated in 1858, and built
a home in Salt Lake City after she married Ralph Ramsay in 1863. Mary Ann Sansom’s block
depicted flowers with the phrase “Love at Home.” Sansom eventually
had seven children. By 1870, when the quilt was made, toddler Louise had died of “teething
and bowel complaint.” Sansom commemorated her family relationships in this block. Other
women remembered their lost children. Martha Zina Paul’s block stated “Christ died that all
might live,” revealing her hope in a resurrection that would include her two-year-old
daughter, Zina Prescendia Paul, who passed away a year previously in 1869. (Appendix, fig.
2.13) The quilt remembered and celebrated family relationships.

Careful analysis of the Twentieth Ward quilt reveals close family relationships among
quilters. Sisters, mothers, daughters, mothers-in-law, daughters-in-law, and sisters-in-law all
illustrated family relationships across the quilt blocks. Both Eliza R. Snow and Zina D.H.

---

64 John Hugh McNaughton wrote the popular hymn, “Love at Home” in 1866, with the message that if the
home succeeds, everything else is more beautiful and satisfying. Karen Lynn Davidson, Our Latter-day Hymns:
65 Dorothy P. Blanpied, “The Necklace of Elizabeth Sansom Barnes,” in An Enduring Legacy, vol. 12 (Salt Lake
66 Eliza M. Williams and Lisadore Williams were sisters. Matilda Brain was the daughter of Mary A. Brain. Jane
T. Lynch was the daughter of Mary Lynch. Margaret Sharp was the daughter of Jane S.P. Sharp. Harriet Lewis
Young had nieces in this ward Relief Society who contributed blocks—Eliza Snow Dunford and Martha Zina Paul, both named after their aunts. The quilt became a family tree of sorts, crossing lines and connecting lineages not captured on a simple genealogical chart.

The central block of the Twentieth Ward quilt, celebrating the reorganization of the Relief Society in Salt Lake City, proclaimed, “Wives honor your husbands.” The connection of Relief Society to marriage and motherhood was also important. Mormon theology identified Relief Society women as “Elect Ladies,” “Mothers in Israel,” and “Daughters in Zion.” As a companion organization to the male priesthood, the female Relief Society sustained and celebrated matrimony and motherhood. Abraham O. Smoot, husband of Margaret T. Smoot, considered her “a true and devoted wife, … an able supporter of the principles of Celestial Marriage.” This commitment to plural marriage occurred in Nauvoo. According to Margaret’s biography, “it was in the temple at Nauvoo that Sister Smoot says her husband entered into the Patriarchal order of marriage by taking other wives to which she gave her full consent, being as she terms it a coworker with him, and a firm believer in the principle as emanating from God, a pure chaste principle revealed to the people, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, which they accepted as divine, believing it to be a holy principle.”

---

was the daughter of Mary Ann Squires Lewis. Lovina Luff was the daughter-in-law of Mary Luff. Mary Ann Lewis married Henry Arundel Lewis, brother of Mary Ann Lewis Sansom. Ann Paul and Martha Paul married brothers.

67 Dunford was the daughter of Snow’s brother, Lorenzo Snow and Sarah Ann Pritchard. Paul was the daughter of Young’s brother Dimick Huntington and Fannie Maria Allen.

68 Speaking about the organization of the Nauvoo Relief Society, John Taylor remarked that “the sisters hold a portion of the Priesthood in connection with their husbands. (Sisters Eliza R. Snow and Bathsheba W. Smith stated that they so understood it in Nauvoo and have looked upon it always in that light.)” “R.S. Reports,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9, no. 7 (September 1, 1880): 53.
Smoot defended plural marriage and family as “holy ties, bonds and covenants, with which families are bound together for time and all eternity.”

The LDS nineteenth-century practice of plural marriage also configured the family relationships exhibited in the Twentieth Ward quilt. Margaret Smoot’s marriage and family extended beyond her relationship to her husband. Her husband’s plural wives formed a holy sisterhood. One of Margaret’s sister-wives was Anna Kristine Mauritzen Smoot from Norway. (Appendix, fig. 14) According to Anna, Margaret welcomed the twenty-two-year-old immigrant into her home shortly after she arrived in Salt Lake City. When their husband Abraham O. Smoot filled a mission to England, the sister-wives found comfort and support in each other. Olive Smoot Bean was the daughter of sister-wife Diana Eldredge Smoot, who carefully recorded in text a detailed description of the quilt and a biographical sketch of Margaret Smoot, her step-mother. Diana’s garland of flowers in her quilt block demonstrated the flowering relationship between the women. Another block was made by Margaret Smoot, Jr., or Mattie, daughter of Abraham Smoot and Emily Hill Smoot, another sister-wife of Margaret. (Appendix, fig. 2.15) Mattie lived with “Ma Smoot” when her own mother and family moved to Provo with their father. As the women cut into fabrics to

---

make their appliqués, so they deconstructed their marriage and female role in order to discover a sense of female autonomy and empowerment.72

The practice of plural marriage originated in Nauvoo.73 When Joseph Smith developed a core network of men and women to initiate the principle, the women all associated with the initially exclusive Relief Society organization.74 At the outset, according to the morals of mid-nineteenth-century America, it appeared that the act of plural marriage would fragment relationships and produce discord among upstanding families. For some it did. It would also seem that the heavy patriarchal culture of the Latter-day Saints would subjugate Mormon women. As women gathered in their own Relief Societies in Utah and cut apart scraps of fabric to piece back together again in the form of a quilt, they created a space to re-center and re-create themselves as individual women in a community of believers.75 They found empowerment in self-expression, both in word and in textile.

In January 1870, a group of Relief Society women gathered under the direction of Sarah Kimball in the neighboring Fifteenth Ward to discuss their indignation at the Cullom Bill, an 1869 Congressional measure aimed at eradicating polygamy.76 The following week,

74 See Andrew F. Ehat, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question” (Master’s Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982).
75 Judy Elsley writes, “A woman makes her world her own by taking apart the patriarchal ways of being to create a space for herself. That space allows her to accept her own fragmentation, embrace those fragments, and thus validate herself. Recognizing rather than denying her pieces is often a woman’s way to becoming ‘wole or whole’ in a more feminocentric way.” Elsley, *Quilts as Textile(s): The Semiotics of Quilting*, 3.
76 Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, “Relief Society Minute Book,” vol. 1, 1869-1875, 16 January 1870. The Cullom Bill, a complex proposal, included “a hodge podge of political and procedural measures, each one designed to eat away at the ability of polygamists and their church to find shelter in local government.
Mormon women met en masse in the Salt Lake Tabernacle to publicly and collectively protest what they considered a severe infringement on their freedom of religion. Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Relief Society president Margaret Smoot participated as a member of the committee to draft the resolutions.77

Although there is no recorded public proclamation by any other member of the Twentieth Ward at the mass meeting, it is reasonable to assume they were among the five thousand in attendance. Because the album quilt was created over the next few months, the thoughts and feelings were fresh on the minds of these women. Those who had not spoken publicly or written columns for the Woman’s Exponent were able to express their sentiments in a different format. The medium of the quilt became a safe place for traditionally non-vocal women, some of whom struggled with English as a second language. With this historical context, and the connection to the Nauvoo Relief Society and plural marriage, such quilted quotations as “Let Sisterly Love Continue,” “Chastity,” “Celestial Marriage,” and “Love at Home” took on additional meaning. At least twenty-one of the fifty-three women depicted on the quilt were plural wives, twelve of them within the same six families. The medium of a quilt, often reserved for such occasions as the marriage bed, seemed an appropriate location for expression of familial support and devotion.78

At the same time that the Relief Society was busy defending the practice of plural marriage and demonstrating their refinement, other groups worked in a similar fashion to


discount LDS women and polygamy. The Woman’s Home Mission Society, the female auxiliary of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Ogden, Utah, created an anti-polygamy quilt in 1882. Like the Twentieth Ward Relief Society quilt, the Methodist quilt included signatures of prominent women, both nationally and locally, including Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes, wife of the U.S. President. Like the Twentieth Ward quilt, this quilt was a presentation quilt, intended for Senator George F. Edmunds of Vermont. His name, like Margaret Smoot’s, was featured in the center of the quilt. Edmunds had sponsored an anti-polygamy bill in Congress earlier that year which declared polygamy a felony and resulted in the conviction of thousands of Mormon men. The quilt medium acted as an appropriate political tribute for women both protesting and protecting marriage laws and practices.

The Twentieth Ward quilt portrayed multiple layers of nineteenth-century family and domestic situations in Salt Lake City. A symbol of home, the quilt covered Margaret Smoot’s bed. The blocks connected makers from the same blood lines and across marriages, linking generations and celebrating the Mother in Israel role founded in Nauvoo. The relationships and messages inscribed in the quilt marked the distinctive LDS practice of plural marriage.

Fine Needlework and Silk—Quilting as Demonstration of Refinement

Quilts not only covered the needy and celebrated family, but women’s handwork showcased refinement efforts in the nineteenth-century West. The skills demonstrated in the Twentieth Ward quilt revealed the resourcefulness that marked frontier life and the desire to

80 According to legal historian Sarah B. Gordon, “The antipolygamy Edmunds Act of 1882, for example, replicated in crucial ways the penalties imposed on the former Confederacy after Appomattox. Like Reconstruction reforms, antipolygamists insisted, keeping the targets of prosecution out of power would allow the legal system to function smoothly.” The law prevented polygamists from serving on juries to protect each other and removed the burden of proof. Punishment of imprisonment was promised to all men guilty of unlawful cohabitation. Gordon, The Mormon Question, 151-153.
domesticate the harsh environment. The coupled efforts of thrift and beautification come to a juncture in quilt made of silk. The Nauvoo Relief Society introduced this combination of resourcefulness and fine skills. Several meetings recorded an exchange of services according to the abilities, materials, and tools available to the women. On 7 July 1843, for example, Sister Farr donated flax and tow, Sister Kelsey offered to spin the flax, and Sister Smith proposed to spin the tow. Sister Lyons said she could give one bunch of cotton yarn to “fill the tow” to make cloth. Sister Overton would then weave the cloth. The process illustrated their abilities as proper housewives and their web of dependence upon each other to produce needed items. On that same day, Sister Pratt “recommended an English family, mostly females, who wished the influence of the Society in supplying them with work, “then proceeded to describe their fine skills.” The Nauvoo Relief Society provided a location to pool resources and skill to survive and to thrive on an amicable port of the Mississippi River.

Crossing the plains and settling in the Salt Lake Valley, members of the Twentieth Ward also pooled resources. In his address to the Relief Society at their organization on 22 April 1868, Bishop Sharp counseled, “One great and important item of your duty, as a society will be to invent your own fashions of dress and to take the lead therein, also the manufacture of straw hats, as there are many in the ward who are good braders of straw and others who are equally as good at making the braid into hats & bonnets.” The quilt blocks were made from Utah silk, embroidered, appliquéd, and pieced; designs included floral, fruit,

81 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 7 July 1843, 95, 94.
82 Twentieth Ward, “Relief Society Minutes and Records,” 22 April 1868.
and animal imagery that indicated a sense of refinement described by Richard Bushman as a transformation of themselves and their environment.\(^{83}\)

The album quilt was a showcase of fine skill. Individual blocks allowed women to demonstrate skill sets indicative of nineteenth-century respectable domesticity. Beginning with the Baltimore album style, considered to be the quilter’s exhibition piece due to its meticulous stitching and ambitious iconographic design, this style originated in Maryland and Pennsylvania in the mid-1840s. By the 1850s, quilt trends shifted to pictorial appliqué with another form of the album quilt, often stitched by different people and created as a presentation piece for a common friend.\(^{84}\)

The fabric of the quilt provides insight into the technology of nineteenth-century Mormon refinement in Utah. The material used in a quilt reveals much about the construction and the quilt-makers. Quilters used animal fibers such as wool and silk for very different types of quilts. They used wool, a soft, heavy fiber, for warm utility quilts. Silk, on the other hand, is a strong, elastic fiber, allowing for elaborate, decorative stitching. However, silk is also slippery and fragile, making fine stitchery difficult but also increasing the coverlet’s value.\(^{85}\) The Twentieth Ward Relief Society made their quilt of silk to signal their refinement and to showcase Utah’s heritage.

Quilters appliquéd squares in Utah silk. The silk industry proved to be a valuable, albeit unsuccessful, venture. As early as 1855, when cotton and flax proved difficult to produce in the arid western climate, Brigham Young invited Mormon missionaries in France

\(^{83}\) Bushman, The Refinement of America, xii.


\(^{85}\) Forrest and Blincoe, The Natural History of the Traditional Quilt, 75–76.
to return to Utah with mulberry trees and silkworms. By 1866, the pioneers grew the trees throughout the territory. At the April 1868 General Conference, Young encouraged the cultivation of silk as part of the home industry movement. According to historian Leonard Arrington, “those women who wished fancy handkerchiefs, gloves, shawls, and dresses for formal wear would be expected to produce them of silk rather than waste territorial exchange in importing them.” Like the English women in Nauvoo who offered their fine sewing skills, European immigrants to Utah taught others how to reel silk into thread. The silk effort reintroduced a cottage industry that had largely disappeared away due to the Industrial Revolution. On her quilt block, Martha Artwell inscribed a quote from Brigham Young: “Let the daughters of Zion adorn themselves with the workmanship of their own hands.” (Appendix, fig. 2.16) This trend of cultivating a unique Utah silk not only set the women apart from their Eastern counterparts, but it also illustrated their efforts to imitate current fashion trends according to their own resources and abilities.

Utah women’s involvement in sericulture increased by 1877 when Brigham Young proposed that the women and the Relief Societies take charge of the movement. He believed that the work of nurturing silk worms was best fitted to women. They learned how to feed chopped-up mulberry leaves to worms, prepare sticks on which to hang cocoons, dry

---

89 Elder Wilford Woodruff spoke on 8 October 1875, quoting Brigham Young with this phrase. The idea also comes from Doctrine and Covenants 42:40: “Let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands.” Young, Journal of Discourses, 18:129; Arrington, “The Finest Fabrics: Mormon Women and the Silk Industry in Early Utah,” 378.
90 “Two Days Meeting at St. George,” Woman’s Exponent 5, no. 22 (April 15, 1877): 172.
cocoons, then reel them into thread and weave the thread into fine silk cloth. Shortly after Young’s announcement, Eliza R. Snow encouraged “all Branches of the Relief Society” to join in the mission of raising silk. “Sufficient proof has been given,” she wrote, “of the practicability of its success.” The women organized local branches of the Deseret Silk Association in each town, and Margaret Smoot acted as president of the Utah County Silk Association when she moved to Provo. The silk in the Twentieth Ward quilt demonstrated both the silk-raising effort and Mormon women’s role in seeking refinement. As the sericulture movement delinked, it became a past no longer usable.

From the fabric to the actual images depicted, the Twentieth Ward women emulated the refined needlework stereotypes of their day. Fruits figured in several blocks, providing insight into the Utah diet from 1857 to 1870. Augusta T. Lewis’s block contained a sprig of strawberries and the term “delicious.” According to Olive Smoot, the “bright red strawberries and green leaves, look[ed] natural enough to almost tempt one to taste.” Berries, including strawberries, serviceberries, choke cherries, currants, raspberries, and elderberries grew wild in Utah. Two blocks depicted a branch of cherries; Eliza M. Williams embroidered a stem of “bright red cherries with green leaves and bright red fruit,”

92 Snow further wrote, “What the sisters cannot do with their own hands, they may bring to pass as Solomon built the Temple.” Eliza R. Snow, “To the Relief Society,” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 22 (April 15, 1877): 173.
93 Bean, “Biographical Sketch of Margaret T. Smoot, Abraham O. Smoot Papers.” Susa Young Gates remembered Smoot as “identified with the original Silk Association” in Salt Lake City before moving to Provo. Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), 54.
while another block with a basket of cherries sits in the lower right corner. (Appendix, figs. 2.18, 2.16) Mattie Smoot pieced together apples for the quilt. (Appendix, fig. 2.15) Several apple varieties thrived in Utah. Mary Ann Lewis appliquéd an orange branch on her block. (Appendix, fig. 2.19) Citrus fruits, such as oranges and lemons, were a popular luxury item in the nineteenth century. Mary Brain and Harriet Bunting’s blocks depicted grapes. (Appendix, figs. 2.20, 2.21) Bunting’s bountiful purple grapes represented Dixie, the nickname for southern Utah. According to quilt historian Patricia Cox Crews, the inclusion of grapes and berries symbolized abundance and are similar to still-life paintings, another mark of refinement. Jane T. Lynch displayed golden pears on her block. (Appendix, fig. 2.22) These blocks showcased the richness of the land and documented the Utah pioneer effort to make the desert blossom as a rose, an illustration of the refinement effort.

In addition to fruit imagery, floral imagery in the Twentieth Ward quilt is of note. While the Victorian age was not the first time women were interested and involved in local plants and gardens, botanical images became increasingly popular during the nineteenth century. The feminine tradition of herbal medicine, agriculture, and botany encouraged the study and use of plants. The popularity of classic floral quilts peaked from the 1840s to the

---

96 Ibid., 235.
97 Crews, A Flowering of Quilts, 48.
98 The Bunting family was called on a mission to settle in Kanab in Southern Utah, also known as Dixie, where grapes were grown plentifully. “Harriet Dye Bunting: ‘Charity never faileth’,” in Heart Throbs of the West, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939), 157.
99 Crews, A Flowering of Quilts, 58.
Quilt curator Susan Curtis noted that “women cultivated flower gardens to demonstrate their homemaking skills and to benefit from the genteel exercise gardening provided. They studied botany to fill their leisure time with productive activity and to understand the spirituality of nature. And by using floral motifs in their decorating, women believed that they could educate and provide moral guidance for their families.” Popular quilt and garden designs in the mid century focused on straight lines radiating from a central point with symmetrical design. Arrangements typically included one variety of flowers and allowed each flower to be seen prominently on long stems amid greenery, often placed in baskets or urns. Emily Dye’s block featured slender yellow lilies with the phrase, “Consider the lilies,” connecting the idea of spiritual care and attention to beauty. (Appendix, fig. 2.23) Mary Davies’s block showed roses with the adage, “Every rose has its thorn.” (Appendix, fig. 2.24) Susan Schettler’s block included forget-me-nots, a popular Victorian symbol to memorialize her after her death. (Appendix, fig. 2.25) Emma P. Toone stitched a pot filled with numerous colorful flowers with the word “unity,” indicating the combination of different varieties needed to produce a proper garden. (Appendix, fig. 2.26) Popular flowers found on the Twentieth Ward quilt included tulips, lilies, roses, forget-me-nots, lilies-of-the-valley, thistles, shamrocks, olive branches, and honey suckle, flowers both native to the Utah Territory and those imported across the plains by the pioneers. Their choice of specific flowers communicated devoted affection and bonds of love according to

103 See Matthew 6:28 and Luke 12:27—“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, either do they spin.”
nineteenth-century Victorian floriology.\textsuperscript{104} The Twentieth Ward quilt infused common Victorian flowers and fruits with singular meaning to the Mormon experience in Utah.

The use of fruit and flowers revealed an effort to both harness and embellish the natural environment. Beyond flowers, blocks represented trees with pine, oak, and leaves. (Appendix, fig. 2.27) Some blocks included birds and animals: doves, eagles, bees, unicorns, and Eliza R. Snow’s lamb and lion with the scripture “and there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.”\textsuperscript{105} (Appendix, fig. 2.28) Other blocks showed non-organic pieces. Baskets, pots, and vases captured and domesticated natural offerings. According to Crews, baskets were often featured in nineteenth-century quilts, reflecting a popular garden trend in the 1830s and 1840s.\textsuperscript{106} Lisadore Williams depicted a harp with the verse Revelation 14:2, “I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” (Appendix, fig. 2.29) An anchor and a clock in two blocks illustrated efforts to remain steadfast and mindful of time. The maker of the clock block inscribed “Time is the cradle of hope, but the grave of ambition.” (Appendix, figs. 2.7, 2.30) Each block illustrated a respect for nature and an effort to control or manipulate a sometimes harsh natural environment.

\textbf{“Clasped in the hands of fellowship”—Quilts and Identities}

Careful analysis of a quilt, its design and its uses, reveals valuable information about the identity of its creators. Both the creation and the presentation of a quilt, often a joint effort, affirm a web of relationships often unrecognized in text. The Twentieth Ward quilt offered multiple lenses with which to understand the intertwining, often overlapping identities of the women. The Nauvoo Relief Society facilitated the collection of individual

\textsuperscript{104} Kate Greenway, \textit{Language of Flowers} (New York: Gramercy, 1978), 22.

\textsuperscript{105} Isaiah 11:9.

\textsuperscript{106} Crews, \textit{A Flowering of Quilts}, 106–107.
efforts into a much larger whole, resulting in magnified work. At an early meeting, secretary Eliza R. Snow commented that a member of the organization “shall be blest wherever she is, and the Lord shall open the way and she shall be instrumental in doing much,—thro’ her own exertions by the instrumentality of others, she shall be enabled to contribute much to the fund of the Society—she shall warm up the hearts of those who are cold and dormant, and shall be instrumental in doing much good.”

A quilt literally warmed the cold and the downhearted among these women. The format of an album quilt allowed individual pieces to both speak for themselves and present a more broad understanding of the group’s identity. Levels of identity included Relief Society membership, the ward and neighborhood, their countries and cultures of origin, and their role as nineteenth-century women.

The friendship quilt served as a helpful format for women to bring their skills together and to commemorate the recipient. Allen and Tuckhorn claimed that such quilts were “rooted in Victorian Americans’ need to ritualize and sentimentalize the passages or stages of life,” particularly a birth, marriage, leave-taking, or death. The New England tradition of friendship quilts began in the early 1840s and spread along the eastern seacoast, then moved steadily westward. The quilted collection of signatures and blocks was quite popular through 1875, when industrialization increased following the Civil War. The friendship quilt, inspired by events such as weddings, births, birthdays, anniversaries, family reunions, deaths, and moving, acted as a textile version of the autograph book popular beginning in the 1820s. Jacqueline Atkins stated, “Leavetakings seem to have spurred the

---

107 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 19 April 1842, 32.
108 Allen and Tuckhorn, A Maryland Album, 91.
making of the greatest number of Friendship quilts, for their period of greatest popularity coincided with the peak of migration to and the settlement of the West…. The women took with them tangible reminders of their former homes and friends—some of whom would never be seen again—in the form of Friendship quilts. Not only were these quilts comforting reminders of their onetime homes, they also served as tangible remembrances of the community that was left behind, a record and perpetuation of the bonds of friendship, for the people who signed the quilts symbolically stayed together.” Atkins went on to say that such quilts “serve to represent and acknowledge the ties, affiliations, and obligations of an individual to the community. They act as a tangible reminder to the recipient of his or her explicit link to a specific population and of the bonds that have been forged together through work in common or shared goals. And, in their creation, the quilts also served to further strengthen the bonds between members of the presenting group.”\(^{110}\)

The Twentieth Ward quilt, a friendship quilt in the form of an album quilt, allowed each woman to showcase her personality and skill in each individual appliqué block. Because this quilt is an appliqué quilt rather than a pieced quilt with a repetitive design and pattern, each individual square reflected individual design. Nevertheless, one block stood out as a geometric pieced square. This block of red, orange, and green half squares was strategically placed in an upper corner, possibly lost in the folds when the quilt was placed on a bed. The maker of this block is unknown. (Appendix, fig. 2.31) Even the quilting of each block varied

according to its design. Because the quilting stitch sculpted the quilt surface, adding a dimensionality to the quilt top and back, each block literally stood alone.  

The Twentieth Ward quilt contained symbols memorializing the Nauvoo Relief Society. The center block showcased a vine wreath surrounding the “clasped hands of fellowship” with dates of the Society’s founding both in 1842 in Nauvoo, by Joseph Smith, and the reorganization in 1867 in Salt Lake City by Brigham Young. The text connected the past with the present, contrasting dates and male priesthood authority-figures. The objects depicted also communicated the identity and mission of the Relief Society. According to Richard G. Oman, vines are a symbol of ancient Israel as well as a symbol of Jesus Christ. The visual symbol of clasped hands stems from a Masonic ritual, again referencing the Masonic prayer at the opening of the Nauvoo minutes. Clasped hands also appeared on the façade of the Salt Lake Temple, dedicated in 1893 and the façade of the Manti tabernacle. The central location of this block anchored the rest of the quilt with blocks by individual women. The quilt was a visual indication that the Relief Society of Nauvoo held the women together.

Of the fifty-three known women who made blocks for this quilt, only three belonged to the Nauvoo Relief Society. The others converted to the LDS Church after the Nauvoo period. Those women who joined the original organization included president Margaret M.T.

---

111 See Forrest and Blincoe, *The Natural History of the Traditional Quilt*, 71.
113 Oman, “Quilting Sisters,” 146.
Smoot, Eliza R. Snow, and Zina D.H. Young.115 Each of their blocks immediately surrounded the commemorative Nauvoo Relief Society in the center of the quilt, as if their authority came directly from this association. (Appendix, fig. 2.33) On either side of ward president Smoot’s block were those of her two counselors, Jane S.P. Sharp and Annie A. Savage. (Appendix, fig. 2.34) The quilt design followed the position and hierarchy of the original Nauvoo Relief Society presidency: president Emma Smith, with counselors Sarah Cleveland and Elizabeth Ann Whitney.

Other blocks displayed written tributes to the unity of the Relief Society: “Let Sisterly Love Continue” hearkened back to the Nauvoo past and stretched to future aspirations for the woman’s organization.116 (Appendix, fig. 2.8) “Faith Hope and Charity” referred to themes treated by Joseph Smith to the women in Nauvoo.117 (Appendix, fig. 2.7) “United We Stand,” “Union Forever,” and “Unity, Purity, and Sweetness” illustrated the interweaving of several different relationships; their families, their neighborhoods, and their religious responsibilities overlapped and combined to a much greater force accomplished by any one individual.118 (Appendix, figs. 2.35, 2.36, 2.26)

Quilts commemorated later Relief Society history, beyond Nauvoo. Every ward in the Bear Lake Stake participated in making a quilt commemorating the organization of the stake in 1877. The white with blue cashmere lining highlighted the embroidered dates and names of the apostle who organized the stake and the stake presidency in the center of the quilt. The names of the original officers and dates of the stake Relief Society and Primary

115 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842; 24 March 1842; 9 June 1842.
116 Lovina Luff (1844-1925)
117 Ann Paul (1840-1875)
118 E. Cooper (nd), Harriet Adelaide Lewis [Van Noy] (1859-1949), and Emma Elizabeth Prosser Toone (1819-1889)
organization for children were embroidered in smaller ovals around the edge. The quilt was presented to Annie Bryson Laker upon her release as president of the Primary.\textsuperscript{119} In 1897, the women of the Iosepa Relief Society in Skull Valley, Utah, all from Hawaii, presented a special Hawaiian quilt to LDS Church president Wilford Woodruff to commemorate the 1897 pioneer jubilee fifty years after Mormon settlers arrived in Utah. The plumeria leaf design and light green and beige color scheme demonstrated their island heritage.\textsuperscript{120}

Although these settlers did not arrive in Utah until 1875, and did not literally share early pioneer past, they celebrated the institutional memory of the larger LDS Church, adapting a “prosthetic memory.”\textsuperscript{121} They shared a common history, although they had not participated as original pioneers, and they commemorated with their own cultural format.

The Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Relief Society quilt was presented to President Margaret Smoot when she moved to Provo. For the women, the quilt served as a tangible reminder of their Relief Society membership and relationships. Bean called the women who designed and sewed blocks “Coworkers with Ma.”\textsuperscript{122} She described her experience as the leader, “which position she held for many years, fulfilling her duties with honor and dignity and her loss was keenly felt by the Society and the sisters with whom she was more closely associated.” Margaret demonstrated a friendship and love worthy of commemoration. Smoot’s square is juxtaposed in the quilt’s center with a block commemorating the original Nauvoo Relief Society. Also central in the 1870 quilt were blocks by Eliza R. Snow and Zina D.H. Young. (Appendix, fig. 2.33) While Snow and Young lived in the neighboring Salt Lake

\textsuperscript{119} “Pioneer Quilts,” in \textit{Our Pioneer Heritage}, vol. 18 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958), 78.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{121} Landsberg, \textit{Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture}.
\textsuperscript{122} Bean, “Biographical Sketch of Margaret T. Smoot, Abraham O. Smoot Papers.”
City Eighteenth Ward, they held prominent positions socially and institutionally as wives of Brigham Young and leaders of the Relief Society. Snow and Young became honorary members of the Twentieth Ward Relief Society.\textsuperscript{123}

The Twentieth Ward quilt furnished a textile map, identifying members of a specific neighborhood. The majority of the families on these blocks joined the LDS Church after the Nauvoo period. Many of them arrived in Utah after 1856 when the ward split from the adjoining Eighteenth Ward.\textsuperscript{124} This ward was not one of the original nineteen wards created in the Salt Lake Valley upon the first settlement. As the population expanded, other wards were created. John Sharp served as bishop of the Twentieth Ward with counselors William C. Dunbar and William L.N. Allen.\textsuperscript{125} Both Sharp and Allen had plural wives and or daughters who participated in the quilt-making, including Jane S.P. Sharp, Margaret Sharp, Hannah Allen, and Mary Jane Snowball Allen. (Appendix, figs. 2.37, 2.38, 2.39, 2.40) The quilt promoted a literal map of the ward in 1870, a snapshot of the ward directory.

A ward map drawn up in 1888 presented the neighborhood much like the blocks of the quilt. (Appendix, fig. 2.41) The map provided clues into the proximity and relationship

\textsuperscript{123} On 2 May 1868, President Margaret T. Smoot commented, “we will have Eliza R. Snow to meet with us as often as possible. She will be able to strengthen us by giving us good instruction.” Zina D.H. Young was voted a member of this Relief Society three weeks later on 22 May 1868. Twentieth Ward, “Relief Society Minutes and Records,” 2 May 1868, 22 May 1868.

\textsuperscript{124} The first eighteen wards in Salt Lake City were divided geographically immediately upon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. When later arrivals expanded neighborhoods and wards, the Nineteenth and Twentieth Wards were created with mostly newer converts and immigrants.

\textsuperscript{125} The Twenty-first ward was created in 1877 from the eastern blocks of the Twentieth Ward. Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah, Comprising Preliminary Chapters on the Previous History of Her Founders, Accounts of Early Spanish and American Explorations in the Rocky Mountain Region, the Advent of the Mormon Pioneers, the Establishment and Dissolution of the Provisional Government of the State of Deseret, and the Subsequent Creation of the Development of the Territory (Salt Lake City: G.Q. Cannon, 1892), 4:205; Andrew Jenson, Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941), 753–754; Andrew Jenson, “Church Encyclopedia,” The Historical Record: A Monthly Periodical vol. 6, is. 9-12 (December 1887): 329.
of women on the quilt. For example, both the George Luff family and the Harry Luff family resided on the same block, putting mother-in-law Mary Luff and daughter-in-law Lovina Luff’s blocks into perspective. (Appendix, figs. 2.9, 2.8) The leaves on their blocks appeared to have been cut from the same fabric. The Lewis families and the Sansom families also lived on the same block. Mary Ann Squires Lewis married the brother of Mary Ann Lewis Sansom, and their adjoining lots illustrated their family relationships. (Appendix, figs. 2.19, 2.12) The location of each quilt block communicated something about the relationship and the “degree of intimacy” of the block-maker with the recipient. The connection of individual women to a larger group indicates membership in a collective entity larger than the individual. Joyce Ice and Linda Norris encouraged analysis of the quilter community, including personal, social, historic, economic, and artistic contexts. Curator Catherine Schwoeffermann suggested examining “the relationships of the quilters one to another; the degree to which the quilters living contemporaneously shared aesthetic ideas of quilting one with another; the effects that outside influences had on quilting; a greater sense of the social historical context of their lives; and a better grasp of these and other quilters as individuals.” Thus the quilt served as a map to the Relief Society as the neighborhood map indicated proximity, both revealing important relationships, identities, and locations.

126 Historian Susan Price Miller carefully examined the blocks of the 1867 Circuit Rider’s Quilt. Through genealogical research and examination of land-ownership maps in Miami County, Ohio, of each name on each quilt block, she determined the interlinkings of family members and neighbors. The concentration of names and fabrics suggests that “the women in a family coordinated their design and construction activities, whether intentionally or by default.” Susan Price Miller, “The Circuit Rider’s Quilt: Reality and Romance,” Uncoverings 29 (2008): 19.

127 Allen and Tuckhorn, A Maryland Album, 91.

128 Joyce Ice and Linda Norris, eds., Quilted Together: Women, Quilts, and Communities (Delhi, NY: Delaware County Historical Association, 1989), 5.

Quilts also allowed for commemoration of specific individuals. The Twentieth Ward remembered their secretary, Susan M. Schettler, who had died in 1869.\textsuperscript{130} (Appendix, fig. 2.25) The bouquet of forget-me-nots honored her with a textile memory, a fitting choice for Victorian floriology. Another quilter, Harriet Dye Bunting, left Salt Lake City in December 1870 with her family to settle in Southern Utah. Her block commemorated this assignment to the area known as “Dixie” and, although the move proved to be difficult, she was remembered affectionately in this quilt.\textsuperscript{131} (Appendix, fig. 2.21)

The Twentieth Ward quilt presented a common Mormon identity as proof of individual biographies. The quilt juxtaposed religious themes with patriotic symbols, a popular nineteenth-century practice.\textsuperscript{132} Many blocks on the Twentieth Ward quilt displayed biblical verses. Quilter Emily Dye’s verse came from Jesus’ teachings in the New Testament: “Consider the lilies.”\textsuperscript{133} (Appendix, fig. 2.23) S. C. inscribed Paul’s famous verse on charity: “Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels and have not charity.”\textsuperscript{134} (Appendix, fig. 2.6) Mary Luff adorned the famous verse “God is love” with honeysuckle.\textsuperscript{135} (Appendix, fig. 2.9) Sarah M. Napper’s block included the psalm “I muse on the work of thy hands.”\textsuperscript{136} Other blocks included biblical phrases from Proverbs, Isaiah, and Revelation.\textsuperscript{137} A similar


\textsuperscript{131} “Harriet Dye Bunting: ‘Charity Never Faileth.’”

\textsuperscript{132} According to Jacqueline Atkins, it was popular to combine patriotic symbols with more classic signature blocks on album quilts. Atkins, \textit{Shared Threads: Quilting Together Past and Present}, vii.

\textsuperscript{133} Matthew 6:28; Luke 12:27.

\textsuperscript{134} 1 Corinthians 13:1.

\textsuperscript{135} 1 John 4:16-18.

\textsuperscript{136} Psalms 143:5.

\textsuperscript{137} Eliza R. Snow quoted Isaiah 11:9, with the image of a lion and a lamb—”They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.” Lisadore Williams's block showcased a harp with the reference to Revelation 14:2—”I
signature quilt, Sarah Mahan’s Ohio Star, also contained many biblical verses on its blocks. Quilt historian Ricky Clark concludes that Oberlin, the Ohio town where the quilt was made between 1848 and 1850, was a “biblically informed community.” The Twentieth Ward women also had the ability to quote the Bible to prove their religious knowledge. Their scripture quotations marked their religious identity.

The Twentieth Ward quilt displayed distinctly Mormon beliefs. Martha Artwell’s block referred to a verse from the Doctrine and Covenants, a book of LDS scripture: “Let the daughters of Zion adorn themselves with the workmanship of their own hands.” (Appendix, fig. 2.16) Brigham Young encouraged this council to women in an effort to promote home manufacture and refinement. References to both Eve and Jesus Christ inferred a particular LDS brand of doctrine. Maggie Smoot embroidered “Temptation: Eve ate the apple” on her block. (Appendix, fig. 2.15) On 7 May 1868, Bishop Sharp had admonished the women in the Twentieth Ward Relief Society to consider Mother Eve as “one of the Elect Ladies who steped from the Courts of Heaven to perform her duty here.” Nineteenth-century LDS women revered and honored Eve for acting in an essential role by using her agency to partake of the fruit and initiate the work of salvation. The temple ceremony recounted the creation story, including the role of Eve; Brigham Young considered Mormon women to be contemporary Eves in their relationship with their

---

140 Doctrine and Covenants 42:40 states: “Let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands.”
141 Twentieth Ward, “Relief Society Minutes and Records,” 7 May 1868.
husbands and their responsibilities for salvation. An ancient past was foremost in the minds of Mormon women.

Blocks containing unique Mormon images blended seamlessly with the others. Zina Young’s square just below the quilt’s center showcased the beehive, a familiar folk art motif in Utah. (Appendix, fig. 2.42) Interestingly enough, on another Relief Society quilt in the 1857 Fourteenth Ward, Phoebe Woodruff also pieced a beehive as a symbol of industry, with embroidered bees. (Appendix, fig. 2.4) While Young and Woodruff were well acquainted through the Nauvoo Relief Society, it is not known if Zina saw Phoebe’s quilt block, stitched thirteen years earlier. The beehive sat on the same type of table and represented industry and thrift celebrated throughout the Territory. According to historian E. Cecil McGavin, the beehive originated as a symbol of obedient people for Egyptians, later adopted by the Freemasons. While the beehive, clasped hands, and term “Holiness to the Lord” were distinct Mormon icons, other popular Mormon images, such as the all-seeing eye, sun, moon and stars, and the Masonic square and compass do not appear on the Twentieth Ward quilt. Only the beehive motif continued beyond the nineteenth century. The clasped hands remained a nineteenth century symbol.

While a common religious identity united the blocks, diverse nationalities marked their differences. Hannah Lewis’s block displayed the American flag and Margaret T.

---

143 At a meeting of the Utah County Silk Association in 1880, Zina Young recalled how Brigham Young had said to a group of women gathered in Lehi, “‘What do I see before me? A congregation of Eves’, how grand the thought.” Zina then “exhorted the sisters to live those principles which unite and bind together, and seek for an increase of faith in God.” “Utah County Silk Association,” Woman’s Exponent 9, no. 7 (September 1, 1880): 56.

144 See Nielsen, The Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward Album Quilt, 39. A. Hoagland, Mary C. Taylor, and Elizabeth C. Taylor also embroidered small versions of beehives in their quilt blocks. See 187, 177-178.

145 E. Cecil McGavin, Mormonism and Masonry (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1947), 61.

Smoot’s block showed the seal of the American government, held by an eagle with an olive branch in its claws. (Appendix, fig. 2.33, 2.43) The eagle appeared on many quilts, particularly around the time of the centennial in 1876. As a patriotic symbol, however, the eagle appeared much earlier on furniture, silver, and ceramics during the Federal period. At the time of this quilt’s construction, the quilt-makers in the Utah territory resided outside the official borders of the United States, although territorial requests for statehood had been submitted since 1849. While territorial status allowed Mormons in Utah the space and power to protect their religious freedoms and beliefs, federal anti-polygamy laws passed first in 1862, then in 1869 outlawed bigamy.

Three other blocks celebrated Utah as a place of peace and a location of women’s rights. Both Elizabeth B. Ramsay and Annie M. Brain came from England to settle in Salt Lake City, and both proclaimed Utah as a place of peace on their blocks. Ramsay’s block included an eagle with a ribbon and the phrase “Peace be to Utah.” (Appendix, fig. 2.10) For Ramsay, Utah became a safe place where as an uneducated woman, she could learn and practice nursing and midwifery. Ramsay’s husband, Ralph Ramsay, carved the eagle on the Eagle Gate, an imposing sculpture overhanging the entrance to Young’s estate. Along with Brain’s block, depicting a red flower, these two revealed Utah in 1870 as a location of peace,

---

147 Allen and Tuckhorn, A Maryland Album, 153.
148 The 1862 Morrill Act for the Suppression of Polygamy was not enforceable in Utah Territory because no jury would convict its peers. The 1870 Cullom Bill required that all cases involving plural marriage be tried before federal judges. See Sarah Barringer Gordon, The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-century America (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
149 As one biographer described her, “with faith, confidence, and the will to do, she successfully operated, amputated, set broken bones, and cured the common ailments of that period. She delivered over three hundred fifty babies without losing a case.” Melissa Ramsay Cluff, “Set Apart,” in Our Pioneer Heritage, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, n.d.), 103.
removed from the trauma of the recent Civil War. (Appendix, fig. 2.44). Martha Moore’s block showed flowers and buds with the phrase “Women’s Rights in Utah.” (Appendix, fig. 2.45) Also from England, Moore celebrated the female suffrage in Utah, recently granted in February 1870.151 These women proudly identified as Utah Mormons.

American and Utah-centric blocks juxtaposed blocks celebrating other national and cultural heritage. Jane S. P. Sharp designed a block with the Scottish emblem, a red lion on orange background surrounded by Scottish thistles.152 (Appendix, fig. 2.37) Both Jane and her husband, John Sharp, bishop of the Twentieth Ward, were born in Devon, Scotland, where they married in 1830. Annie Adkins Savage’s block displayed the emblem of England with three running lions and the French phrase, *Honi soit qui mal y pense* (Shame to him who thinks evil of it; evil to him who evil think).153 (Appendix, fig. 2.46) Born in Leighton, England, Savage married her husband, photographer Charles R. Savage, in Brooklyn, NY, in 1856. Mary Jane Snowball Allen, a native of Newcastle, England, included the British naval flag on her block, with the phrase “English hearts of Oak will defend the standard of Zion, with as much zeal as they ever did their flag. Don’t give up the ship.” (Appendix, fig. 2.40) The reference to a British naval ditty demonstrated a deep British loyalty to the oak used to build ships.154 Mary Lynch, a founding member of the Twentieth Ward Relief Society, appliquéd shamrocks and the phrase, “Shamrock of Ireland, lightheartedness” on her block.

---

151 While women in Wyoming were given the right to vote in December 1869, Utah women, who were far more numerous, voted before Wyoming’s next election. Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Introduction,” in *Battle for the Ballot: Essays on Women Suffrage in Utah*, ed. Carol Cornwall Madsen (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1997), 5–6.

152 King, “Pioneer Quilts,” 485.

153 Ibid.

She proudly commemorated her homeland. Born in Cork, Ireland, in 1838, Lynch crossed the plains with her family in 1855. Ellen Toronto embroidered the name of her home of origin, Wales, into her block, along with a vase of flowers and a proclamation of “In God We Trust.” Abraham O. Smoot, husband to three of the quilt-makers, served a mission in England from 1851 to 1856, explaining the popularity of that part of the world.\footnote{Jensen, \textit{Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia}, 1:485.}

The Danish connection was also important in this ward. The influx of immigrants proved to be an important part of the Twentieth Ward Relief Society agenda. On 22 May 1868, Brother Allen suggested that a Danish sister be appointed to visit other Danish women who did not understand English.\footnote{Twentieth Ward, “Relief Society Minutes and Records,” 22 May 1868.} R.G.S.B. stitched her Danish nationality into her block with a white star and blue hearts. A month later, President Smoot expressed concern for these immigrants: “Let our influence be for good for the Spirit, which we have, our stranger sisters will partake of when they arrive from the old countries.”\footnote{Ibid., 26 June 1868.}

Each of these women felt a strong pride in her national heritage and identity. The idea that British, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and Danish women worked closely with the American women indicated individual national pride as well as cooperation that extended beyond international borders. In fact, Norwegian Annie K. Smoot notated on her block, “The Gospel power is strong; it gathers from every land.” This block insinuated that shared theological belief as well as covenant through membership that united women of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. As Jewish women in Baltimore adapted American quilting...
techniques, so did women of western Europe gathered in Utah. The quilt suggested an opportunity to transcend barriers of language and culture as women gathered to sew.

The last form of identity in this quilt was that of the nineteenth-century female. Ann Erskin’s block commented on gender roles: “Man is the lofty rugged pine—Woman the slender clasping vine,” lines from a poem printed in the Ladies’ Literary Cabinet newspaper in 1819. (Appendix, fig. 2.50) Such concepts demonstrated Barbara Welter’s construct of the “cult of domesticity,” dictating the ideal feminine culture carried across the rough and tumble West from the gentrified and refined East. The female domestic art of needlework also reacted to the encroaching infiltration of industrialization. As a sixteen-year-old girl, Mattie Smoot’s block appeared as a sampler, when she learned needlework skills appropriate for a teenaged girl of her age. (Appendix, fig. 2.15) Mattie was living with her step-mother, Margaret Smoot, when this quilt was made in 1870 in Salt Lake City. The quilt presented several layers of multiple associations including neighborhood, religion, Latter-day Saint, nationality, and gender. The diversity confirmed the Nauvoo Relief Society teaching of unity.

**Quilt Tatters—Preservation and the Unusable Past**

Quilt provenance describes how a textile piece was valued and used, as well as who owned the quilt. Forrest and Blincoe provided insight into the “life cycle” of the quilt and its

---

158 According to Ronda McAllen, “for the Jewish women, the making of album quilts suggests an acceptance of American tradition and a break with European Jewish traditions which precluded women’s involvement in public endeavors or public art forms. The album quilts made for and by members of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation indicate their owners’ progress toward becoming part of a diverse community.” McAllen, “Jewish Baltimore Album Quilts,” 212.

159 The poem was reprinted several times in various publications throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, indicating its popularity and speaking to Victorian gender norms. “Man and Woman,” Ladies’ Literary Cabinet 1, no. 17 (September 4, 1819): 136.


physical changes over time: “Fabrics soften and fade until eventually they fray and fall apart.”\textsuperscript{162} Today the Twentieth Ward quilt has certainly seen better days. The layers of appliqué on some blocks appear to have come apart, and some of the careful ink writing has faded over time, making it difficult to decipher who made each block. And yet the quilt has been carefully cherished. According to Forrest and Blincoe, friendship and album quilts “exist as heirlooms and ‘collectibles.’ These are all types of quilts made with preservation in mind; they are deliberately special.”\textsuperscript{163} Fortunately, Smoot’s step-daughter, Olive Smoot Bean, took the time to describe each block carefully.\textsuperscript{164} An artist’s rendering of the quilt by Florence Truelson for the Index of American Design provides a visual reconstruction of some shredded designs.\textsuperscript{165} (Appendix, fig. 2.51)

In contrast, the women of the Twentieth Ward made this Relief Society commemorative quilt to be used. As a flat piece, the quilt resembles a painting or a photograph. The orientation of the blocks, however, suggests what the quilt was to be used for. The central vertical line of blocks appear in correct orientation—the clock, grapes, lamb and lion, U.S. crest, clasped hands, vase of flowers, oak leaves, and anchor all appear naturally. The blocks in the columns on each side shift orientation outward. (Appendix, fig. 2.2) The quilt was made to go on a bed with the sides hanging down over the edge of the mattress. Forrest and Blincoe encouraged the importance of viewing quilts in their natural

\textsuperscript{162} Forrest and Blincoe, \textit{The Natural History of the Traditional Quilt}, xxii.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 157.
\textsuperscript{164} Bean, “Biographical Sketch of Margaret T. Smoot, Abraham O. Smoot Papers.”
setting to understand the social context. With this kind of orientation, the quilt blocks appear in their proper place—on a bed.

The combination of utility and craft suggests both an adherence to nineteenth-century domestic ideology and a specific religious adaptation. The Twentieth Ward Relief Society presented the quilt to President Smoot when she moved to Provo in 1872. One reminiscence stated that while its makers have passed away, the quilt served “as a memento of their energy and industry.” The focus on a strong work ethic rather than refinement is enlightening. Instead of praising the needlework or the skilled design, Olive Smoot complimented the labor. The production as well as the intent for placement on a bed suggested a high value placed on resourcefulness.

As for President Smoot, the quilt held memories of relationships and work from her days as Relief Society president of the Twentieth Ward. After relocating to Provo with her husband, Smoot served as president both of the Utah County Silk Association and the Utah County Stake Relief Society. She suffered a stroke in May 1883. A year and a half of convalescence required care from “those to whom she has so fondly ministered during her life, have gladly returned a few of her kindnesses.” After another stroke in August 1884, Smoot died in Provo on 1 September 1884. She had no direct daughters on whom to bequeath the quilt. Unlike a utilitarian quilt, often used until it fell apart, this one was

---

166 According to Forrest and Blincoe, “A quilt is made to go on a bed, its edges fold over the sides. In its natural situation, one sees the quilt’s design horizontally and vertically at the same time, and often one cannot see the whole pattern at once. By walking around the bed, one sees the quilt from different angles and takes in different parts of the pattern.” Forrest and Blincoe, xii–xiii.


168 Emmeline B. Wells, “A Touching Tribute--Ma Smoot,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13, no. 8 (September 15, 1884): 91.
The quilt was donated to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) by Polly Jones Smoot, the wife of Smoot’s son William Cochran Adkinson Smoot, in 1924.\(^{169}\) The DUP owns a large pioneer quilt collection, each one providing details about its maker and contributing to the overall tradition of quilting. As stated by Miller, “removed from their original context, the quilts became objects to be admired, studied, and exhibited for their artistic merits.”\(^{171}\) At one point, the Twentieth Ward quilt covered a bed on the third floor of the DUP museum in Salt Lake City in a glassed-off room, replicating a pioneer bedroom. In this setting, the quilt became a piece of a recreated nineteenth-century scene.\(^{172}\) Connection to an important family and to the Relief Society set this quilt apart from others folded up in glass cases lining the walkways downstairs.

The Twentieth Ward quilt was carefully preserved by its makers, its recipient, the family, and the museum. Countless other quilts have not withstood the test of time. Because of their heavy use, utilitarian quilts were often not preserved. Mary Murphy suggested that early quilts from the American West did not survive simply because utility was necessary in the era of settlement. Within a couple of decades, with the advent of industrialization and commercialization, after building a basic settlement, women were able to accumulate materials, tools, and skills to make more artful quilts.\(^{173}\) Families preserved these decorative quilts as “keep me” quilts based on a perceived emotional value. Allen and Tuckhorn, *A Maryland Album: Quiltmaking Traditions, 1634-1934*, 18, 23.\(^{169}\)

---

\(^{169}\) Allen and Tuckhorn consider the quilts that are preserved and passed down from generation to generation as “keep me” quilts based on a perceived emotional value. Allen and Tuckhorn, *A Maryland Album: Quiltmaking Traditions, 1634-1934*, 18, 23.

\(^{170}\) “Pioneer Quilts,” 71.

\(^{171}\) Miller, “The Circuit Rider’s Quilt: Reality and Romance,” 35.

\(^{172}\) The quilt was located on a bed in a 2004 exhibition at the International Daughters of Utah Pioneers museum in Salt Lake City, Utah. In 2012, the DUP placed the folded quilt in a glass display case on the main level.

quilts as tributes to their family heritage. Commemorative quilts from the Twentieth Ward Relief Society, the Fourteenth Ward Relief Society, or the Eighth Ward Relief Society exhibit the tradition of Relief Society charity.

Also valuable is what memory is not commemorated on the quilt, another example of “unusable” past. While the Twentieth Ward quilt displayed an abundant harvest of flowers, vines, and fruits, some of which grew natively or were transplanted to the intermountain west, many of the abundant native fruits and flowers were not displayed. The sego lily, later memorialized as the food which prevented early pioneer starvation, did not appear on the quilt. The difficulty of embroidering or appliquéing a white flower on a white background may have prevented the image’s appearance. Or, more likely, the sego lily was too commonplace to be considered for a piece of refinement. A weed has no place in a garden.174 Other key parts of Mormon theology were not included on the quilt. There were no Book of Mormon phrases, nor was there any reference to Joseph Smith other than the inclusion of his name in connection to the Nauvoo Relief Society in the central block. Instead, women referred to Brigham Young, such as Mattie T. Smoot’s stitched tribute—“Long life to Brigham Young.” (Appendix, fig. 2.15) Not every woman from another country highlighted her home of origin. And some block-makers remained virtually unknown. Time removed their names and their memorials. Everything, then, selectively pointed to a particular part of these women’s past. Their selection revealed their agency in presenting their identity and their history.

In conclusion, the Nauvoo Relief Society operated as a benevolent organization in the care of the local poor and needy. The Salt Lake Twentieth Ward Relief Society emulated these charitable principles. Even though very few of the members of the Twentieth Ward had any viable connection to the Nauvoo Relief Society, those that did testified often of their experience, using this past to encourage purposeful activity. As a result of this testimony, the Nauvoo Relief Society became a prosthetic memory for all members of the Utah Relief Society; the quilt itself became a mnemonic device. The Twentieth Ward Relief Society created a commemorative quilt in 1870, both to remember their Nauvoo institutional roots and to honor their president, to cover and warm her when she left their physical presence in Salt Lake City in 1872.

Careful analysis of the quilt reveals its memorial of family and home, both as a proper part of nineteenth-century decorum and as a tribute to the distinct nineteenth-century Mormon polygamous family. Examination reveals relationships and identities as women of specific locations, with refined skills equal to their counterparts in the East, with their own LDS version of gentility. Each of these interpretations provides insight into Relief Society efforts to create and use their past.

The Twentieth Ward quilt presents a patchwork of color, shape, design, and skill levels. This collection of blocks represented diverse nationalities united in a common cause to commemorate a dear friend and Relief Society sister. At the same time, the blocks allowed for individual expression and belief. From fruit to bible verses to national flags to animals,

175 Margaret T. Smoot counseled her Relief Society to follow “the instructions which had been read from the book of Record of the F.R.S. of Nauvoo, which were given by the prophet Joseph.” Twentieth Ward, “Relief Society Minutes and Records,” 2 May 1868.

these blocks communicated a wide realm of the stuff of daily life in 1870 Salt Lake City. They also spoke of hopes and dreams, of lives past and future. The display of blocks stitched together offers a snapshot of a specific moment in a transitory time, a map of an ever-changing neighborhood in the northwest corner of Salt Lake. But more than a map or a photograph, the quilt provided a tangible, material piece of history. It was meant to be touched, fingered, wrapped around, covered, and warmed. The fabrics have been stitched and re-stitched, overlapping images of family, church, neighborhood, friendship, national ethnicities, and local geography. The Twentieth Ward quilt is the ultimate symbol of Relief Society sisterhood.
Appendix 2

Figure 2.1. Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes
LDS Church History Library
Figure 2.2. Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt, 1870
Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, Salt Lake City
Figure 2.3. Page, Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes
16 June 1843

Figure 2.4. Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward Quilt
private possession

Figure 2.5. Salt Lake City Eighth Ward Quilt
LDS Church History Museum

Figure 2.6. Quilt block, S.C.
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward quilt
Figure 2.7. quilt block, Ann Paul
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.8. quilt block, Lovina Luff
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.9. quilt block, Mary Luff
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.10. quilt block, Elizabeth B. Ramsay
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.11. quilt block, Elizabeth S. Ramsay
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.12. quilt block, Mary Ann Sansom
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.13. quilt block, Martha Zina Paul
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.14. quilt block, Annie K. Smoot
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.15. Quilt block, Margaret T. Smoot, Jr
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.16. Quilt block, Martha Artwell
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.17. Quilt block, Augusta T. Lewis
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.18. Quilt block, Eliza M. Williams
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.19. quilt block, Mary Ann Lewis
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.20. quilt block, Mary Brain
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.21. quilt block, Mary A. Brain
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.22. quilt block, Jane T. Lynch
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.23. quilt block, Emily Dye
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.24. quilt block, Mary Davies
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.25. quilt block, Susan Schettler
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.26. quilt block, Emma P. Toone
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.27. quilt block, unknown maker
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.28. quilt block, Eliza R. Snow
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.29. quilt block, Lisadore Williams
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.30. quilt block, unknown maker
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.31. quilt block, unknown maker
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.32. center block
Twentieth Ward quilt

Figure 2.33. quilt blocks, Nauvoo Relief Society members
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.34. Quilt blocks, Relief Society Presidency
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.35. Quilt block, E. Cooper
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.36. Quilt block, Hannah Lewis
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.37. quilt block, Jane S.P. Sharp
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.38. quilt block, Margaret Sharp
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.39. quilt block, Hannah Allen
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.40. quilt block, Mary Jane Snowball Allen
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.41. map, Twentieth Ward, 1888
LDS Church History Library
Figure 2.42. quilt block, Zina D.H. Young
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.43. quilt block, Margaret T. Smoot
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.44. quilt block, Annie M. Brain
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.45. quilt block, Martha Moore
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward quilt
Figure 2.46. quilt block, Annie Adkins Savage
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.47. quilt block, Mary Lynch
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.48. quilt block, Ellen B. Toronto
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.49. quilt block, R.G.S.B.
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt
Figure 2.50. quilt block, Ann Erskin
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt

Figure 2.51. artistic rendition, Florence Truelson
Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward Quilt for the Index of American Design
3. “I NOW TURN THE KEY TO YOU”: NAUVOO’S RED BRICK STORE, RELIEF SOCIETY HALLS, GRANARIES, AND COOPERATIVE STORES

Eliza R. Snow recorded the minutes of the Nauvoo Relief Society in an account book presented to them by Joseph Smith’s clerk, Willard Richards.¹ The ledger proved to be a useful administrative resource with its alphabetic tabs and measured columns. There the women kept membership lists, donation accounts, and meeting minutes. (Appendix, fig. 3.1) As secretary, Snow wrote up the minutes and speeches; as treasurer, Elvira A. Cowles enumerated all forms of contributions, starting with five dollars in gold from Joseph Smith at the first meeting.² Donations included money, quilts, clothing, candles, food, and store orders. Some women facilitated work exchanges.³ On 9 June 1842, Joseph Smith deeded a lot of land and an unframed house to the Relief Society to build accommodations for the poor.⁴ There were so many donations in kind that on 13 August 1843, Reynolds Cahoon commented that the Relief Society needed their own storehouse for all the goods.⁵

While Willard Richards, Joseph Smith, Reynolds Cahoon, and other men led the business of the LDS Church and the community of Nauvoo, the women ran the business of the Relief Society. (Appendix, fig. 3.1) The minute book demonstrated that members of the Relief Society, like women of other benevolent societies, were astute businesswomen: they

¹ Eliza R. Snow kept minutes for nineteen of the thirty-three meetings. Other secretaries included assistant secretary Phebe M. Wheeler, Hannah Ells, and an unidentified scribe. Derr and Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory,” 90–94.
² “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 4, 13, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
³ On 24 March 1842, for example, the minutes record that Mrs. Salome wanted work knitting or sewing. Ibid., 24 March 1842, 20.
⁴ Ibid., 9 June 1842, 63–64.
⁵ Ibid., 13 August 1843, 109.
recorded their earnings, their work, their output, and their established business model. While the nineteenth-century American marketplace separated gendered roles and expectations, Peggy Pascoe recognized that “benevolent activity provided women with an opportunity for moral stewardship parallel to the commercial leadership exercised by local merchants.”

According to historian Lori Ginzberg, “in the disbursement as in the raising and investing of funds, benevolent women demonstrated a corporate as much as philanthropic sensibility.”

When LDS women settled the West, they emulated the pattern of female economic activity established in Nauvoo. Utah Relief Society minute books continued the pattern of accounting. Minute books, however, were not the only mode of remembering business features of the Nauvoo Relief Society. Construction of nearly 140 Relief Society halls, stores, and granaries signified Mormon women as economic actors who actively used their past while negotiating the rocky terrain of their current needs and challenges. Nineteenth century ventures allowed Utah women an unprecedented independence as they researched, worked, and reported their earnings and activities. These buildings testified to Mormon women’s economic acumen, signaling a sense of female autonomy starting in Nauvoo.

The construction, use, and preservation (or lack of) of Relief Society halls, granaries, and cooperative stores illustrates the power of memory and the use of the past. Memory theorist Pierre Nora described the concept of lieux de mémoire or “sites of memory.” Physical locations or objects become tools or replacements from the past lost environment to rematerialize and connect to the present. The construction of halls as a memorial to the red

---

7 Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 36–67.
8 Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 17–21.
brick store and the Nauvoo Relief Society and the preservation efforts of these buildings indicated a need for a physical presence of the past and space for activities in the present. Nineteenth-century Relief Society buildings exhibited efforts at refinement. The buildings also extended LDS female autonomy, particularly economic autonomy. The space provided a spiritual component to the value of work. Although a majority of these buildings vanished in the twentieth century, their nineteenth-century construction and use function as lieu de mémoire both for the Nauvoo Relief Society and the Utah Relief Societies.

“A Place of This Kind”—Historical Background

Religious architecture has long utilized design elements to create a connection to the past. For example, mid-nineteenth century churches across the country featured Gothic architecture. This type of popular architecture “conjured powerful images of continuity with the devout spirit of medieval Christianity, forging an emotional link between contemporary Protestantism and an idealized era,” according to architectural historian Carl Lounsbury.9 Historian Jeanne Halgren Kilde observed that “using historical architectural forms to allude to and claim kinship with an ancient or more authentic Christianity is a form of historicization, a process through which people claim connection to ideas, objects, or practices of the past in order to lend legitimacy to their own activities.”10 This architectural material link to the past intimated a sense of historical authority for Mormon women in Utah.

As a Restorationist movement, the LDS Church sought to present a legitimate identity and connection to the past in its building, particularly in the Kirtland temple and the

---

Nauvoo temple, and to engage women in the process. Upon organization, the Relief Society contributed to these construction efforts. On 17 March 1842, twenty-two women met in the upper room of Joseph Smith’s red brick store to officially organize the Female Nauvoo Relief Society. (Appendix, fig. 3.2) Although the group had gathered earlier in Sarah Kimball’s parlor as a ladies’ sewing circle, this meeting, under the direction of the male priesthood, instigated a new sense of propriety. The red brick store’s Federal lintels provided a legitimacy not found in Kimball’s parlor. The influence of the red brick store extended to Utah as women in the Relief Society’s second iteration constructed stores, halls, and granaries. Adobe, brick, and wood buildings echoed propriety and semi-permanence in their construction and use. Initial success resulted from capitalism and industrialism in the American West. Their subsequent ruins testify to a loss of autonomy and economic activity.

Constructed in the fall of 1841, Joseph Smith’s red brick store opened for business on 5 January 1842, three months prior to the women’s meeting in March. Located strategically on Water Street, just above the Mississippi River in south Nauvoo, the store quickly became a center of economic activity in the community. According to historians Roger D. Launius and F. Mark McKiernan, the store was “one of the finest mercantile establishments in the region.” The first floor of the building functioned as the shop, while the second floor included offices and a large meeting space used by the temple and house

12 Roger D. Launius and F. Mark McKiernan, Joseph Smith, Jr.’s Red Brick Store (Macomb, IL: Western Illinois University, 1985), 13.
committees, the city council, the Nauvoo Legion, and the Masonic lodge. The edifice served as a bank, tithing office, school, and church office building, also holding dramatic expositions, lectures, debates, public meetings, and temple ordinances.

In that upper room of the red brick store important events specifically for the LDS women of Nauvoo took place. They were organized, elected leaders, received proper authority, and heard counsel from the Prophet. They received the temple endowment and participated in the highest religious ritual found in the young church before the completion of the Nauvoo Temple. At the sixth Relief Society meeting, Joseph Smith proclaimed, “I now turn the key to you in the name of God and this Society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time—this is the beginning of better days, to this Society.”

The connection of a physical key, unlocking the door to a room or a building, opened to the women a new realm of religious participation among their secular and temporal labors. (Appendix, fig. 3.3) Like the presentation of a city key to a prominent citizen, this statement, describing a physical icon, represented authority and autonomy.

---

15 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
16 At the 1882 anniversary celebration of the Relief Society, Sarah Kimball remembered Joseph Smith saying, “I have desired to organize the Sisters in the order of the Priesthood. I now have the key by which I can do it.” “Early Relief Society Reminiscences,” Sarah M. Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” 17 March 1882, 29, Church History Library.
17 The symbol of the key was later used at the Relief Society’s jubilee celebration in 1892 in the form of a floral arrangement displayed on the pipes of the organ at the Salt Lake City tabernacle. According to the report printed in the *Woman’s Exponent*: “The stands were handsomely ornamented with flowering plants principally Calla and Easter lilies. The large organ was draped with the stars and stripes, the flags extending across and a large oil painting of Joseph the prophet hung high in the centre, below it an immense key made of the most beautiful flowers, underneath which was the picture life-size of Emma Smith the first President of the Relief Society and on her right a picture of Eliza R. Snow the second President, and on her left that of Zina D.H. Young the present President.” “Relief Society Jubilee,” *Woman’s Exponent* 20, no. 18 (April 1, 1892): 140.
After the 1844 death of Joseph Smith, the 1845 dissolution of the Nauvoo Relief Society, and the 1846 exodus from Nauvoo, the red brick store remained the property of the Smith family. Business of the store declined in the late 1840s, and the building was closed. In 1860, the upper room was opened for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, headed by Joseph Smith III, a break-off of the LDS Church. The red brick store was abandoned in the 1870s, and by the mid-1880s, it had been vandalized and boarded up. In 1890 the building was dismantled.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the red brick store remained in Relief Society memory. In 1869 Sarah Granger Kimball, president of the Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward Relief Society, had a vision. She wanted to build a “modern” red brick store as a gathering place for women to meet, sell homemade goods, bear witness, work, and fill their prophetic charge to care for the poor and save souls. The women of the Fifteenth Ward Relief Society planned and funded a building that followed the architectural outline of Joseph Smith’s red brick store in Nauvoo, with a store on the main level and a meeting room upstairs. (Appendix, fig. 3.4) The women also built a granary to store wheat. The Fifteenth Ward Relief Society minute books paralleled those of the Nauvoo Relief Society ledger with records of religious witnessing and business accounting. The store, building, granary, and key all represented the efforts of Utah women to utilize their Nauvoo past in the present.

Seven years later, the Kaysville Relief Society women, north of Salt Lake City, dedicated their hall. At the dedication, John Taylor spoke about his memory of the Nauvoo Relief Society. He had attended the first meeting in 1842, and thirty-four years later he remembered the influence of that founding: “A good spirit prevailed.” Taylor then

¹⁸ Launius and McKiernan, Joseph Smith, Jr.’s Red Brick Store, 33.
remembered how Emma Smith’s public opposition to plural marriage led to the disbanding of the Relief Society. “When the sisters come to a place of this kind they ought to feel the spirit of their mission, enter into the sympathies of the people, consider the wants of the poor and provide for them, and never never, entertain harsh feelings towards one another, but forgive as they would be forgiven.” The memory of the Nauvoo days encouraged loyalty and identity to the Relief Society organization.

Relief Society buildings sprouted up throughout Utah Territory, many in the same form as the red brick store, following the traditional two-story pattern with a store below and meeting space above. The Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward Relief Society built their two-story brick building under the direction of President Mary Isabella Horne. (Appendix, fig. 3.5) Like Kimball, Horne had participated in the original Nauvoo Relief Society at the red brick store. With the cooperative store occupying the first level of the hall, the building more fully imitated the utilitarian effort to capitalize on space and community. In Thurber (now Bicknell), Wayne County, the women constructed their hall from local adobe, but found the finished product unappealing and not “red” enough. They sent their husbands forty miles away to collect red mud to create red adobe bricks to make their building as red as possible. (Appendix, fig. 3.6) This material construction cemented their authenticity and connection to Nauvoo’s female religious authority and legitimacy.

Commemorative events celebrated Relief Society building efforts and initiated additional construction, communicating a sense of pride in the past and work for the future.

20 Mary Isabella Horne joined the Nauvoo Relief Society on 9 June 1842. Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, 20.
21 Kate B. Carter, ed., Heart Throbs of the West (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939), 6:143–144.
At the Relief Society Jubilee celebration in Salt Lake City on 17 March 1892, Joseph F. Smith recalled how Joseph Smith had presented the Relief Society with “a building lot; and he did not see why the plan of building could not be carried out. It appeared to him an easy matter.” The commendation both remembered the past and built upon it, paving the way for another wave of construction. At least twenty-six halls were built between 1892 and 1902, compared to seven in the previous decade.

The Relief Society buildings spread across Utah’s Wasatch Front demonstrated the historic construction and preservation of female space. Different from temples, set apart for religious ordinances, these buildings were used and maintained primarily by women for commercial, civic, and Relief Society activity. Scrutiny of the architecture and use of the adobe, stone, and wood buildings illustrated efforts to remember the Nauvoo Relief Society, both in physical space and in authority and autonomy. The institutional memory of Nauvoo linked these women to the past but also forged them into a progressive present as they immersed themselves in the grain market and other economic ventures.

“The beginning of better days”—Refinement

When Joseph Smith metaphorically presented the Nauvoo Relief Society with keys of authority on 28 April 1842, he promised them that “this is the beginning of better days.” The women took this charge seriously and worked to cultivate a sense of refinement in all their activity. Cultural historian Richard Bushman described the design, construction, and

24 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40.
embellishment of homes, churches, and cities as a concerted transformation of the environment to present a cultivated and refined identity.\textsuperscript{25} The transformation of the Utah desert environment into a settled, refined, and beautiful location is evident in the Relief Society building and commercial efforts, an effort to make the desert bloom as a rose.\textsuperscript{26} Refinement efforts included attempts to achieve permanence and legitimacy, to present a genteel, polite identity, and to exhibit pride in a respectable organization.

The Nauvoo Relief Society started strong. With the chaos surrounding plural marriage and the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Brigham Young effectually disbanded the Society.\textsuperscript{27} When the Latter-day Saints left Nauvoo and prepared to cross the plains, women continued to gather together to bless and comfort one another but not under the name of Relief Society. Instead, Eliza R. Snow took the Nauvoo Relief Society minute book as her personal possession. (Appendix, fig. 3.1) By the time the Relief Society officially reorganized under the direction of Young in 1867, the women were spread all across Utah Territory. The only reminder of their original Society was this minute book, which they considered to be their compass and constitution.\textsuperscript{28}

Construction of Relief Society halls signaled permanence, and the physical location of the halls provided legitimacy. As Sarah Kimball’s home sewing circle led to founding the Nauvoo Relief Society in Joseph Smith’s red brick store, so her effort to build an official hall

\textsuperscript{25} Bushman, \textit{The Refinement of America}, xii–xviii, 25, 152.

\textsuperscript{26} See Isaiah 35:1.

\textsuperscript{27} Brigham Young denounced attempts of women meddling in the “affairs of the kingdom of God.” He stated: “When I want Sisters or Wives of the members of the church to get up Relief Society I will summon them to my aid but until that time let them stay at home and if you see Females huddling together veto the concern.” “General Record of the Seventies, 1844-1847,” Church History Library, 9 March 1845.

\textsuperscript{28} See Jill Mulvay Derr and Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Preserving the Record and Memory of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, 1842-92,” \textit{Journal of Mormon History} 35, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 88-117.
Relief Society location in Salt Lake City changed the organizational concept as they spread throughout the territory. Not only did the design and architecture of the first Relief Society hall mimic that of Nauvoo’s red brick store, but the religious authority and autonomy also associated with the Nauvoo Relief Society was made manifest. (Appendix, fig. 3.2)

The dedication of the second Kaysville Relief Society hall also demonstrated this sense of permanence. The initial building, used for meetings and storage, had been destroyed by wind sometime between 1873 and 1875. When a second hall was constructed and dedicated in 1876, Daniel H. Wells remarked: “The kingdom of God, like any other kingdom, requires space, territory, and people to be subjects of it. Building, manufacturing, agriculture etc., are just as much needed in it, as in any other kingdom.” Wells observed that the expansion of Latter-day Saints across the western territory and the development of their communities fulfilled prophesy. The Beaver Relief Society hall, constructed in 1896, was made of local pink stone, or tuff. The tuff signaled a sense of permanence to an evolving community much as the Relief Society provided stability within the community with their

30 Daniel H. Wells said: “The accomplishment of these purposes requires determination, skill, application and perseverance. In carrying out some of these purposes women are indispensable.” “Report of the Dedication of the Kaysville Relief Society House, Nov. 12, 1876,” 149. According to economic historian Leonard Arrington, “Making the waste places blossom as the rose, and the earth to yield abundantly of its diverse fruits, was more than an economic necessity; it was a form of religious worship.” Leonard J. Arrington, “The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women,” Western Humanities Review 9 (Spring 1955): 152.
31 According to the National Park Service, the pink rock came from a rock quarry about four miles east of Beaver in a side canyon of the Beaver River, discovered in 1881. Previously local builders used black lava rock in nearby hills. The pink rock was softer, allowing masons to display lovely tooling on their facades.” National Register of Historic Places Inventory–Nomination Form, “Historic Resources of Beaver (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties)” (United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, August 4, 1982), 6, http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NRHP/Text/64000859.pdf.
benevolent and refinement efforts.\textsuperscript{32} (Appendix, fig. 3.7) The Kaysville and Beaver Relief Society halls represented a sense of permanence in the vast nineteenth-century Utah desert. In addition to a sense of permanence, Relief Society women developed refinement in their building projects, exhibiting a sense of both décor and decorum with architectural details. The construction of “genteel” buildings and structures illustrated what Bushman described as outward signs of inward grace, or the conscious creation of “polite society.”\textsuperscript{33}

The construction or use of building space by women’s groups was not new in the nineteenth century. Benevolent societies and female religious organizations had participated in the work of moral reform since the 1790s.\textsuperscript{34} By the 1860s, many were organizing homes and institutions for the poor and disadvantaged citizens.\textsuperscript{35} Programs to assist orphans, widows, working women, the elderly, and the sick and infirm illustrated benevolent efforts at the same time they cleaned up city streets of vagrants and created a more respectable urban environment.\textsuperscript{36} Other women’s groups worked to preserve historic homes in the name of Victorian domesticity.\textsuperscript{37} These efforts, according to Bushman’s refinement thesis, revealed an effort to expand middle class gentility and to clean up and morally purify urban areas.\textsuperscript{38}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{32} According to the Utah State Historical Society, “Stone, as a material, represented Beaver’s evolution into a permanent settlement, as did the establishment of institutions like the relief society.” Utah State Historical Society, “Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse” (Historic Preservation Research Office, October 18, 1983), 2.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{33} Bushman, \textit{The Refinement of America}, xii.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{34} Ginzberg, \textit{Women and the Work of Benevolence}, 37.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{35} A nineteenth-century history of the city of Detroit lists several female benevolent associations’ building efforts including the Women’s Hospital and Foundlings’ Home, Home of the Friendless, Thompson Home for Old Ladies, Convent of the Good Shepherd, Working Woman’s Home, and Little Sisters’ Home for the Aged Poor. Silas Farmer, \textit{The History of Detroit and Michigan, or the Metropolis Illustrated, A Chronological Cyclopaedia of the Past and Present} (Detroit: Silas Farmer, 1884), 659-665.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{36} See Pascoe, \textit{Relations of Rescue}.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{37} Patricia West, \textit{Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums} (Washington [D.C.]: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{38} “A patchwork genteel world came to overlay the gruff irregularities of the actual city.” Bushman, \textit{The Refinement of America}, 166.
\end{flushleft}
\end{footnotesize}
The construction and architecture of churches also demonstrated Bushman’s refinement argument. The transition from utilitarian and consciously unadorned Puritan and Quaker meeting houses to more ostentatious décor and design is seen throughout the history of the United States, revealing a redefinition of ideology and religious practice across the diversity of denominations.\(^{39}\) According to historian Gretchen Townsend Buggeln, early American church buildings were noted as signs of civilization and progress: “At a time particularly tuned to growth and building, fine architecture was an important, distinguishable ornament of a community.”\(^{40}\) Some churches used their architecture to create a public identity of respectability.\(^{41}\) Towers, steeples, stained glass windows, decorative altars and pulpits, all pointed to decorum and refinement. For example, the Torrey, Utah, meetinghouse and school was constructed of logs in the Greek revival style, utilizing local material to present popular classical architecture.\(^{42}\) (Appendix, fig. 3.8)


\(^{40}\) Buggeln cited Congregationalist Timothy Dwight, who believed “people will necessarily see the advantage of more tasteful objects and will wish to emulate the possessors of such things, not as mere consumers of objects but as owners of taste, and hence, morality.” Gretchen Townsend Buggeln, \textit{Temples of Grace: The Material Transformation of Connecticut’s Churches, 1790-1840} (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2003), 171, 173, 177.

\(^{41}\) The creation of a mainstream, white, middle class, Protestant religious space gave some marginal religious groups a norm to emulate. For example, some Jewish congregations sought to Americanize by changing the architectural format of their synagogues. The addition of space for women, the removal of the choir, and modernized features allowed such reform and conservative groups to feel more “American” at the same time they altered their actual worship format. Karla Goldman, \textit{Beyond the Synagogue Gallery: Finding a Place for Women in American Judaism} (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000); Etan Diamond, \textit{And I Will Dwell in Their Midst: Orthodox Jews in Suburbia} (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Leon A. Jick, \textit{The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870} (Hanover, N.H: Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, 1976).

\(^{42}\) Over each of the symmetrically-placed windows is a hybrid lintel/pedimented window head. A square bell tower covered with planks with a truncated hip roof and flared eaves is on the tall, steeply-pitched hip roof. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “National Register of Historic Places, Torrey Log Church/Schoolhouse” (National Park Services, May 14, 1993), 2.
If the planning and construction of a building by and for a religious women’s group suggested a degree of permanence, the ceremonies surrounding laying cornerstones conveyed legitimacy. An elaborate cornerstone ceremony for the Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward Relief Society on 13 November 1868 and the subsequent dedication in August 1869 aroused public awareness as the women adhered to classical tradition, illustrating the refinement associated with a genteel society. Male leaders provided priesthood oversight, but the women planned and carried out the event on their own terms. At the cornerstone ceremony for the first Relief Society hall, the women formed a procession and marched to the location. They gathered in precision around the foundation while Kimball ceremoniously laid the cornerstone. Both Kimball and Snow then addressed the congregation. Kimball described being present at cornerstone ceremonies for the Kirtland Temple in Ohio, the Nauvoo Temple in Illinois, and the Salt Lake Temple then under construction. The pageantry of the event gave the women credibility and authority and soon gave way to other building efforts as Relief Societies were organized throughout the Territory. The formality of cornerstone and building dedications followed a long practice of public ceremony and ritual intended to produce both respect and consecration. According to Buggeln, “dedication and consecration sermons reveal attitudes toward church buildings…. Consecration turned the building into a sacred house of God; the congregation asked God to be always present there

43 At the laying of the cornerstone of the first Relief Society hall on 13 November 1868, Sarah Kimball remarked: “A silver trowel and mallet were furnished me by a master mason, and surrounded by an assemblage of people I had the honor of laying the corner stone of the first Relief society building in this dispensation.” Emmeline B. Wells, “A Grand and Noble Woman,” Deseret News, December 10, 1898, 13. Kimball drew upon her own history of the Nauvoo Relief Society—also originating in a Masonic Hall—to provide legitimacy to her new hall. Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” 30. See also Sarah M. Kimball, “Salt Lake City, 13th November 1868,” Woman’s Exponent 14:2 (15 June 1885): 14-15.

44 Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, “Relief Society Minute Books” (Church History Library, v. 1875 1869), 12 November 1868.
and committed itself to keeping the building holy.45 By setting the building apart from any other dwelling or public space, these women were laying out the metes and bounds. The fact that this was a women’s building made the event and effort especially significant.

The Relief Society adapted space as needed.46 Initially, pioneer Utah architectural trends were limited to utilitarian design, drawing upon natural resources and community construction abilities. After the tenuous initial arrival in the Utah Territory and the effort to build up a functioning settlement, more attention turned to fine detail. The introduction of stone quarries and brick kilns in Utah in the 1860s led to more advanced architectural styles.47 For example, the discovery of local soft pink rock in Beaver facilitated the construction of a Relief Society hall built of the material, with careful tooling on the façade.48 (Appendix, fig. 3.7) Other Relief Society halls reflected their environment. The Washington Relief Society hall, completed in 1875, was built on a black lava rock foundation laid in a clay sand mortar, standard materials in the southern Utah desert.49 (Appendix, fig. 3.9)

Once settled, women especially worked to refine their environment, emulating the culture of the East. Bushman argued that material artifacts, including architecture, home décor, dress, and other pieces, illustrated class standing. Emulation of middle class material

45 Buggeln, Temples of Grace, 133.
46 Historian Jeanne Halgren Kilde notes that “‘Scholars of religion need to continue to read religious buildings as evidence of changing religious life. For though it is tempting to see a church building as a symbol of an eternal, nonmutable presence, the reality is that human-made churches incorporate and reflect timely concerns born of the urban contexts in which they have been erected.’” Jeanne Halgren Kilde, “Urbanization and Transformations in Religious Mission and Architecture,” U.S. Catholic Historian 22, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 32.
48 “Many pink rock buildings display lovely tooling on their facades, and it is even possible to identify some masons by their chisel patterns.” National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, “Historic Resources of Beaver,” 6; Utah State Historical Society, “Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse.”
allowed lower classes to bridge the gap. Eliza R. Snow commented that Mormon women in Utah considered “ourselves among the finest women in the world, and aim to compete with our sisters elsewhere in every pursuit and every branch.” Building design shifted from the vernacular to the more popular patterns in the eastern U.S. of Greek Revival and High Victorian. Greek Revival styles called for additions to the typically symmetrical, low-gabled rectangular buildings, adding such characteristics as molded cornices. Relief Society halls represented this shift from vernacular architecture to a more high-brow design. For example, the Washington Relief Society Hall illustrated the use of adobe, “a serviceable, economic and easily available building material,” but added elements such as molded cornices. Relief Society halls represented this shift from vernacular architecture to a more high-brow design. For example, the Washington Relief Society Hall illustrated the use of adobe, “a serviceable, economic and easily available building material,” but added elements such as molded cornices. Relief Society halls represented this shift from vernacular architecture to a more high-brow design. For example, the Washington Relief Society Hall illustrated the use of adobe, “a serviceable, economic and easily available building material,” but added elements such as molded cornices.

52 Relief Society halls represented this shift from vernacular architecture to a more high-brow design. For example, the Washington Relief Society Hall illustrated the use of adobe, “a serviceable, economic and easily available building material,” but added elements such as molded cornices. Relief Society halls represented this shift from vernacular architecture to a more high-brow design. For example, the Washington Relief Society Hall illustrated the use of adobe, “a serviceable, economic and easily available building material,” but added elements such as molded cornices.

53 (Appendix, fig. 3.9) The Beaver East Relief Society hall was built by the Beeson family, British brick masons. They employed architectural details including a gable facing the street in the main façade, pointed-arched windows and door, stained white mortar joints with Flemish bond, and raised bead, common British techniques. (Appendix, fig. 3.10) Such classical architectural elements added to their stone permanence with an aura of authority, drawing upon another type of ancient past popular in American architecture following the Revolutionary period. The effort to emulate classic sources illustrated material refinement.

Later Relief Society halls incorporated other popular high Victorian architectural details. The inclusion of medieval architectural details followed national trends from 1850 to

50 Bushman, The Refinement of America, 406.
51 Mrs. Frank Leslie, California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate. (April, May, June, 1877) (G. W. Carleton & Company, 1877), 79.
52 See Thomas Carter and Peter Goss, Utah’s Historic Architecture, 1847-1940 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Graduate School of Architecture and Utah State Historical Society, 1991).
54 Utah State Historical Society, “Beaver Relief Society Meetinghouse,” 2.
1900. Nineteenth-century culture embraced Romantic details as seen in Gothic and Romanesque-revival architecture.\textsuperscript{55} The Weber Stake Relief Society hall presented an excellent example of Victorian Gothic architecture with a prominent steeply-pitched gable roof and three pointed arched windows in the principle façade, highlighted with low relief brick arches.\textsuperscript{56} (Appendix, fig. 3.11) The Relief Society hall built in Deseret, Millard County, in 1906, included a gable roof, cornice returns, Queen Anne detailing, lathe-turned columns with spindled brackets, and a transom over the door.\textsuperscript{57} (Appendix, fig. 3.12) The Santa Clara Relief Society hall in Washington County was completed in 1908 and included a unique masonry false front with a round top to conceal the gable.\textsuperscript{58} (Appendix, fig. 3.13) Such rich details were certainly not a part of Sarah Kimball’s initial vision of a utilitarian building for her ward Relief Society hall, though she did name her hall a “temple.”\textsuperscript{59} Rather, these elaborate architectural details could turn a small, dilapidated frontier town into an upscale urban center simply by using popular architectural style.

Another means by which Relief Society halls presented a sense of decorum was through civic activity. Local churches developed social programs outside of traditional worship creating space as a community meeting place.\textsuperscript{60} Relief Society halls encompassed both religious discussion and secular activity with work meetings where quilts, rugs, and


\textsuperscript{59} Sarah M. Kimball, “Salt Lake City, 13th November, 1868,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 14, no. 2 (June 15, 1885): 14.

\textsuperscript{60} Kilde, \textit{Sacred Power, Sacred Space}, 158.
other homemade articles were created. Bazaars, parties, cultural and civic events, and classes occurred within the walls of these buildings, all arranged, coordinated, and planned by women.  

Emmeline Wells described the Gunnison Relief Society hall as “a good illustration of the executive ability women have shown who have managed the various practical enterprises that has made this great organization such a success financially.” (Appendix, fig. 3.14) Relief Society women contributed to the overall well-being of their communities as proper nineteenth-century women.

The sense of permanence and decorum encapsulated in the Relief Society halls and granaries instilled a sense of pride in the women’s organizations. Emmeline Wells described the Brigham City Relief Society granary as the best in the Territory, “and is such a large and substantial structure that it is a source of laudable pride to the women of the society everywhere.” (Appendix, fig. 3.15) Wells also described the laudable St. George Relief Society hall as a “creditable building,” indicating community value and prestige. Such building efforts illustrated both rural and western efforts to refine and compete with their urbanized, eastern counterparts. Nineteenth-century Relief Society halls communicated both institutional permanence and civic refinement.

---

61 Sarah Granger Kimball, president of the Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward Relief Society, memorialized the purpose of Relief Society, not only to “feed the hungry and clothe the needy, but to foster, to practice, and to encourage home manufacture, with habits of economy.” She commented on the sense of autonomy granted to the women: “they have allowed us to be, what we think we should be, coworkers with them in this labor of love and duty.” Salt Lake Fifteenth Ward Relief Society, “Relief Society Annual Message, 1873,” 3, LDS Church History Library.


63 Ibid., 23.

64 The building included a large hall and stage, accommodating 150 people in the audience. Ibid., 72.

65 Buggeln, Temples of Grace, 58–62.
Another form of refinement was the historic house movement, popular at the same
time as the surge and decline of the Relief Society building effort.66 The Mount Vernon
Ladies’ Association (MVLA) provided groundwork for the late nineteenth-century
movement toward nostalgia and romanticizing the past. The movement continued with the
Ladies of the Hermitage Association, who based their preservation efforts of Andrew
Jackson’s Hermitage on the pattern of the very successful MVLA.67 Other women’s groups
followed.68 The Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of Utah Pioneers,
and other organizations followed with movements to preserve historic buildings, place
historic markers, and commemorate historic locations.

The historic house movement was a natural location for female public activity.
Stemming from the Victorian cult of domesticity, protection and preservation of the home
proved a natural step for public history work.69 The MVLA and the Ladies of the Hermitage
Association provided opportunities for women to enter a public domain previously
restricted to the male market. Historic preservation also allowed women to disengender
masculine spaces.70 They learned how to obtain organizational charters, to claim real estate,
and to own, care for, restore, and preserve historic properties, as well as to showcase them to

67 Mary C. Dorris, Preservation of the Hermitage, 1889-1915; Annals, History, and Stories ([Nashville: Smith & Lamar,
1915).
68 Helen Pitts Douglass, second wife of Frederick Douglass and influential Caucasian reformer in her own
right, worked to preserve the home and memory of her abolitionist-women’s rights activist husband. She rallied
support among their wide-reaching circle of friends, then turned to the newly-formed National Association of
Negro Women. These groups worked to preserve the Frederick Douglass home in Washington, D.C., calling it
the “black Mount Vernon.” Barbara J. Howe, “Women in the Nineteenth-Century Preservation Movement,” in
Restoring Women’s History Through Historic Preservation, ed. Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman (Baltimore:
Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 35.
70 The women of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, for example, restored
Williamsburg’s powder magazine and used the location for afternoon teas and soirees, thus reclaiming powerful
an interested public. They worked to fundraise and market their intent. Their history work
placed them in the marketplace and paved the way for later public ventures with progressive
reform houses, such as Jane Addams’s Hull House and settlement houses for immigrants.

Mormon women also worked to preserve their buildings as a significant marker of
their past. In 1993, the Santa Clara Relief Society claimed their hall was the oldest remaining
LDS building in the pioneer community. (Appendix, fig. 3.13) The building housed Sunday
School, Primary, and Mutual Improvement Association classes for youth, as well as a school,
clinic, hospital and post office. Historians of Deseret, Utah, proudly hailed their Relief
Society hall as the “oldest remaining LDS church building in the community” and drew
upon its space for various reasons; when the church house burned in 1929, the Relief Society
Hall was used for Sunday church services for several years. The building was used by the
school after a fire as well as by the Boy Scouts, an upholstery business, the Deseret Irrigation
Company, and the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. (Appendix, fig. 3.12) The Richfield Second
Ward Relief Society Hall was the natural gathering place for such historically-minded
organizations as the Sons and Daughters of Indian War Veterans. (Appendix, fig. 3.16)
Over time, these halls have come to designate and house history themselves.

“That the Society might proceed to business”—Female Autonomy

Joseph Smith firmly emphasized the concept of female autonomy. He encouraged
the leadership of his wife, Emma Smith, as Relief Society president, with her two counselors.

Society Hall,” 5. The Laketown Relief Society hall is also billed as the oldest public building in this town in Rich
Society Hall,” 8.
73 “Sons and Daughters of Indian War Veterans,” Richfield Reaper, July 9, 1925.
He visited the Relief Society six times, commenting on religion and allowing the women space to administer their organization and charitable activity. The women were entirely responsible for the collection and distribution of funds and donations. Smith taught that their object was “to supply the poor with money—provisions, cloathes, old cloathes &c. that it was wisdom to keep all the money we could, for the purchase of materials to do with.”

Often after his religious teaching, Smith proposed that the men present “withdraw, that the Society might proceed to business.” Women experienced this same vein of autonomy in Utah with the reorganization of the Relief Society. The construction and use of Relief Society halls, granaries, cooperative stores, and silk factories furnished the basis for Relief Society female economic activity and overall autonomy.

Analysis of Relief Society halls and granaries reveals much about late nineteenth-century women’s economic activity in Mormon Utah Territory. The ever-innovative Sarah Kimball originated the idea to construct a hall in 1868. “The wheels of progress have been permitted to run until they have brought us to a more extended field of useful labor for female minds and hands,” she said in November of that year. It was an auspicious time for Mormons in their western territory. As they escaped the political and religious persecution in Missouri and Illinois to practice their religion freely in the unsettled West, Latter-day Saints thrived in their communities. For roughly two decades until 1869, they experienced, for the most part, economic and political isolation. With the arrival of the transcontinental railroad just north of Salt Lake City in May, however, the insular economy of the Territory and the Mormon culture changed drastically, allowing for singular economic opportunities for

74 Derr and Madsen, “‘Something Better’ for the Sisters.”
75 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 29 March 1842, 21.
76 Ibid., 30 March 1842, 23.
women. Historian Leonard Arrington surmised that the religious, economic, and agricultural climate of nineteenth-century Utah allowed women to act more independently than their female counterparts due to LDS family structure and settlement patterns.

The new Fifteenth Ward Relief Society building reflected a particular economic environment. The design, funding, construction, and use of the hall were all administered by women. The minutes recorded that when Mr. Barlow “kindly offered to donate the land—but that while the committee gratefully accepted his good will they preferred paying for it—that the first payment of fifty dollars had been made.” Snow’s dedicatory poem highlighted this female financial effort: “And here may thought and speech be free / Instruction to impart, / Commercially and financially— / In science and in art.”

Besides constructing buildings, Relief Society women demonstrated autonomy by finding ways to establish their own space. Location inferred autonomy in the sense that the women owned their own real estate and made their own decisions about how to use it. Some Societies utilized other buildings for their halls. The Vernal School District built a brick school house in 1895. After only two years, trustees decided that the location was too far for

---

77 Leonard Arrington suggested that the completion of the transcontinental railroad posed three threats to Utah Mormons: exploitation of local mines, increased commercial intercourse, and involvement of Mormons in national exchange, all of which would alter the previous Mormon theocracy. The arrival of the railroad facilitated a division of gendered labor, geographic specialization, greater mobility of capital and labor, growth of national monopolies, and the transformation of religious, political, and economic ideologies. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 234-235.

78 According to Arrington, the practice of polygamy encouraged women to act independently to manage her own home and children without the undivided support of a husband. Settlement in towns rather than isolated farms and ranches suggested the influence of the Church in defining towns’ social, political, and cultural practices. As well, the variety of nationalities among settlers due to Mormon missionary efforts influenced the unique economic situation in Utah. Leonard J. Arrington, “Rural Life Among Nineteenth-Century Mormons: The Woman’s Experience,” *Agricultural History* 58, no. 3 (July 1984): 240; Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*.


children from the east side of town to walk, and the Vernal Relief Society moved in. The building was sold to the LDS church in 1913 for fifty dollars.\textsuperscript{81} The building is no longer in use. (Appendix, fig. 3.17) The Torrey Relief Society utilized their ward meeting house, a one-room log structure, as their Relief Society hall.\textsuperscript{82} (Appendix, fig. 3.8) Many Relief Societies constructed their own granaries, while others rented space or used their husbands’ grain vaults.\textsuperscript{83} The creative use of space demonstrated the women’s resourcefulness, skills which translated to acute business practices.

The Relief Society halls demonstrated an economic autonomy through such business enterprises as cooperative stores, granaries, and sericulture. Many Relief Society halls, in fact, also housed women’s cooperative stores. The cooperative movement, initiated by Brigham Young in 1867, promoted home manufacture and cooperative retail stores throughout Utah’s settlements. It was this home manufacturing movement that precipitated the reorganization of the Relief Societies in Utah in 1867.\textsuperscript{84} By Arrington’s analysis, Young suggested that women work to “relieve the territory of the burden of supporting both unnecessary importation and unnecessary poverty.”\textsuperscript{85} President Young encouraged women


\textsuperscript{82} United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “National Register of Historic Places, Torrey Log Church/Schoolhouse.”

\textsuperscript{83} See Jessie L. Embry, “Relief Society Grain Storage Program, 1876-1940” (MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974).

\textsuperscript{84} At the semi-annual conference on 8 October 1867, Brigham Young suggested that “if ladies would get up societies by which they could promote the home labor of their sex, they would do what was well-pleasing in the sight of heaven. He wanted the young ladies to learn everything that was useful in the domestic circle.” Historian’s Office, \textit{Journal History}, vol. 68, 1867, 8 October 1867, 2.

\textsuperscript{85} Arrington, \textit{Great Basin Kingdom}, 252. In a letter to the Relief Society dated 4 October 1876, Brigham Young asked the women to form associations “to start business in the capacity of disposing of homemade articles, such as are manufactured among ourselves, for the benefit of the Latter-day Saints; also to make a selection from among the sisters, members of this association, to take charge and carry on this business on commission.
to work as bookkeepers, accountants, and storekeepers. Little did he know that such a recommendation would spur the women to become financially savvy and independent, out-producing some priesthood efforts. Women took matters into their own hands and soon initiated their own stores, selling products and produce gathered by Relief Society members. Such cooperative stores hedged Gentile competition according to Brigham Young’s economic policy of the 1860s. In addition, these stores empowered Relief Society members to become sharp business women and contribute to Utah’s economy.

The first Utah Relief Society hall had utilized the ground floor as the organization’s store in close imitation of Joseph Smith’s dry goods store in Nauvoo. (Appendix, figs. 3.2, 3.4) Blueprints included plans for shelves, counters, doors, showcases, and proper ventilation. At the cornerstone ceremony, Kimball stood on the building’s foundation and distinguished the “lower story to commerce and trade. I view this as a preliminary stepping stone to similar structures on a grand scale.” The entire building effort cost about $2,500. The store opened with $2,000 in stock and two women working as clerks. It took the

---

or by purchase.” Arrington, “The Economic Role of Pioneer Mormon Women,” 152; “A Woman’s Convention.”

86 At a meeting in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on 6 April 1869, Brigham Young stated: “The ladies can learn to keep books as well as the men; we have some few, already, who are just as good accountants as any of our brethren. Why not teach more to keep books and sell goods, and let them do this business, . . . and do something or other to beautify the earth and help to make it like the Garden of Eden?” Brigham Young, “Remarks,” Deseret News, May 26, 1869, 7.


89 Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, “Relief Society Minute Books,” Church History Library, 1869-1875.

90 Ibid., 12 November 1868.

women five years to pay off the building.\textsuperscript{92} The success of the Fifteenth Ward hall and store marked the beginning of grand scale of Relief Society enterprise.

Cooperative stores and millinery and tailoring establishments opened in Relief Society halls throughout the Territory.\textsuperscript{93} Shortly after the Fifteenth Ward Relief Society built their store, the Weber Relief Society opened a Co-op Mercantile and Millinery Institution on 24 May 1869. They reported a dividend of twenty percent after a year of business and operated successfully until 1880.\textsuperscript{94} The Manti Relief Society opened a store in a private home while they constructed a two-story oolite building. (Appendix, fig. 3.18) The two rooms on the main level were used for a store and a millinery shop. A local historian commented, “A striking peculiarity of the woman’s store is the absence of loafers.” Business continued for about fifteen years, when the Relief Society rented out the building, then eventually sold it.\textsuperscript{95} The Holden Relief Society built their store in the center of town.\textsuperscript{96} The Grantsville Relief Society store sold clothing, gloves, stockings, and overalls, all made by the women, with profits to assist the local poor. The Coalsville Relief Society opened a millinery and dressmaking store on 18 October 1882, centrally located on the corner of Main Street and Center Street.\textsuperscript{97} As encouraged by Young, the stores employed female clerks and managers.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{93} Hanson, \textit{The Relief Society: Its Meeting Halls, Granaries, Cooperative Stores and Its Impact on Nineteenth Century Utah}, 46.
\textsuperscript{94} Located in a house across from the tithing office, Annie Dyer Taylor directed the work. “Ladies Co-op Stores,” 157-158.
\textsuperscript{95} “Miscellaneous News Items,” in \textit{An Enduring Legacy}, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 3-6), 5; “Ladies Co-op Stores,” 156–157.
\textsuperscript{97} “Ladies Co-op Stores,” 117-118.
\textsuperscript{98} Young said, “If you cannot be satisfied with the selection of sisters from among yourselves to take charge, we will render you assistance by furnishing a competent man for the transaction of the financial matters of this
The success of satellite organizations throughout the territory prompted the opening of a centralized Woman’s Commission House in Salt Lake City in 1876 under the direction of the Relief Society.99 (Appendix, fig. 3.19) Following the organization of a Women’s Centennial Territorial Fair, prompted by the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, Brigham Young suggested that Eliza R. Snow and the Relief Society continue the collection of women’s work, this time to sell at a prime location downtown.100 Banners hanging in this business proudly stated such mottos as “Knowledge is Power,” “In Union is Strength,” and “Success to Industry.” Eliza R. Snow proudly stated that the object of this endeavor was “to encourage self reliance, and perfect independence of the outside world.” She continued: women “had as much interest as men in the prosperity of the territory, and their rights and privileges were equal.”101 The store’s stock was locally made and included woven fabrics, shawls, socks, cuffs, clothing hats, books, soap, butter, cheese, and eggs. According to a notice printed in the Woman’s Exponent, “the women of this Territory are making this almost unprecedented movement to consecrate their exertions in one grand enterprise to become self-sustaining, that they may free themselves as a people, as soon as possible, from the

---

100 Interestingly enough, American women amassed a large collection for the national exhibition in Philadelphia, but were not allowed exhibition space. In response, women built a hall for their displays. Utah women quickly gathered donations to exhibit, but could not raise the money to transport the artifacts. So they quickly set up their own territorial centennial exhibition at the Constitution Building, under the direction of Eliza R. Snow. Eliza R. Snow, “Women’s Centennial Territorial Fair,” Woman’s Exponent 4, no. 18 (February 15, 1876): 141; Relief Society, History of the Relief Society, 1842-1966 (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1966), 113–114.
101 The banners, “done in white on a blue ground,” hung prominently next to an American flag. Mrs. Frank Leslie, California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate. (April, May, June, 1877) (G. W. Carleton & Company, 1877), 78-79.
shackles of Babylon.”102 (Appendix, fig. 3.20) Eliza R. Snow managed the store.103 The store survived for several months with additional iterations in later years.

Relief Society women set up county-central stores in Ogden, Brigham City, Provo, Parawan, and St. George.104 According to a local history, the stores “succeeded for a time and at least sociologically it was a great success, for it gave the women who managed and the women who patronized the stores, a new sense of economic values.”105 Wells described the effort as a natural attribute for women: “it seems perfectly consistent that women should be able to arrange and carry out systematically and effectively plans of action which would operate successfully in business affairs. The many phases of woman’s household work require order, method, promptness and executive ability.”106 Stores allowed women to utilize domestic skills in a new entrepreneurial manner, in the name of Relief Society.

Not content to confine their efforts to small-time necessities, Mormon women moved on to granaries, demonstrating the foray of LDS women into an economic realm previously reserved for men. Brushing up against strict codes of gendered public and private spheres, Utah women also managed and financed the *Woman’s Exponent* (1872-1914), provided financial contributions to the Perpetual Emigration Fund and temple construction,

---

102 “Notice,” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 11 (November 1, 1876): 85.
106 Wells went on: “if women did not understand, by habit and intuition, the easiest, quickest and best modes of dispatch, they could never bring quiet, peace and harmony to their domestic habitation. How much careful study, thought and practice are brought into requisition by the complication of circumstances which every household develops.” Emmeline B. Wells, “Women as Manufacturers of Business,” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 12 (November 15, 1876): 89.
and encouraged medical school training for women as well as the administration of midwifery schools and the Deseret Hospital (1882-1894). After several invitations from Brigham Young to the priesthood men to store grain and prepare for times of famine, he turned to women. An 1876 call to Emmeline Wells to lead this grain-saving movement changed the economic ventures of the Relief Society once again. Wells soon published an editorial in the *Woman’s Exponent*, carefully defining the mission and calling upon the collective memory of the role of women as well as appealing to their ability to organize and act. She closed, expressing confidence in the abilities of the Relief Society: “The women of this Territory are capable of carrying out President Young’s counsel in this matter; … The sisters will have ample opportunity to prove their ability in financiering.” Through such ventures, Mormon women gained skills in accounting, fundraising, and administration.

Like other occasions, the Fifteenth Ward Relief Society, under the direction of Sarah Kimball, pioneered the grain-saving movement. Just a month after Wells published her editorial, Bishop Burton met with the Fifteenth Ward women to plan the construction of a granary. Men attended the meeting and offered their opinions about the best material for a state-of-the-art facility. Kimball oversaw the completion of a “fireproof granary, built of rock with tin roof, brick floor underlaid with concrete, double door, inside nicely finished

---

107 “The *Exponent* both signaled and supported the entry of Mormon women into the wider world of commerce, education, professional life, and political involvement that exploded with the decade of the 1870s.” Support of suffrage movements and sericulture also contributed to this sense of business acumen. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 106–113.
108 The Salt Lake City Eighth Ward bishop stated “as we had commenced storing grain he hoped that we would continue to persevere; he believed that the sisters would accomplish what the brethren had failed to do in storing grain.” E.B. Fletcher, “S.L. City, Feb. 14, 1877,” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 19 (March 1, 1877): 146.
110 Emmeline B. Wells, “Sisters Be in Earnest,” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 10 (October 15, 1876): 76.
111 Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, “Relief Society Minute Books,” 23 November 1876.
bin, that may be subdivided as circumstances may require.” The Seventeenth Ward Relief Society also built a rustic structure, constructed on a solid rock foundation, capable of holding twelve hundred bushels of wheat. “The Society has taken a deep interest in this matter, and liberally responded to the calls made upon them,” claimed President Mary Ann Hyde, a member of the original Nauvoo Relief Society and Utah granary strategist.

Grain storage led women to research, plan, and negotiate the grain market. According to historian Jessie Embry, “The women of the Church not only accepted the call to accumulate wheat, they set out to collect as much as they could. Although sometimes it was difficult to raise money to buy grain, they used their imagination to discover ways to amass more grain.” Relief Society women obtained wheat through donations, purchase, gleaning fields, and raising lots, and they bought, sold, traded, and loaned their storage. For example, the Relief Society of Mill Creek in Salt Lake County raised money to purchase grain by holding a “social party, which was conducted in Leap Year style, being managed especially by the young ladies,” according to an Exponent report. The Pleasant Grove Relief Society created a “purchasing committee” with plans to glean local fields at harvest time. Lucinda Houd of the Beaver Relief Society organized gleaners: “she gathered together a few kindred

---

112 “Home Affairs,” Woman’s Exponent 6, no. 9 (October 1, 1877): 69.
113 The Seventeenth Ward Relief Society was very proud of their efforts to maintain their budget at the same time they produced a sound storage unit. Ibid.
114 Embry, “Relief Society Grain Storage Program, 1876-1940,” 11.
116 The Pleasant Grove women combined business and domestic responsibilities with the grain-saving effort. “We have selected our purchasing committee and have on hand about sixty bushels of wheat and are making arrangements to secure more, if our Heavenly Father blesses us with a bountiful harvest the coming season, we will then try to buy up grain enough that our little ones may not cry for bread; and some of the beautiful mornings of next summer the sisters that have agreed to make a raid on the harvest fields and gather the golden heads of grain that the harvesters have dropped, will be showing by their presence there they are earnestly engaged in this great work.” F.E. Stuart, “Pleasant Grove, Feb. 18, 1877,” Woman’s Exponent 5, no. 19 (March 1, 1877): 150.
spirits, eight of them in all, and taking their lunch with them they went into the fields to glean. All through the heat and dust of that weary day they continued their labors until at nightfall, tired and footsore, but happy, they returned with their treasure, five grain sacks closely packed with heads of the precious wheat.” The Huntsville Relief Society incorporated the abilities of all skill levels in their economic grain endeavors: “The proceeds of our last working meeting will be turned into sheep and grain. We think it wise to provide working material for our elderly sisters, as many of them can spin and knit and are very willing to assist in whatever way they can.”

As with their halls, Relief Society women found varying degrees of male support in their grain-saving efforts. According to Daniel H. Wells, a presiding priesthood leader and husband of Emmeline Wells, the women’s mission of storing grain was “within the province and lawful sphere of the sisters’ Relief Societies. The women are just as much interested as the men are and their salvation and welfare are just as much concerned.” By 1883, some bishops began to doubt the women’s abilities for grain administration. Their concerns underestimating female business acumen reached Salt Lake City. The First Presidency responded with a circular letter to all bishops maintaining the women’s autonomous role in grain storage: “This wheat has been collected by the members of this society in the various wards at considerable trouble and they are the proper custodians thereof and responsible

---

117 Louisa W. Jones and Mary E. White, “Biographical Sketch: Sister Lucinda Houd,” Woman’s Exponent 31, no. 5–6 (August 1, 1902): 23.
119 Daniel H. Wells continued: “I like to see the sisters bear their proportion of the labors of the kingdom, that they may share in its blessings. Women are more susceptible of receiving the truth than men.” “Report of the Dedication of the Kaysville Relief Society House, Nov. 12, 1876,” 149.
therefor [sic.] to the parties from whom it has been obtained.” Such top-level priesthood support, reminiscent of Joseph Smith’s encouragement of female economy, encouraged the women to manage their own grain storage business.

Granary construction was often a joint effort between various groups. The Brigham City Relief Society granary was operated by the Relief Society but technically owned by the Brigham City Mercantile and Manufacturing Association, the local male-managed co-op. (Appendix, fig. 3.15) Local Primary children reportedly collected old glass to crush and mix with the mortar in hopes of discouraging mice from making holes in the walls. The women of Gunnison planned to build both a Relief Society hall and a granary in February 1877, working in the meanwhile to save grain where they could. (Appendix, fig. 3.14) The secretary reported to the Woman’s Exponent: “We feel, that while our husbands are toiling yearly to raise the ‘staff’ and necessaries of life, it is but consistent, that we should be as frugal and industrious as possible; that, far from being encumbrances, we may be a source of genuine comfort and strength unto them.” Some Relief Societies stored their collected wheat with their husbands’, while others used the ward tithing office. Regardless of location or financial status, the women gained both experience and insight into the nineteenth-century grain market.

120 “No Bishop has any right, because of his authority as a presiding officer in the ward, to take possession of this grain. It belongs to the societies who have collected it, and it is their province to dispose of it for the purpose of which it has been collected, and it should not be appropriated or disposed of by any Bishop for any other object.” John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, “To the Bishops of the Various Wards,” Woman’s Exponent 12, no. 4 (July 15, 1883): 23.


Sericulture, or silk production, was another important Relief Society effort illustrating female autonomy and independence from Eastern textile manufacture. As with cooperative stores and grain storage, Brigham Young encouraged Relief Society participation by purchasing lots for mulberry trees and space for the production of silk. The Relief Society developed the Deseret Silk Association to disseminate information and provide training across the Territory. Again, ward Relief Societies responded according to local resources. The Santa Clara Relief Society in Washington County purchased a lot and planted an orchard of mulberry trees. The women erected a two-storey adobe structure, reserving the upper room for silkworms. The ground level was divided into three sections, the middle of which included grain storage bins. In addition, by February 1877, the Pleasant Grove Relief Society owned three fenced city lots for mulberry tree cultivation. Nearly every local Relief Society had some form of silk production. According to historian Leonard Arrington, the operation of local silk factories, though not successful, allowed women to experiment and administer the sericulture effort.

Examination of Relief Society halls, stores, granaries, and silk factories revealed female autonomy through the administration and management of women’s business ventures. This autonomy, however, challenged some local priesthood leaders. At the Box Elder Stake Relief Society in 1877, Eliza R. Snow mentioned, “Sometimes I think we can do

126 Stuart, “Pleasant Grove, Feb. 18, 1877.”
127 Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, 254.
more than the brethren.” The Santa Clara Relief Society experienced tension with the bishop in the funding and planning of construction efforts for a new hall in 1906. (Appendix, fig. 3.13) The bishopric decided that the storage of wheat was no longer effective and that all Relief Society funds would be turned over to the bishop. The Huntington Relief Society leadership also struggled with their bishopric over building matters and ownership. In the process of discussion with local priesthood leaders, the women learned to negotiate as well as submit for the sake of unity. According to Jill Mulvay Derr and Janath Russell Cannon, the harmony achieved by Relief Society and priesthood reflected Joseph Smith’s counsel in Nauvoo and overrode any need for female autonomy.

Another challenge for local Relief Society arose with the shift to centralized coordination in Salt Lake City. While ward and stake Societies had their own halls, general officers in Salt Lake rented their office space. With the promise of property on which to build their own building from church president Lorenzo Snow in 1900, general Relief Society president Zina Young rolled out a church-wide fundraising campaign. Women of the Deseret Relief Society in Millard County, for example, contributed funds for their own updated hall to the building of the new central Relief Society building in Salt Lake City as requested. Despite this initial setback, the Deseret women eventually built their hall, raising

---

130 “Box Elder Stake Relief Society Minutes,” 1884 1875, 6 November 1877, LDS Church History Library; cited in Mulvay [Derr], “Eliza R. Snow and the Woman Question,” 5.
132 Cannon and Derr, 136-143.
133 Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 174–175.
the total cost of $743.65 for materials.134 (Appendix, fig. 3.12) In 1907, however, the First Presidency deeded the promised Relief Society lot in Salt Lake to the Presiding Bishop and agreed to incorporate the women’s office in a new Bishop’s Building. Despite disappointment over losing their own designated space, the Relief Society complied. In 1947, once again Salt Lake stymied local efforts when general president Belle Spafford asked each Relief Society member to contribute five dollars and each stake Relief Society to donate half of one year’s funds to the construction of a new general Relief Society building.135

Growth in membership also presented challenges. When the Nephi Ward was divided into two in 1890, the original Relief Society hall was sold so that each ward might have its own hall.136 (Appendix, fig. 3.21) Similarly, when the Beaver Ward split in 1905, the Relief Society was divided into two. Both societies left their shared hall, built in 1896, and constructed their own.137 (Appendix, figs. 3.7, 3.10) The Weber Stake Relief Society hall, constructed in 1902, faced administrative challenges when the stake was divided into three stakes in 1908.138 (Appendix, fig. 3.11) By 1924, Relief Society halls were abandoned during the consolidation of ward buildings.139

134 The Deseret Relief Society built their original adobe hall (no longer existing) in 1878 under the direction of President Eliza Whicker. United States Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, “Deseret Relief Society Hall,” 7.
Even with challenges, Relief Society halls, granaries, and cooperative stores constituted a source for nineteenth-century female autonomy, albeit temporary. Relief Society economic ventures, including cooperative stores, granaries, and silk factories, provided new opportunities for women. The women planned, marketed, administered, and worked, gainfully, in their communities. Arrington claimed that “the Relief Society was indispensable in implementing Mormon economic policy during the last third of the nineteenth century.”

Utah Relief Societies followed Joseph Smith’s mandate from Nauvoo to “proceed with business,” expanding his vision in a way that was virtually impossible in an earlier time and place. As Sarah Cleveland responded to Smith’s call in March 1842, “they had put their shoulder to the wheel and exhorted them to do with their might—we have entered into this work in the name of the Lord and let us boldly go forward.”

“In the name of God”—Spiritual Component of Work

When the Relief Society originated in Nauvoo in 1842, the fledgling women’s organization restored an ancient female order and a location of religious authority. Under this collectivity, with prophetic guidance, the women participated in religious ritual associated with the temple in a location beyond the bounds of the Relief Society. Smith was very clear that the key he presented to the women in Nauvoo was “in the name of

---

142 Joseph Smith taught the women in the Nauvoo Relief Society that that they were part of “the order which God has established. He then turned administrative keys to the women to lead the organization. Ibid., 19 April 1842, 30; Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 27, 28, 39–43. Counselor Sarah Cleveland reminded early Relief Society members that their organization was “organiz’d after the order of heaven.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 19 April 1842, 30. See also Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Co, 1992), 27, 28, 39-43.
143 See Madsen, “Mormon Women and the Temple: Toward a New Understanding.”
The women spiritualized the concept of work. They found religious implications in the idea of Relief Society service. Counselor Sarah Cleveland remarked that “we have entered into this work in the name of the Lord let us boldly go forward.” This religious charge directed their building and economic efforts.

The Fifteenth Ward Relief Society hall demonstrated this spiritual component. The female space enabled woman, according to Kimball, to “exercise all her God-given powers and faculties in the manner best calculated to strengthen, and develop, and perfect her.” According to the Fifteenth Ward Relief Society minutes, the dedicatory hymn, penned by Eliza R. Snow, illustrated this autonomy as the women petitioned for divine approval and manifestation. Such a paean served to consecrate the edifice for the purpose of union, welfare, and religious instruction: “We dedicate this House to Thee, / As love and labor’s bower; / May Zion’s welfare ever be / Its ruling motive power.” The divine appeal included intellectual, social, economic, and spiritual endowments for the women’s work. The poem, cornerstone ceremony, and dedication demonstrated the means by which Relief Society women acted independently to directly connect with the divine rather than through a male priesthood intermediary. (Appendix, fig. 3.4)

Examination of Relief Society halls also reveals an important working relationship between the Relief Society and the priesthood. The minutes record that when the Fifteenth Ward planned the construction of their building, Bishop Burton donated fifty dollars. He “spoke on the principle of making a commencement and persevering until the object was

---

144 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40.
145 Ibid., 30 March 1842, 24.
147 Derr and Davidson, Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry, 795–796.
The dedicatory prayer for the Relief Society building in Kaysville on 12 November 1877 also demonstrated priesthood support of this female effort. The prayer, offered by John Taylor, president of the Church after Brigham Young’s death, resembled the dedication of a temple. Taylor petitioned God for protection over the building and “the ground on which it stands we dedicate unto the Lord of Hosts, to be holy unto thee.” Taylor prayed that “when thine handmaids shall meet to perform any duty or office, may thy spirit be with them, to direct, enlighten, and assist them, and whatever office or calling they shall undertake, we ask, O God, that their acts and sayings may be such as God and angels will approve.” In his remarks at the Kaysville services, Daniel H. Wells stated that the women of the Relief Society “are a power in Israel, and a great one, too.” This sense of female religious authority, supported by priesthood leadership, allowed women to expand the breadth and depth of their organization.

A connection to an ancient religious past influenced the women in the granary movement. In an introductory editorial explaining the mission, Emmeline B. Wells connected past and present: “It is no doubt the best investment of means that could possibly be made, for if the prophets of the Scriptures, both ancient and modern, and of Joseph Smith are to be fulfilled, which the Latter-day Saints profess to believe, . . . and if the women of this Territory will be wise, and hearken to the counsel given to them now, there is no doubt that the result will be an eminent success.” The women drew upon this religious

148 Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, “Relief Society Minute Books,” 14 August 1868.
149 Daniel H. Wells went on to say “The sisters are quite a power in the wards in assisting our bishops. Some of our city bishops say they would not know what to do, now, without the aid and assistance of the sisters in looking after the poor, and other duties.” “Report of the Dedication of the Kaysville Relief Society House, Nov. 12, 1876,” 149.
150 Wells, “Sisters Be in Earnest,” 76.
mission and an ancient past to venture into a new enterprise. In an editorial a month later, Wells historicized the traditional gender roles with the memory of strong ancient women: “It is argued by men that ancient history proves woman’s inferiority and servile state, in the days when God had His prophets upon the earth; but do not the Scriptures certify woman to have been not only queen and prophetess, but Judge in Israel, as witness Deborah in the fourth chapter of Judges. Is there then anything so inconsistent in women building storehouses and filling them with grain?”

Wells used memory in her appeal to women as an underpinning to act.

At least one Relief Society perceived the historical use of a strong religious past to inform their present identity. Mary Furguson reported that the Spanish Fork Relief Society was eager to carry out their part in the grain storage effort:

> knowing assuredly that famine and pestilence will desolate the land, and that as Joseph was sold and banished from his home and kindred to bring about the purposes of God in saving his brethren and kindred, so have the Latter-day Saints, even the seed and royal blood of Joseph, been banished from their homes, friends and inheritances to work out the divine purposes of God, who maketh even the wrath of men to praise Him; and as Joseph filled the granaries of Egypt, so may we fill the granaries of Utah; thereby proving that we are noble daughters of a noble Sire.

The grain storage movement, in addition to the construction of halls across the territory, gave women theological rational to build upon their history to meet current challenges.

**Abandoned—An Unusable Past**

Like the Nauvoo red brick store, Relief Society halls, cooperative stores, and granaries thrived for a time. These building efforts highlighted Mormon women’s refinement

---

151 Emmeline B. Wells, “Be Wise and Hearken to Counsel,” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 11 (November 1, 1876): 84.

and economic and organizational autonomy in their own space. Male priesthood leadership opposition, membership growth, and the subsequent transition to coordinated supervision on a centralized rather than a local level diminished Relief Society building and economic ventures. As well, the development of manufacture and transportation, spurred by the installment of mail-order catalogs, spurred a new marketplace. The loss of these buildings, and of their memory, presents a case of unusable, abandoned past.

Relief Society building construction and commemoration shifted over the turn of the century, an important transition period as Utah gained statehood. Part of that transition included the abandonment of polygamy in 1890, often associated with its beginnings in Nauvoo. Instead of remembering the Nauvoo period, the Relief Society strove to remember a more recent, Americanized, Utah past. The Weber Stake Relief Society celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1902 with the construction of a new stake Relief Society hall in Ogden. (Appendix, fig. 3.11) The dedication proudly marked the organization of the first stake Relief Society created under the direction of Brigham Young in 1877. The stake hall commemorated a newer past, distancing these modern, Americanized women from an embarrassing Nauvoo past, characterized by polygamy and no longer usable in the twentieth century. Such selective use of the past demonstrated what historian Kathleen Flake termed as “re-placing memory,” or “a collective act of remembering that helped members forget a past they could not carry with them into the future.” This more recent, Americanized past situated women in a more marginalized, restrictive place than had been afforded them on the

progressive frontier. These lieux de mémoire, or physical pieces of the past, linked readily to the present, especially with changing needs at the turn of the twentieth century.

The casualty of Relief Society granaries and halls illustrates another selective use, or loss, of memory—or the un-useable past. While various records indicate the construction of around 140 Relief Society halls in Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, Mexico, and Canada, only twenty-five remain extant today, all in various stages of use and disrepair. When ventures such as sericulture, grain storage, and cooperatives proved unprofitable, buildings were either used for other purposes, sold, or abandoned. The Santaquin Relief Society hall, for example, toppled to the ground in 1963. A marker erected by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers in 1964 commemorated the hall with a description of the red adobe brick building and its furnishings. The Santaquin building was remembered. Countless others were not.

Many abandoned buildings serve as a testament to a sense of lost autonomy. As ward church buildings expanded, they consolidated all ward auxiliary programs under one

---

156 Sources culled from Carter, Heart Throbs of the West; Daughters of Utah Pioneers, ed., An Enduring Legacy, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1978); Kate B. Carter, Our Pioneer Heritage, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1958); Kate B. Carter, Treasures of Pioneer History, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1952); Relief Society, A Centenary of Relief Society, 1842-1942 (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1942); and the Woman’s Exponent.

157 The marker reads: “In 1882, on this site, a Relief Society building was erected under the leadership of Elizabeth J. Stickney, President. It was a one room structure, 20 x 30 feet in size, built of red clay brick made by Joseph Chatwin. The interior was furnished with homemade carpet, a pot belly stove, chairs and benches made of native lumber, an organ and a small table. At one end was a stage with curtains. July 10, 1942, the building was sold to the city for a public library and was later known as the civic center. It toppled to the ground in May, 1963.” “First Relief Society Hall - Santaquin, Utah,” geocache, Waymarking.com, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM1NQV_First_Relief_Society_Hall.

158 Several scholars have examined the sense of loss with empty buildings as a testament to the past. Judith Modell’s study of the closure of steel works in Homestead, Pennsylvania, revealed a great sense of loss for townsmen whose lives revolved around the factories. “To see it grow empty and silent must have struck residents of the town with terrible force.” Judith Schachter Modell, A Town Without Steel: Envisioning Homestead (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), 3, 5. Similarly, Thomas Sugrue’s research on the burned-out and boarded-up neighborhoods of Detroit demonstrated a treatment of concentrated poverty, physical decay, racial isolation, and urban crisis. Thomas J. Sugrue, The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit: With a New Preface by the Author (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3, 5. Dydia DeLyser examined the ghost town of Bodie, California, paying attention to “heroic images of American pioneers” and
roof. The Relief Society was generally given its own room, alleviating the need for a separate Relief Society hall. Many Relief Societies were not able to keep up with modern grain storage methods, inviting questions about cost effectiveness. By 1911, the Relief Society centralized its wheat, funds, and granaries, under the direction of the Presiding Bishopric. The new management sold Relief Society wheat to the federal government without even consulting the women.159 The loss of their own space, including Relief Society halls and granaries, marked a loss of autonomy. A centennial history of the Relief Society included photographs of the ragged ruins of thirteen existing granaries with the tribute: “The buildings remain, mute evidence of the faith, obedience, and industry of pioneer Relief Society women.”160 (Appendix, fig. 3.22) Even in their fragile, ruined states, the crumbling walls and remnants serve as a lieu de mémoire—a reminder of loss. Their presence and the empty lots, once home to other halls, continue to testify to women’s activity and innovation.

In conclusion, the red brick store in Nauvoo lay in disrepair for nearly a century. (Appendix, fig. 3.2) Although the bricks were used to build other buildings in town, the fingerprint of the basement and the building remained. In 1979, after years of careful archeological research and construction, the Reorganized Church of Latter-day Saints (now known as the Community of Christ) rebuilt and dedicated a new red brick store.161 Tours of

159 Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 180, 210–212. A tribute made to the grain-saving effort included this idea: “Thus were drawn to a close for the women of Relief Society the memorable years of sowing and of reaping their golden grain, and the years of patiently gleaning in the fields of harvest.” Relief Society, History of the Relief Society, 1842–1966 (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1966), 110–111.
160 Relief Society, A Centenary of Relief Society, 73.
161 Launius and McKiernan, Joseph Smith, Jr.’s Red Brick Store, 41–49.
the reconstructed building tell the story of the founding of the Nauvoo Relief Society, and annual commemorations on March 17 often reenact the event with costumes and music. A popular souvenir item sold in the restored red brick store is a replica of the original store key. (Appendix, fig. 3.3) To those who remember, this key metaphorically represents the key Joseph Smith turned over to the women in 1842, allowing them to boldly move forward.

Nineteenth century Relief Society halls, granaries, and cooperative stores reflected a foundation derived from the original Nauvoo Relief Society. Planning, construction, and management of both economic ventures and Society operations positioned the women within their own space and with a sense of independence and self-determination. Such female autonomy certainly contributed to the Utah economy. According to Arrington, the Relief Society’s “contributions to Mormon economic growth and Territorial development have not been negligible.” Like so many other women’s enterprises in the nineteenth century, these efforts fell victim to a larger economic system of capitalism. Such female space, albeit short-lived, served as lieux de mémoire. Whether in imitation of Nauvoo’s federal-styled red brick store or with classic Greek detail and Victorian ornamentation, these buildings represented permanence and refinement for Deseret’s women.

Nauvoo’s red brick store does not compare architecturally to the Relief Society Building, headquarters to today’s general Relief Society presidency. Completed in 1956, more than a century after its humble beginnings in an upper room in a busy Nauvoo store, this

163 Joseph Smith told the women that he would soon deliver the keys to the Society and the Church. Later, in the same meeting, he uttered his famous words, “I now turn the key to you in the name of God.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 37, 40.
modern building suggests a futuristic, professional office-building. (Appendix, fig. 3.23) The Relief Society Building is located on prestigious Mormon real estate on Temple Square between the Salt Lake Temple and the Church Office Building. It sits across the Main Street plaza from the Church Administration Building, which houses offices for the First Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Their proximity and their separate space suggests both an ongoing relationship with the priesthood and a separate women’s space.

The sleek granite exterior of the Relief Society Building echoes the stone of the temple, the Conference Center, and the Church History Library across the street to the north. Bronze sheaves of wheat symbolize the Relief Society’s commitment to care for the poor.165 Designed by George Cannon Young, the building reflects an architectural trend characteristic of the 1950s.166 Items from around the world decorate the interior in glass display cases. The Relief Society Building has come to represent a modern, global version of the red brick store of Nauvoo, once a piece of usable past that allowed women to act independently, gather and manage resources, contribute economically, and support each other, based on their Nauvoo beginnings.

---

Appendix 3

Figure 3.1. Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, Donations, n.d., 1843, p. 115, LDS Church History Library

Figure 3.2. Joseph Smith’s Red Brick Store
Nauvoo, Illinois

Figure 3.3. Nauvoo Red Brick Store Key
Figure 3.4. Fifteenth Ward Relief Society Hall
Salt Lake City, Utah

Figure 3.5. Fourteenth Ward Relief Society Hall
Salt Lake City, Utah

Figure 3.6. Bicknell/Thurber Relief Society Hall
Bicknell, Utah

Figure 3.7. Beaver Relief Society Hall
Beaver, Utah.
Figure 3.8. Torrey Relief Society Hall
Torrey, Utah

Figure 3.10. Beaver East Ward Relief Society Hall
Beaver, Utah, 1909

Figure 3.9. Washington Relief Society Hall
Washington, Utah

Figure 3.11. Weber Stake Relief Society Hall
Ogden, Utah

Figure 3.12. Deseret Relief Society Hall
Deseret, Utah
Figure 3.13. Santa Clara Relief Society Hall
Santa Clara, Utah

Figure 3.14. Gunnison Relief Society Hall
Gunnison, Utah

Figure 3.15. Brigham City Relief Society Granary
Brigham City, Utah

Figure 3.16. Richfield Relief Society Hall
Richfield, Utah
Figure 3.17. Vernal Relief Society
Vernal, Utah

Figure 3.18. Manti Relief Society Hall
Manti, Utah

Figure 3.19. Woman’s Commission House, 1876
Old Constitution Building, 1873, Salt Lake City, Utah

Figure 3.20. Woman’s Commission House Ad
*Woman’s Exponent* 5:11 (1 November 1876): 88
Figure 3.21. Nephi Relief Society Hall
Nephi, Utah

Figure 3.22. Relief Society Granaries
Centenary History of the Relief Society, 73.

Figure 3.23. General Relief Society Building
Salt Lake City, Utah
4. **Representative Women of Deseret: Strategic Re-Imaging of a Political, Respectable Past**

In 1842 in Nauvoo, the idea of a female sewing circle expanded beyond needle and thread. Kimball invited a well-educated friend to formulate a constitution for the group, a popular practice among contemporary associations following the American Revolution.¹ Eliza R. Snow drafted a document and presented it to Joseph Smith for his approval. Smith praised Snow’s efforts and then scheduled a meeting to organize the women under the pattern or order of the Priesthood, the first of its kind for LDS women. This conjunction of men and women, working together administratively, suggested that Smith’s conception of patriarchal priesthood included matriarchal participation.² The legitimacy of a written constitution, bolstered by sanction from male patriarchal leadership, laid the foundation for a politically useful past to be remembered and celebrated later in Utah.

On 17 March 1842, when Joseph Smith formally organized the Nauvoo Relief Society, he instituted a proper “order” of Mormon women.³ In that first meeting, Smith

---

¹ Anne Firor Scott noted that “women who had been young children during the Revolution had seen the widespread use of association for political purposes during the conflict and had grown up at a time when state-making and formal constitutions were much on people’s minds. When they came to form their own groups, they nearly always began with a constitution upon which members voted; they carefully followed parliamentary procedure, kept records, and published reports.” Scott, *Making the Invisible Woman Visible*, 263.

² At one of the initial Nauvoo meetings, and under Joseph Smith’s tutelage, Bishop Newel K. Whitney stated, “In the beginning God created man male and female and bestow’d upon man certain blessings peculiar to a man of God, of which woman partook, so that without the female all things cannot be restor’d to the earth—it takes all to restore the Priesthood.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 27 May 1842, 55, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; Sarah M. Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” Church History Library. See also Sarah M. Kimball, “Relief Society Notes,” *Woman’s Exponent* 20, no. 19 (April 15, 1892): 149–150.

³ Joseph Smith described “the order which God has established.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40. Reynolds Cahoon later called this order “the order of God connected with the priesthood…the Order of the Priesthood is not complete without” the Relief Society. Ibid, 13 August 1843, 109.
instructed the women to nominate and elect leaders, approve a select membership, speak in
meetings, and act appropriately. The minute book reveals a record of those meetings: the
dates, locations, membership, leadership, participation, donations, and recipients of
assistance from the Relief Society. The ledger also contains a record of activity in the form
of circulars presented to the public in support of Relief Society platforms, of petitions
presented to the governor with names of Relief Society members, and of epistles and edicts
voicing Relief Society programs. The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo was more than a
women’s sewing circle; it was a feminist political entity in that it recognized the combined
strength of women and their perspectives and contributions as a vital force to society.  

Utah Relief Society women remembered their Nauvoo roots. After a hiatus of
activity upon crossing the plains and settling in the Territory, they reorganized in Utah,
restructured their leadership, and re-entered the political arena. In 1870 the women of Utah
achieved suffrage, second only to the women of Wyoming. They joined forces with national
suffrage associations. They held mass meetings and rallies to voice concern for their
constitutional freedoms. They published the Woman’s Exponent, a newspaper written, edited,
and published by women, with the masthead “The Rights of the Women of Zion, and the
Rights of the Women of All Nations.” Augusta Joyce Crocheron’s lithograph poster,

---

4 This definition of feminism is based on the early nineteenth-century movement to recognize and understand
women’s rights—the “Woman Question.” The rise of women involved in reform groups ranging from moral
reform to abolition recognized the active participation of women. According to Robert H. Abzug, “by 1836
men and women reformers had created what they saw as an honored and vital place for womanhood, one that
bestowed purpose and power upon them as part of reform’s sweeping resymbolization of the cosmos.” Robert
H. Abzug, Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination (New York: Oxford University Press,
1994), 184–185. See also Jill C. Mulvay [Derr], “Eliza R. Snow and the Woman Question,” BYU Studies 16

5 The first issue where this masthead appears is 15 November 1879, vol. 8 no. 12.
“Representative Women of Deseret” proudly displayed one medium of this memory.6

(Appendix, fig. 4.1) Twenty women posed gracefully, adorned with flowers, highlighted by heavenly rays of light, and crowned with divine approval. Surrounded by depictions of civic and cultural pursuits and backed by holy scripture, the women gazed out at the nineteenth-century world around them, displaying a combination of nineteenth-century culture with religious iconography, refined décor, and samples of their benevolent work. These symbols served as mnemonic devices, communicating meaning from past experiences.7 Created by Crocheron, a budding Utah author, the poster not only represented the height of appropriate political respectability and refinement in 1883 America, but also drew upon the foundation of political organization and activity in Nauvoo.8

Crocheron’s 1883 picture poster, Representative Women of Deseret, illustrated one way LDS women reacted to negative press, visually recasting themselves and their heritage as politically active, culturally respectable, and appropriately religious. Even the title of the poster reflected this sense of strategic branding. Instead of using the common nickname

6 For a close-up examination of the poster, see http://mormonwomenhistory.org/final/final2.html.


8 Augusta Joyce Crocheron was born in Boston in 1844. Crocheron’s mother, Caroline Harriman, converted to Mormonism as a young woman before marrying John Joyce, also LDS. Together they sold their possessions and set sail from New York City for California with the 1846 Samuel Brannan voyage when Augusta was about two years old. After a rocky couple of years in Yerba Buena, California, where her parents separated, Augusta’s mother remarried Colonel Alden A.M. Jackson, another convert to Mormonism, who acted as a father to Augusta and her younger sister, Helen, born in 1847. The family moved to Utah in 1867. There Augusta married George Crocheron as a second plural wife in 1870 and they settled in St. George, in southern Utah, with three sons and two daughters. Crocheron wrote poetry, short stories, and biographies, and held many leadership positions. According to biographers Judith Rasmussen Dushku and Patricia Rasmussen Eaton-Gadsby, she was “something of a women’s advocate; her literature had a feminine orientation,” with honorable female heroes. She died in 1915 in Salt Lake City. Judith Rasmussen Dushku and Patricia Rasmussen Eaton-Gadsby, “Augusta Joyce Crocheron,” in Sister Saints, ed. Vicky Burgess- Olson (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 481-494.
Mormon, Crocheron identified them as women of Deseret, the original name given to the Utah Territory.\(^9\) The poster also demonstrated a dramatic shift in the Mormon women’s audience. The event of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 facilitated transportation, communication, and cultural exchange with the East. The Utah Territorial Legislature granted Utah women suffrage in 1870, leading to association with national women’s suffrage groups. The *Woman’s Exponent* began publication in 1872, including correspondence with women worldwide. The organization of an official general Relief Society presidency and board in June 1880 expedited a strong central leadership. The Relief Society began to look outside the borders of Utah. The ways in which Mormon women chose to depict themselves and their distinct history as well as the identity and heritage they omitted in their visual representation, communicated a strategic self-presentation. In short, *Representative Women of Deseret* also illustrated the period of transition from Mormon isolation and separatism to assimilation and Americanization in which Mormon women took the lead.

“If the eye of the stranger may thereby be opened”—Nineteenth-Century Print Media

At the Nauvoo Relief Society’s founding meeting on 17 March 1842, Joseph Smith proposed that the women elect a president and two counselors. He “suggested the propriety of electing a Presidency to continue in the office of good behavior, or as long as they shall

---

continue to fill the office with dignity.” According to parliamentary procedure, the women elected Emma Smith as their president. John Taylor encouraged Emma to be “a pattern of virtue; and possess all the qualifications necessary for her to stand and preside and dignify her Office, to teach the females those principles requisite for their future usefulness.” Taylor rejoiced “to see this Institution organiz’d according to the law of Heaven.”

Crocheron captured the Nauvoo Relief Society’s sense of decorum and order in Representative Women of Deseret. In her introduction she explained her desire to create the true image of Mormon women: “If the eyes of the stranger may thereby be opened to a knowledge of their purity, integrity, and faith in God, their heroic firmness and the trials they have endured without wavering in allegiance to their cause.” She depicted the twenty women with photographs rather than by drawings. Crocheron highlighted the women with the dignity and propriety they experienced in Nauvoo.

And yet these are Mormon women from Utah, cast in popular newspapers, magazines, travel accounts, and exposés throughout the second half of the nineteenth century as uncivilized and uncouth, duped by lascivious men, wreaking havoc on innocent children in the harsh reaches of the American West. (Appendix, fig. 4.2, 4.3) Similar to unfavorable depictions of their contemporary Catholic, Jewish, and black Baptist women, LDS women also experienced harsh review, cultural rejection, and deliberate definition as outsiders based on their religion and the practice of plural marriage. The Republican party connected polygamy to slavery, calling them the “twin relics of barbarism” at their 1856

---

10 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 7, 9, 14.
11 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, i.
12 See “A Refutation,” Woman’s Exponent 12, no. 18 (February 15, 1884): 142.
national convention. Popular female reform groups, including the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, balked at including Mormon women as members, while more explicit organizations such as the Anti-Polygamy Society and the Industrial Christian Home Association actively worked to counter any Mormon advances in Utah.

While countless Utah news editorials rhetorically defined LDS women through text, Crocheron designed, printed, and copyrighted a picture to honor Mormon women and to literally “show” progressive America “what manner of people these ‘Mormons’ are.” She recounted the motivation for her work: the “design of the picture Representative Women of Deseret appeared to me one night as I rose from family prayers.” An accompanying book of biographies, an after-thought to the lithograph, described each woman in a sentimental, hagiographic style. Mormon women appropriated popular symbols and formats in an effort to mainstream themselves into nineteenth-century American culture.

A brief examination of nineteenth-century print media situates Representative Women as a deliberate public relations piece. The advent of sophisticated and accessible commercial lithography and print technology, as well as cheap transportation with the expansion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, facilitated the dissemination of textual and visual accounts through newspapers, magazines, and books. Editorials illustrated with caricatures, cartoons, pictures, and engravings were rife with nineteenth-century symbols and meanings. According to John and Selma Appel, this age of print and media called for careful perusal of images,

14 Madsen, An Advocate for Women, 241; Pascoe, Relations of Rescue.
15 “Anti-Mormon Measures,” Woman’s Exponent 12, no. 18 (February 15, 1884): 140; Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, 1. See, for example, “Anti-Mormon Measures,” Woman’s Exponent 12, no. 18 (February 15, 1884): 140.
16 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, i, 108.
unlike the quick glance required of twentieth-century political cartoons with simplified lines and uncluttered composition. Popular publications of the late nineteenth century included *Frank Leslie’s Weekly, Harper’s Weekly, The Graphic, Puck,* and *The Wasp,* with illustrations by such artists as Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler. Images depicting anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism helped to popularize American nativism in the popular press. For example, a provocative 1879 cartoon in *The Wasp* alluded to Mormons, Chinese, blacks, Native Americans, and Irish as “Uncle Sam’s Troublesome Bedfellows,” indicating widespread problems with America’s various ethnic and religious groups, racializing different denominations. (Appendix, fig. 4.4, 4.5, 4.6)

Several groups became the object of indiscreet, blatant stereotyping, understood by readers everywhere. The Appels’ study of anti-Catholic imagery defines stereotypes and caricatures as “homemade tools of American anti-Catholicism” in the nineteenth century. Hasia Diner described the generalized public image of the Irish Catholic woman as “lacking in intelligence, manners, and common sense,” and John Appel closely examined this particular stereotype as depicted in *Puck.* (Appendix, figs. 4.7, 4.8, 4.9) Riv-Ellen Prell scrutinized the popular American perception of Jewish women, exposing their cultural

---

18 Alison Landsberg discussed the use of commodification to make ideas and images readily available. Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture,* 16.
vulnerability.\textsuperscript{22} Newspapers such as the \textit{Anti-Polygamy Standard} aimed to expose the evils of contemporary LDS social and religious practice, while travel accounts written by European tourists and exposés by disaffected Mormons spread across a larger national readership.\textsuperscript{23} Such efforts created a strong identity of appropriate American citizenship and culture at the same time that it marginalized groups of people who threatened the consensus nature of the center.\textsuperscript{24} The negative images of marginal and minority groups proliferated through new technology and a newly accessible audience. Historian Ann Douglas linked the values of sentimental Victorian culture with this proliferation of consumerism as “an intimate connection between critical aspects of Victorian culture and modern mass culture.”\textsuperscript{25}

Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and others struggled to maintain their distinct identities when print technology cast them negatively outside the national center of appropriate culture.

Gender added an additional layer of distinction. As a result of negative stereotyping, minority and marginal women’s religious groups found creative ways to recast themselves in appropriate feminine American imagery. They often appropriated popular nineteenth-century American symbols to fit their situations and re-cast their own identities. The black Baptist Woman’s Convention, according to historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[22] Prell, \textit{Fighting to Become Americans}, 3. Prell examined “how gender images have served as a powerful medium through which Jews expressed and reflected their relationship to America” beginning in the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century. Although she included a period later than this study of Mormon women, the effort to tell “a story about how a dominant American culture has dealt with minorities” is similar. See p. 4, 10.
\end{footnotes}
illustrated the concept of “self-representation, of re-figuring themselves individually and collectively.” Their educational, theological, and reform efforts worked consciously to present themselves in the same refined categories as their white counterparts.

Female public activity produced significant reason to commemorate their efforts. Visual representation provided a useful medium of self-expression, collective identity, and memory, particularly by utilizing media approved and used by the mainstream culture. The material manifestations of a culture expanded and refined the story of the past, adding new dimensions and valuable insight. Photographs, illustrations, artifacts, monuments, relics all represented strategic efforts at constructing identity and subsequent heritage.

In late 1883, Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City did not have access to national media and, thus, could not produce pro-Mormon images to counteract the numerous anti-Mormon depictions seen in the national press. Crocheron left Utah to concoct her own effort and to reach a wider audience. She presented her women on a lithographic poster published by the Graphic Company of New York, with photographs glued on after printing. The lithograph, a popular advertising format, typically circulated information about books, performances,

26 Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent, 186.
public events, or consumer products. The medium also commemorated people and historic events, such as U.S. presidents, Supreme Court justices, or Civil War generals.\textsuperscript{30} (Appendix, figs. 4.10, 4.11) While an extensive archival search yielded no other such posters memorializing minority religious women’s organizations, similar efforts produced representations of Catholic, Jewish, and black Baptist women in line drawings, newspapers, pamphlets, and books, adorned with appropriate symbols and embellishments. These visual representations reveal common concerns and efforts imitating the larger nineteenth-century American social and cultural worldview.

Why a lithograph? And why poster-sized (21” x 31”)? Posters, according to historian Charles Hiatt, were among the oldest, most obvious forms of advertisement, used in ancient Greece for legal inscriptions and in Rome as book advertisements.\textsuperscript{31} In the nineteenth century, lithographic posters promoted public events and performances, sold consumer products, and advertised for the circus and theater.\textsuperscript{32} Smaller lithographs illustrated and advertised books, often embellishing the title page. Colorful lithographic posters transformed art to an easily-reproducible medium. Such posters democratized art, bringing pictorial art to the masses.\textsuperscript{33}

Lithographs were easily printed and published. While little is known about Crocheron’s experience in New York, an understanding of the typical lithographic process illuminates her experience. Depending on the particular chemical reactions of grease and


\textsuperscript{31} Charles Hiatt, Picture Posters: A Short History of the Illustrated Placard, with Many Reproductions of the Most Artistic Examples in All Countries (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), 3–5.

\textsuperscript{32} Neil Harris, “American Poster Collecting: A Fitful History,” American Art 12, no. 1 (n.d.): 11.

\textsuperscript{33} Frank Weitenkampf, American Graphic Art (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970), 162; Hiatt, Picture Posters, 12.
water, the lithography artist used a stone with a smooth surface to ink and print the design. The artist then pressed damp coated paper against the stone to transfer the image. Later, the artist would add etching to the paper for fine detail.\textsuperscript{34} While the stone offered possibilities of color printing, known as chromo-lithography, Crocheron used a more basic two-tone process. Generally the artist worked alongside the printer, ensuring correct detail.\textsuperscript{35} 

Crocheron included photographs instead of engravings on her poster. She glued on images once she was back in Salt Lake City, making this piece a true limited-edition collector’s item. The medium suggested a commercialization of a Mormon female image, much as other lithographs sold circus tickets or books. Crocheron copyrighted the final product, possibly to legitimize the work and to prevent alteration by negative press. She fully intended, according to the introduction of her book, to open the eyes of the stranger to the complex skills and abilities of these women and to prove to Mormon youth the honor and nobility of their organizational foremothers.\textsuperscript{36} The actual accomplishment of such lofty goals, however is difficult to measure.

\textit{Representative Women} premiered at the eightieth birthday party of Eliza R. Snow, the original secretary of the Nauvoo Relief Society and the “leading lady” to whom the picture and the book were dedicated.\textsuperscript{37} The \textit{Deseret News}, a Salt Lake City newspaper, detailed its reception, calling it a “handsome, well executed lithograph . . . encased in a handsome frame of brown and gilt.” The following week, Crocheron displayed the print and the book at the

\textsuperscript{35} Weitenkampf, \textit{American Graphic Art}, 172–173.
\textsuperscript{36} Crocheron, \textit{Representative Women of Deseret}, i–ii.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., ii.
newspaper’s office. The press reacted favorably to the picture, calling it “a worthy medium of the compliment it conveys.” Careful study of the picture and its “compliments” reveals a cultural self-expression for the outcast minority women in nineteenth-century America, first as political women, second as refined women, and third as religious women.

“Receiv’d by Vote”—Politics of Respectability
Nineteenth-century America sought political and social legitimacy. The experimental development of a collaborating federal and local government created an environment of public activity. Sentiments of democracy and civic responsibility permeated the activity of towns, churches, women’s organizations, and social groups, including the Relief Society. Proper behavior, including adherence to parliamentary procedure, and capable leadership to support competent political and civic activity, created an aura of validity.

The concept of polite respectability characterized the first meetings of the Nauvoo Relief Society. The minute book contained a formal record—the date, location, membership list, and donation log, all according to contemporary mores of accountability. Careful discussion of parliamentary procedure produced proper governance. The women elected their president and other leaders. President Emma Smith worked diligently to promote polite unity in discussion, and membership “to provide union in this Society must be carefully attended to—that every member should be held in full fellowship—as a society hop’d they would divest themselves of every jealousy and evil feeling toward each other, if any such

39 Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity.
40 At the first meeting, Joseph Smith said: “I now declare this society organiz’d with president and counselors &c. according to Parliamentary usages—and all who shall hereafter be admitted into this Society must be free from censure and receiv’d by vote.” Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 12.
existed—that we should bring our conduct into respectability, here and every where else.”

Joseph Smith proposed a close examination of each candidate for membership for this “select Society”—truly a representative group for all LDS women to look to. Newspaper editor John Taylor praised the Relief Society in a published editorial: “We had the privilege of being present at their organization, and were much pleased with their modus operandi, and the good order that prevailed; they are strictly parliamentary in their proceedings; and we believe they will make pretty good democrats,” or advocates of democracy.

Mormon women followed the patterns of other antebellum women active in charity work, moral reform, temperance, and abolition, utilizing tools of legislative action through the medium of petitions. According to historian Lori Ginzberg, abolition groups’ petition campaigns between 1835 and the 1840s proved to be the single most effective tool in grassroots organizing among women. For example, problems arose in Nauvoo when mayor John C. Bennett took advantage of a tenuous situation with rumors regarding polygamy and spiritual wifery. A purported bachelor who claimed to be a gynecologist, Bennett sought illicit relationships with women. On 23 June 1842, president Emma Smith “propos’d that a Circular go forth from this Society, expressive of our feeling in reference to Dr. Bennett’s character—requested all who could wield the pen, to write and send in their

---

41 Ibid., 24 March 1842, 15.
42 Ibid., 30 March 1842, 22.
44 Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 71.
In a poem celebrating the Relief Society, published in the Nauvoo newspaper *Times and Seasons*, Eliza R. Snow proposed the Society’s mission “To stamp a vetoing impress on each move / That Virtue’s present dictates disapprove— / To put the tattler’s coinage, scandal, down, / And make corruption feel its withring frown.”\(^{47}\) The moral obligation to correct public wrongdoing was an essential part of the organization.

Another example was a Relief Society petition in support of Joseph Smith. In July 1842, Emma Smith, Eliza R. Snow, and Amanda Barnes Smith visited Illinois Governor Thomas Carlin with a petition challenging charges of treason against Joseph Smith. Carlin’s cordial reception and promise of help encouraged the three women to believe he would act judiciously in their behalf. At the following Relief Society meeting, president Emma Smith reported on their visit. She “proceeded to make observations respecting her visit to Quincy—that she was prosper’d—was cordially rec’d by the Governor who assured us of his protection &c. She said we could govern this generation in one way if not another—if not by the mighty arm of power, we can do it by faith & prayer.”\(^{48}\) Later that month, the Relief Society sent a petition signed by a thousand women to Governor Carlin in support of the verbal agreement. They wrote: “It may be considered irrelevant for Ladies to petition your Excellency on the above-named subject . . . but on occasions like the present, our desires for the peace of society, the happiness of our friends, the desire to save the lives of our husbands, our fathers, our brothers, our children, and our own lives, will be a sufficient palliation, in the estimation of your Excellency, for the step we have taken in presenting this

\(^{46}\) John C. Bennett had suggested that the Relief Society could produce a mob, insinuating their rough and vigilante-like character. “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 23 June 1842, 69.  
\(^{48}\) “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 4 August 1842, 79.
petition.”49 Joseph Smith later commented: “The Relief Society has taken the most active part in my welfare—against my enemies—in petitioning the Governor.”50 The public pronouncement provided Relief Society women with a public, political voice. Eventually the legal matter was settled in Smith’s favor.

The political strategizing of the Nauvoo Relief Society continued. In March 1844, the women addressed the slander against its members by Orsimus F. Bostwick. Bostwick, along with John C. Bennett, had sought to take advantage of the confusion surrounding rumors of plural marriage in Nauvoo.51 A month earlier, Bostwick had publicly claimed he could have any woman in Nauvoo for a half barrel of meal. Hyrum Smith charged him with slander, prompting a lawsuit.52 The women responded as well, proclaiming support for women’s moral purity outlined in the “Voice of Innocence,” a response to Bostwick’s demeaning remarks penned by W.W. Phelps.53 “Voice of Innocence” served as a public rallying point for the Relief Society women.54 Democratic tools such as petitions, proclamations, votes, and mass rallies provided a political voice for LDS women in Nauvoo and provided a political past for later women in Utah.

Later in Utah, Relief Society women reclaimed the political activity born in Nauvoo. The first organized effort to secure suffrage happened in January 1870, when the Salt Lake

49 Nauvoo Female Relief Society, “Petition to Governor Thomas Carlin, Springfield, IL,” ms (Nauvoo, IL, July 1842), Church History Library.
50 Smith added: “These measures were all necessary... All had an influence in my redemption from the hands of my enemies.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 31 August 1842, 81.
51 Bushman, Joseph Smith, 460.
52 Smith and Roberts, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6:225.
53 Joseph Smith charged Relief Society women to be pure. He encouraged the women to assist the priesthood by “correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the female community.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 9 March 1844, 123.
54 Ibid., 17 March 1842, 6.
City Fifteenth Ward Relief Society, under the direction of Sarah Kimball, gathered to protest proposed anti-polygamy federal legislation. (Appendix, fig. 4.12) Following the lead of the Nauvoo Relief Society, the women asserted their right to “rise up... and speak for ourselves.” Kimball reminded the women of their revolutionary legacy of their forefathers who participated in the War of Independence: “she felt that we would be unworthy of the names we bear and of the blood in our veins.”

A week later, more than five thousand women met in the Salt Lake City tabernacle as a public demonstration for their religious freedoms. A month later, in February 1870, Utah women were granted the right to vote by acting territorial governor S.A. Mann. By 1880, Utah women worked to extend political rights to hold public office. Mormon women participated in national suffrage associations beginning in 1879 when Emmeline B. Wells and Zina Young Williams, both pictured on Crocheron’s poster, attended the national convention in Washington. (Appendix, figs. 4.13, 4.14) The 1887 Edmunds-Tucker act, however, disfranchised all Utah women in an effort to restrict polygamy. Mormon women participated in several campaigns to reclaim suffrage but did not receive the right to vote until Utah achieved statehood in 1896.

55 Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, “Relief Society Minute Books” (Church History Library, 1869-1875), 6 January 1870.
56 “Great Indignation Meeting.”
57 Letter, Governor S.A. Mann, Salt Lake City, to Ladies of Utah, Salt Lake City, 19 February 1870, Deseret News Weekly, 2 March 1870.
58 Martha Hughes Cannon became the first female state senator in American history. Cannon beat her own husband in state elections in 1896, after Utah statehood, when Utah women were again given the right to vote.
59 Wells and Williams were welcomed warmly in Washington, D.C. They were offered prominent seats and invited to address the conference. Although critics questioned the religious aspect of polygamy, the convention leadership called for respect of diversity. Wells and Williams also presented a memorial to Congress and visited with Lucy Hayes, wife of President Rutherford B. Hayes. Lola Van Wagenen, Sister-wives and Suffragists: Polygamy and the Politics of Woman Suffrage, 1870-1896 (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2003), 73–80.
Nauvoo Relief Society members considered their political efforts as a single element of their public, civic responsibility. At the 28 April 1842 meeting in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith told the women: “This Society is to get instruction thro’ the order which God has established—thro’ the medium of those appointed to lead—and I now turn the key to you in the name of god and this Society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time—this is the beginning of better days, to this Society.” Civic responsibility, or public work—efforts contributing to the well-being of the community, to use a nineteenth-century phrase—proved important for American women during the nineteenth century. The women of the Nauvoo Relief Society busied themselves with the care of the poor and needy. They also sought, however, opportunities to exercise their civic responsibility and political voice, including petitions to garner public support of their causes. The women took this charge seriously, working to influence cultural, civic, and secular facets of their lives as well as evidenced in Crocheron’s poster and biographical book.

Crocheron organized the women on the lithograph in a particular manner. (Appendix, fig. 4.1) The top grouping included the leading ladies of the LDS women’s organizations, the group on the left signified the literary leaders; the group on the right included female leaders of the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association and the Primary Association for children, and the women on the bottom represented Latter-day Saint efforts in “literature, art, medicine, education, and works of benevolence.” (Appendix, fig. 4.15) Even though Crocheron constructed a deliberate hierarchy, she depicted all the women as examples of civic responsibility no matter their placement.

---

61 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40.
62 “Women of Deseret: Mrs. Crocheron’s Latest Achievement.”
Crocheron used mnemonic symbols to reverse charges of illegitimacy and ignorance in the press. She demonstrated civic responsibility with the illustration of the American flag, framing the grouping at the bottom of the lithograph. (Appendix, fig. 4.16) The flag situated these women, located geographically in Utah Territory—initially a place of exile and isolation—firmly in the realm of American social responsibility. While under the political jurisdiction of federally-appointed territorial governors, many Latter-day Saints disdained the seemingly unfair legislation. They perceived unfavorable reports as restrictions of their religious freedom. These women, though, worked to re-cast their image of separateness to one of common national cause. Prominent female leader Eliza R. Snow, pictured at the apex of *Representative Women*, referred to the flag in several of her poems, maintaining her commitment to its values of liberty and justice. (Appendix, fig. 4.17) Like other minority groups, civic activity in the West, in particular, offered women opportunities for increased visibility and public activity.

Beyond the patriotic symbol of the flag, Crocheron depicted various other depictions of civic responsibilities such as caring for the poor and the needy, a mission key to the Relief

---

63 Freud considered the absence of recognition of past events as having a subconscious affect on behavior. Crocheron responded with a strategic placement of symbols of what was absent elsewhere, namely, the press. “First Lecture,” 12.


65 For example, “My Own, My Country’s Flag,” written 5 March 1865, describes Snow’s love for the flag and the country, learned from her Revolutionary War veteran-grandfather. In defining the Saints’ departure from the United States for Utah, she wrote: “There came a time, which I remember well, / Beneath the Stars and Stripes, we could not dwell! / We had to flee; but in our hasty flight, / We grasped the Flag, with more than mortal might; / And vow’d although our foes should us bereave / Of all things else, *the Flag we would not leave*. / We took the Flag, and journeying to the West, / We wore its motto graven on each breast.” *Deseret News*, 15 March 1865; Eliza R. Snow, *Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political*, vol. 2. Salt Lake City, 1877, 60-62. An earlier poem, however, reveals a sense of bitterness associated with a government unable to protect its people. “*Our fathers died: Their sons forgot / That Equal Rights with blood were bought; / Then law-abiding men were slain! / Columbia’s Banner wears the stain!*” 4 July 1854, printed in *Deseret News*, 13 July 1854.

Society. Crocheron visualized LDS work in the medical field, sending women to medical school and instituting a local school of midwifery.67 (Appendix, fig. 4.18) Romania B. Pratt and Elvira S. Barney, two of the “Representative Women,” graduated from medical schools in the East, then returned to Utah and participated in a school of midwifery and the LDS women’s Deseret Hospital. The illustration of the Mormon woman as a group who cared for the sick and the weary matched that of the appropriate, civically responsible nineteenth-century American woman. Catholic women also visually depicted medical efforts. The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word displayed photographs of their hospitals, infirmaries, and sanitariums in a souvenir pamphlet. (Appendix, figs. 4.19, 4.20) As with LDS women, the Sisters of Charity placed value on the professionalization of efforts, as noted by J.W. Shaw, Archbishop of New Orleans.68

Another important civic activity depicted in Crocheron’s lithograph was the grain movement, a program to store wheat for times of famine. Crocheron included a sheaf of wheat in the upper left corner of the poster, as well as minutes from the Grain Committee under Wells’s portrait. (Appendix, figs. 4.21, 4.13) Brigham Young’s invitation to the Relief Society to save grain under the direction of Wells prompted new economic activity.

68 “In the skillful and gentle care of the sick and suffering in mind and body, in their hospitals, infirmaries and sanitariums throughout our Southland, the loving ministrations of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word have won form them an enviable reputation among all classes and creeds . . . In their magnificent and well equipped institutions the Sisters who are for the most part graduate nurses, aided by a numerous corps of well trained nurses keep a ceaseless vigil by night and by day at the bedside of the sick and dying members of Christ, availing themselves of everything that medical science can offer for the relief of human suffering. While they never fail to say in due season the kind word of encouragement or do a gracious courtesy that is so warmly appreciated by the sick and suffering, still they never intrude on the religious susceptibilities of their patients, but leave rather to the intercession of silent prayer and gentle charity the blessings they ask from the heavenly physician for the painracked and despondent sufferer.” Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Alamo Heights, San Antonio, Texas, 1869-1919, pamphlet, Catholic University of America Archive, Washington, D.C.
Concerned about past droughts and potential famines, the women initiated programs to purchase and store wheat, building granaries, selling stock subscriptions, and maintaining jurisdiction over their wheat. The wheat stored by the Relief Society women provided assistance for local and international needs. The sheaf of wheat visually associated women’s active involvement in the good of their communities.

Crocheron worked to depict a strong heritage of political and civic prowess inherent in the identity of Mormon women. Contemporary American women demonstrated the politics of respectability through the publication of biographical collections, emphasizing appropriate behavior. As early as 1853, books and magazine articles highlighted “representative women,” focusing on royalty, heroines, biblical characters, literary figures, and religious and geographical groupings. The idea of female leadership to instill proper decorum also proved important among black Baptist women. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham described such representative women—the Talented Tenth—who demonstrated appropriate religious and social decency within their denomination, equating a politics of respectability with public behavior, individual self-respect, and the larger advancement of African Americans. Such examples would “trickle down” to the larger masses. Similarly, J.W.

---


Gibson and W.H. Crogman noted in their 1903 work, *The Colored American from Slavery to Honorable Citizen*, that the formal organization of black women into clubs, leagues, and associations “for the moral uplift of their race is a distinctive forward movement.” They concluded, “Colored women have begun to learn that if they would give their clubs prestige and influence with the great association with white women, they must bring to the front and encourage their best women, that our representatives must be representative of the best they have.”

The political principles espoused by the elite ladies set an example for all women.

Crocheron’s lithograph demonstrates the politics of respectability in several ways. Seven of the twenty women pictured on the poster were members of the original Nauvoo Female Relief Society. Eliza R. Snow, top and center, represented the Nauvoo presidency, where she was elected secretary. Some Relief Society organizations spontaneously began forming in the 1850s in Utah. Brigham Young officially reinstated ward organizations in 1866, providing another level of leadership for women. In 1877 Relief Societies organized on the stake level to coordinate local congregations. It was not until 1880 that a pattern of centralized leadership was founded under the direction of John Taylor and Eliza R. Snow.

As founding mothers, these women stood to “represent” the foundation of the past and the direction of the future. Crocheron made efforts to demonstrate visible female authority in an environment that portrayed Mormon women as victims and commodities, subjugated to

---


73 Members of the Nauvoo Relief Society included Eliza R. Snow (17 March 1842), Zina D.H. Young (24 March 1842), Mary Isabella Horne (9 June 1842), Sarah M. Kimball (17 March 1842), Phoebe W. Carter Woodruff (28 April 1842), Bathsheba W. Smith (17 March 1842), and Precendia L. Kimball (19 April 1842). All except Precendia Kimball are pictured at the top of the poster.

74 “R.S. Reports.”
power-hungry men. She wrote, “Many suppose that Mormon women are not encouraged in their abilities, are perhaps repressed. This has not been so in my case, or in my observation of others. Both encouragement and help have been given me by friends, by those in authority.” She highlighted LDS female empowerment displayed by a distinct hierarchical leadership that was intended to influence members everywhere.

The book Representative Women of Deseret followed the trends of the times, showcasing stories and genealogies and featuring sentimental poetry. The poster presented a very visible structure, an organizational chart demonstrating the political make-up of the LDS women’s groups, similar to later charts outlining the political respectability of groups such as the officers of the Board of Lady Managers for the Chicago World’s Fair, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Young Women’s Christian Association, and even the first general presidents of the Relief Society, though these do not include the intricate detail and cultural adornment of Representative Women. (Appendix, figs. 4.22, 4.23, 4.24, 4.25) Mormon women demonstrated their own political clout and leadership in the poster. Official scrolls on either side of the design authenticated the Relief Society, Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association, and the Primary Association, both organized in Utah with dates of organization

76 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, 108.
77 Jeanne Madeline Weimann, The Fair Women (Chicago, Ill: Academy Chicago, 1981), 140; National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, “Papers of the President General,” n.d., DAR Archives, Washington, D.C.; Rebecca F. Morse, Young Women: A History of the American Committee of the Young Women’s Christian Associations (Chicago: The American Committee of Young Women’s Christian Associations, 1901), flyleaf; Kathleen L. Enders, Akron’s “Better Half”: Women’s Clubs and the Humanization of the City, 1825-1925 (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2006), 137. These organizations and their visual leadership charts span the later nineteenth century. They represent the time in which Crocheron developed her own chart, certainly influenced by contemporary efforts. In 1920, the Relief Society Magazine published a chart with photographs of the first five general Relief Society presidents, including Emma Smith, Eliza R. Snow, Zina D.H. Young, Bathsheba Smith, and Emmeline B. Wells, each of whom had a Nauvoo connection. This later example exhibited a popular format with modern touches since Crocheron’s 1883 effort.
by male leadership. (Appendix, figs. 4.26, 4.15) The scrolls endowed the women with authority and priesthood endorsement both visually and bureaucratically. In her book, Crocheron noted the support of Bishop Hiram B. Clawson as well as her husband, who “encouraged and assisted me in every way in his power.” Her copyrighted lithograph added another layer of authority. An increasing number of professional lithographic artists signed their work, indicating their pride in their artistic endeavors rather than simply including the name of the printer. Crocheron’s name appears at the bottom of the print attached to the copyright information. Stamps of authority and approval appear in many places, providing legitimacy to the past and the present, a use of mnemonic symbols.

Upon its creation, the poster became an immediate locus of identification and participation, exhibiting in a public gathering (the birthday celebration of Snow) the nature of female religious and civic power. Crocheron wanted to highlight the personalities and activities of Mormonism’s leading ladies. She did not consider herself initially a part of this hierarchical group, and her picture and chapter biography were added as an afterthought. She constantly deferred to the leadership of the women pictured, seeking their approval, extolling their virtues, and humbly recognizing the privilege to be in some way associated with them; at one point she stated, “looking it all over, the thought arises—how little I have done after all! I have scarcely more than furnished the thread on which their gems were strung.” Yet because of her geographical proximity to these leaders, she participated in creating a collective public memory. According to John Bodnar, “public memory speaks primarily about the structure of power in society because that power is always in question in

78 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, iii, 108.
79 Ibid., 97, ii.
a world of polarities and contradictions and because cultural understanding is always
grounded in the material structure of society itself.”80 These women had a voice,
demonstrated through this poster, to counter their negative misrepresentation. Presenting
this kind of creative representation allowed them to participate as their own agents in the
social and political conflicts around them.

“A pattern of virtue”—Representative Refinement

Joseph Smith preached often to the women of the Nauvoo Relief Society about
purity and refinement. He encouraged the sisters to guard against corruption “and thus
sanctify the Society and get it pure.”81 Along with strict membership requirements of
upstanding moral character, the Society worked to train and mold women into their brand of
refinement. Smith taught “it is the object of this Society to reform persons, not to take those
that are corrupt, but if they repent we are bound to take them and by kindness sanctify and
cleanse from all unrighteousness, by our influence in watching over them.”82 Relief Society
history demonstrated effort not only to be refined but also to preach refinement.

In 1883, the national perception of Mormons, particularly the women, continued to
be depicted as morally debased, ethnically different, and intellectually stymied. Crocheron
used Representative Women of Deseret as a means of providing an alternative, refined identity.
The introduction to her book addressed the effort as “an explanation may be appropriate
that the object may be rightly understood.” Crocheron hoped to express “a knowledge of
[Mormon women’s] purity, integrity, integrity and faith in God.”83 She embellished her

---

80 Bodnar, Remaking America, 15.
81 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 39.
82 Ibid., 9 June 1842, 62.
83 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, i.
etchings with Victorian flowers and other signs of genteel culture. These drawings showed LDS women as not only refined and polished, but also as well-versed in social propriety.

The concept of refinement established an important cultural standard emulated by many nineteenth-century women. White middle class women celebrated a specific brand of Americanized refinement at the same time industrialization and western expansion tugged at the American cultural center. Such a standard, however, presented a type of demarcation from minority women, both ethnic and religious. In *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, Richard Bushman outlined a trajectory to illustrate how lower classes and minorities eventually identified themselves with refined appearances, homes, and organizations in order to elevate their social standing. Women’s magazines such as *Godey’s Ladies’ Book* and *Ladies’ Home Journal* advertised, instructed, and popularized a wide range of topics of interest to women. (Appendix, figs. 4.27, 4.28, 4.29) Many women’s religious groups embraced high-brow culture as they redefined themselves to match their perceptions of mainstream, respectable America.

The national press and popular magazines often depicted high-brow culture through definitions of beauty and refinement. At the same time, newspapers depicted Irish Catholics as squatters in Central Park and Jewish women as poor working women flaunting cheap

---

85 Bushman, *The Refinement of America*.
87 See Levine, *Highbrow/lowbrow*.
adornment in order to appear wealthy. Caricatures illustrated LDS women as victims of poverty, living in harsh desert conditions. Mark Twain’s popular book, *Roughing It*, for example, portrayed Mormon women as “poor, ungainly and pathetically ‘homely’ creatures,” and he jokingly praised Mormon men for having such Christian charity to marry them. (Appendix, fig. 4.30)

Women portrayed negatively in a tightly-defined cultural milieu worked to redefine themselves. They refashioned their image to mirror the larger American middle class. For example, culturally-accepted Methodist women made an effort to “elevate [their] sisters, making them more capable for their life work.” Majors, in his treatise on African American women, worked to re-cast black Baptist women in a genteel way: “We have given a far off view to the beautiful landscape,” indicating the effort to present seemingly uncomely women as decent or well-mannered.

Higginbotham’s black Baptist women also experienced refinement. They considered a particular sense of mission in what she termed as “social uplift”: to teach members of their organization the good manners, elegance, and gentility associated with the middle class. Higgenbotham claimed that their “preoccupation with respectability reflected a bourgeois vision,” vacillating between their ethnic culture and American white middle-class prosperity. Black Baptist missionary women often trained lower-class rural black women to emulate

---

92 Majors, *Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities*, x.
Victorian standards of domesticity with clean homes and tasteful décor. In contrast, Prell described one method in which young unmarried working Jewish women reacted to the “Ghetto Girl” stereotype. At a time when they felt vulnerable to mainstream American condemnation, young Jewish women embraced the latest fashions and printed their photographs in a seemingly appropriate, refined manner each Sunday in the *Jewish Daily Forward* as “Portrait Studies of Jewish Women.” Similarly, Crocheron displayed her twenty women as elegant, clean, attractive, and graceful. She stated in her preface her intention to prove that “Mormonism is not a cloak, a subterfuge and a selfish system; that our women are not from the dregs of civilization.” Even the layout of the poster is similar to a trading card or a fashion plate, a popular symbol of class. Moreover, in their roles as leaders among Mormon women, these “Representative Women” inspired a similar sense of gentility among other Relief Society women.

Western women of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and religions considered their roles as civilizers on the frontier. Efforts to elevate society included more than lace tablecloths and appropriate dinner-time manners. Jeanne E. Abrams claimed that Jewish women who settled the West in the nineteenth century struggled physically at the same time they worked

---

94 Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans*, 21–25. While this example occurred after the negative stereotypes of Mormon women in discussion, the practice continued of distinguishing religion and ethnicity with class.
to create beauty and community cohesion in their religious observance. Civilized refinement included collective activity to influence society and government, focusing on religion and family as formats of action, a practice established in Nauvoo.

Proper Victorian floral embellishment for Catholic women in Texas and for LDS women in Utah illustrated larger efforts to civilize and refine their harsh environments. Catholic sisterhoods often depicted their representative leaders with flowers. The nuns of the Sisters of the Charity of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas, published a souvenir pamphlet for their fiftieth anniversary in 1919. (Appendix, fig. 4.33) One particularly visual depiction of the first three Superioress Generals includes oval photographs of the three women, adorned by flowers. The Reverend Mother M. John O'Shaughnessy’s picture includes shamrocks, marking her distinctive Irish heritage. According to art historian Dominic Ricciotti, “floral symbolism was frequently employed in the texts [of popular magazines] to connote the beauty and the spiritual qualities of women.”

The presentation of the LDS women with floral adornment and careful cultural depictions testified to their refinement. The flowers symbolized different aspects of personality and heritage, according to traditional Victorian floriology. For example, lilies of the valley depicted around the portraits of Zina D. Young and Helen Mar Whitney symbolized purity, modesty, and humility. Both of these women had been married plurally to Joseph Smith, a concept that many non-Mormons considered sexually promiscuous. These flowers, however, attested to their virtue. (Appendix, figs. 4.34, 4.35) Crocheron

98 Abrams, Jewish Women Pioneering the Frontier Trail, 16.
100 Nineteenth century Mormon women, according to material culture historian Carol Edison, often displayed floral arrangements in their homes. See Edison, “Material Culture,” 322.
embellished Young’s portrait with fuchsia, symbolizing confiding and humble love and amiability. Susa Young Gates described this distinction: “Sister Zina was all love and sympathy, and drew people after her by reason of her tenderness.”

Pansies, commemorating loving thoughts and union, decorated the poster title and appeared around Ellen C. Clawson’s photograph. (Appendix, figs. 4.36, 4.37) In her biographical sketch of Clawson, Crocheron praised her loving connections to others. Crocheron integrated Utah flowers into traditional Victorian floriology embellishing the poster. Sumac and dogwood leaves, native to Utah, fill in as greenery, along with shamrock around Zina Young Williams. Sumac represented intellectual efforts and highlighted Williams’ work at the Brigham Young Academy. (Appendix, fig.4.14) Exotic palm fronds encircled Eliza R. Snow’s portrait. Representing victory and success, palms also reminded people of Snow’s 1872-1873 epic journey to Europe and the Middle East. A photograph of Snow in Cairo, Egypt, surrounded by palm leaves, suggested her success and victory as a well-traveled woman, familiar with the Holy Land and the life and mission of Jesus Christ.

---

102 Susa Young Gates, *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911), 21. Crocheron echoed this description in her biographical sketch of Young: “Picture and words are alike powerless to convey the beauty of her face, her spirit and her life. Each succeeding year adds a tenderer line to her face, a sweeter, gentler intonation to her voice, a more perceptible power to her spirit from the celestial foundations of faith; widens the circle of her friends, strengthens and deepens their love for her, and brings a richer harvest of noble labors to her name.” Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret*, 16.

103 Clawson’s mother had died from exposure and exhaustion following the exodus from Nauvoo, and her father had been sent on a mission. The young children crossed the plains on their own. “Think of this noble girl, hardly more than a child, taking upon her young life the duties and cares of a loved and lost martyred mother! Surely she was precious in God’s sight; and his arm must have sustained her through that long and lonely journey through the wilderness. That same strength of character, that same sweetness of spirit, gentle manner, have upheld her through later eventful periods. A prominent and beautiful feature in her life, one that has won to her the truest respect, the unperished love of her friends is the position she has maintained amid her husband’s family, like a loving queen mother, in his home circle.” Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret*, 61.

104 According to Karen Lynn Davidson and Jill Mulvay Derr, “Eliza had seen the vast world; she had visited the people of many other lands; and her response, when she returned, was to treasure even more the kingdom of
Crocheron’s flowers demonstrated the conquest of the Utah landscape with travels beyond, manifested in the briars and thistles contrasting with the lilies. (Appendix, figs. 4.39, 4.40) These horticultural efforts in the Utah desert revealed the Saints’ biblical injunction to make their desert blossom as a rose.¹⁰⁵ Mormon women and Catholic women, in short, acted as pioneers in refining their worlds and making their efforts visible through material culture.

In addition to comely appearances and floral adornment, Crocheron embellished Mormon women’s portraits with marks, or mnemonic symbols, of refined culture. Needlework and oil painting icons appeared in the bottom third of this picture around Louie Wells to communicate a propensity for feminine culture. (Appendix, fig. 4.41) Depictions of musical instruments next to Louie Wells include a lute and a pianoforte, not the stereotypical pioneer harmonica and banjo. This brand of high-brow culture revealed a hierarchy of refinement, a tendency noted by historian Lawrence W. Levine used to structure the transformation of the frontier to a civilized metropolis.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, an illustration of women in the 1893 book, Noted Negro Women, delineated their refined musical proclivities. (Appendix, fig. 4.42) The line drawings of a harp, a pianoforte, a lute, and a violin intertwined with representative black women, made the depiction visual. The author described these African American musicians: “Indeed, a history could be written portraying the musical accomplishments of our women, dwelling alone in the realms of classical rhythm, cadence and harmony. Suffice it; these stand out in bold relief, proofs of our

¹⁰⁵ Isaiah 35:1.
¹⁰⁶ Levine, Highbrow/Lowbrow.
progress and mile stones along the intellectual highway of Negro accomplishments.”

Beyond civilizing a harsh environment, these women raised the bar with cultural refinement.

Another mark of refinement was education or intelligence. In the Nauvoo Relief Society, Joseph Smith provided “instructions respecting the different offices, and the necessity of every individual acting in the sphere allotted to him or her.” A month later, on 27 May 1842, while visiting the Nauvoo Relief Society, Newell K. Whitney stated: “I rejoice that God has given us means whereby we may get intelligence and instruction.”

With the careful selection of membership and instruction to these chosen women, the Relief Society was, from the beginning, an educational institution. Eliza R. Snow referred to this educational pursuit in a poem, “The Female Relief Society of Nauvoo: What Is It?”: “To give instruction, where instruction’s voice / Will guide the feet and make the heart rejoice— / To turn the wayward from their recklessness, / And lead them in the ways of happiness.” Early Mormon men and women supported female instruction and education, especially according to moral standards.

Female social trends in the second half of the nineteenth century expanded from domesticity to include female participation in education. According to historian Ann Douglas, the feminization of American culture shifted the field of education to the hands of women. Barred from more prominent and political public spheres, women influenced and nurtured publicly through schools and training. In 1893, Charles Wesley Buoy described

---

107 Majors, Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities, 258.
108 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 35.
109 Ibid., 27 May 1842, 59.
111 Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture, 76. Douglas criticized the quality of female education as “flippant,” extracurricular, and sentimental in contrast to the more intellectual superior education for males, but
the Methodist value of intelligence associated with religion: “Spiritual life begets intellectual life…. The intellectual splendor of Unitarianism is the direct sequence of its faith.” Buoy then complimented the work of Methodist women in promoting education, building schools, and supporting educational movements. “The fruit of higher education,” he wrote, “is the highest indication of its need. The splendid leadership of the educated women of our republic has saved our social life…. The higher education is only to fit [the Methodist woman] to fill spheres of duty and rule she has always occupied.”112 By the end of the century, American society, as a whole, encouraged female education.

A national cultural standard had been set, contrasting sharply with how the media presented minority women. Cartoons exposed Mormon women, particularly young immigrant girls as stupid and uneducated, duped into conversion and plural marriage as a ticket to America.113 (Appendix, fig. 4.2) As a result, several groups worked to reform or educate Mormon women. In his treatise on the Methodist emphasis on female education, Buoy described its far-reaching efforts: “With broad catholic faith, calling no man common, they rear homes of learning among the ebony daughters of the rice field, as well as among the olive-hued Indians of the far West, or the erring blue-eyed sisters of Mormondom.”114 Historian Peggy Pascoe wrote about the efforts of Protestant women in the East to educate misguided women floundering in the West.115

---

112 Buoy, Representative Women of Methodism, 352, 360, 364, 367.
114 Buoy, Representative Women of Methodism, 360.
115 Pascoe, Relations of Rescue.
Meanwhile, minority groups worked to promote education and to depict their own educational endeavors. In his effort to situate African American women as culturally refined, Majors wrote in the preface to his 1893 book, *Noted Negro Women*, “A race, no less than a nation, is prosperous in proportion to the intelligence of its women.”\(^{116}\) Certainly as white women, Mormon women maintained advantages over black women. Both groups utilized the power of education to provide social uplift. Mormon Emmeline B. Wells claimed, “Knowledge is power, and this with virtue and wisdom united, guided by inspiration, ignorance and tyranny will alike be impotent against the growing hosts of Israel.”\(^{117}\) (Appendix, fig. 4.13) The concept of education empowered these women to intelligent action within the bounds of their religion.

Efforts to cast themselves as educated and intelligent extended among many minority women. Motivated by opportunities to educate their fellow members, black Baptist women organized their own official convention. According to Higginbotham, “There was little doubt in their minds that education stood second only to religion in enabling their survival and salvation in America.” Higginbotham interpreted their methods of infusing education, especially higher education, in the same vein as their political respectability and cultural refinement. College-educated black Baptist women bore the responsibility to disseminate knowledge and uplift the entire group. The “Female Talented Tenth,” much like LDS Representative Women, served as examples to the Baptist masses, infusing a desire for education and educating women at the same time. The American Baptist Home Mission

---

\(^{117}\) Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret*, 68.
Society and the Spelman Seminary provided secular and spiritual training to women, working to establish nineteenth-century American social ideals in rural areas.\textsuperscript{118}

Pictorial efforts to promote women’s education appeared in different formats. Photographs of missionary schools and teachers highlighted educated black Baptist women.\textsuperscript{119} The General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky published a golden jubilee book highlighting their work. The Baptist Women’s Educational Convention, organized in 1883, proudly proclaimed their efforts to encourage youth to attend college, especially to provide means and support for young women.\textsuperscript{120} (Appendix, fig. 4.43) In a commemorative book, the American Baptist Home Mission Society presented the female graduates of Shaw University’s Missionary Training School, adorned with proper Victorian embellishment, similar to Crocheron’s \textit{Representative Women of Deseret}.\textsuperscript{121} (Appendix, fig. 4.44) Mormon women used the same mechanisms as black women.

Catholic sisterhoods also worked to educate their parishes, documenting their efforts in a refined self-presentation. In a souvenir pamphlet marking its fiftieth anniversary, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word outlined the history of their schools among the population of San Antonio, Texas.\textsuperscript{122} Along with their text, picture montages showed their modern facilities, the clean and pressed students, and the sister teachers. (Appendix, fig. 118)

\textsuperscript{118} Higginbotham, \textit{Righteous Discontent}.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 19–46.


\textsuperscript{121} American Baptist Home Mission Societies, \textit{Twenty-nine Years’ Work Among Negroes} (Chicago: Women’s Baptist Home Mission Society, 1906).

\textsuperscript{122} “In the field of Christian Education, whether it be in the parish schools or in the college or convent, the Sisters with minds well trained and with hearts filled with charity of the Lover of the little ones, have been valiant auxiliaries of the Church and her clergy in forming souls to God.”Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Alamo Heights, San Antonio, Texas, 1869-1919. Pamphlet, Catholic University of America Archive, Washington, D.C.
4.19) A poster similar to *Representative Women of Deseret* illustrated the martyr nuns who died in a fire that consumed their orphanage and school. The commemoration featured the nuns’ oval photographs highlighting their virtuous work.

Crocheron presented several layers of education and intelligence on the *Representative Women* poster. Utah women would recognize the ladies pictured as their own teachers and educators. Of the women pictured in Crocheron’s lithograph, five taught school.123 (Appendix, figs. 4.12, 4.13, 4.17, 4.45) One served as the advisor and director of female students at the Brigham Young Academy.124 (Appendix, fig. 4.14) One woman attended medical school.125 (Appendix, fig. 4.46) Five were published poets.126 (Appendix, figs. 4.13, 4.17, 4.47, 4.48, 4.49) One edited a newspaper, and several others were regular contributors.127 (Appendix, fig. 4.13) Two wrote petitions to Congress, while others wrote petitions to governors and other political leaders.128 (Appendix, figs. 4.13, 4.14, 4.17) One published her reminiscence as well as tracts promoting plural marriage.129 (Appendix, fig. 4.35) Not only were these LDS women literate, but they were well-read and published and highly involved in educational and intellectual endeavors. They were also anxious that other people appreciated these intellectual efforts. The “Representative Women” lived the charge given to the Relief Society in Nauvoo.

123 Eliza R. Snow, Sarah Granger Kimball, Mary Ann Freeze, Emmeline B. Wells, and Elvira S. Barney, according to their biographies in Crocheron, *Representative Women*, 2, 27, 53, 64, 66, 80.
124 Zina Young Williams, Ibid., 125.
125 Romania Pratt and Eliva S. Barney, who was included in the book but not the poster. Ibid., 73, 81.
126 Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, Emily Hill Woodmansee, Hannah Tapfield King, and Augusta Joyce Crocheron, Ibid., 1, 70-71, 82-90, 95-96, 108.
127 Emmeline B. Wells edited the *Woman’s Exponent*, Ibid., 68-69.
128 Emmeline Wells and Zina Williams petitioned Congress concerning religious rights and polygamy. Eliza R. Snow and others wrote petitions to Governor Thomas Carlin of Missouri, as well as Acting Governor Thomas Mann of Utah Territory. Ibid., 68, 3.
129 Helen Mar Whitney, Ibid., 114.
Another prominent mode of education and intelligence for nineteenth-century women was the press. Douglas noted that women turned to the press and literary production in the second half of the nineteenth century as a means of feminine professionalization. Newspapers, poetry, memoirs, and pamphlets became tools of female evangelism, promoting socially appropriated activities as education, cultural opportunities, and moral improvement. Utah women were especially proud of their own Woman’s Exponent, started in 1872. Printed in Salt Lake City and distributed throughout the Utah Territory and beyond, the newspaper had a “serious diplomatic mission to the outside world.” Through the newspaper’s columns, Utah women spoke to the greater American public as a “public-relations machine persuading the scornful East that Mormons were respectable” in contrast to the national media’s portrayal of Utah women as ragged, downtrodden wretches.

Crocheron’s creation of the poster suggested the ability of these Mormon women to recast and re-imagine themselves. In the process, they educated the larger public about their identity as accomplished, respectable nineteenth-century women.

“Organiz’d according to the law of Heaven”—Refinement and Religion

Last, Crocheron’s Representative Women illustrated the elevated role of Mormon women in LDS theology. From its inception, Joseph Smith taught Relief Society women religious doctrine pertaining particularly to them as women within a religious structure. On 28 April 1842, he “exhorted the sisters always to concentrate their faith and prayers for, and place confidence in those whom God has appointed to honor, whom God has plac’d at the

---

131 Bushman, “Reports from the Field,” 297–298.
head to lead—that we should arm them with our prayers.” Relief Society members recognized their religious role as disciples of Jesus Christ. As women involved in charitable activity, they considered themselves representatives of the Savior. On 5 August 1843, Sister Chase “rose and spoke on the necessity of prayer and faith exhorted the Sisters to faithfulness to be much in prayer said she stood a living wittness for Jesus of Nazareth knew he had pourd his Spirit upon her. Inasmuch as we visit the sick we shall be blest I mean to do all that I can to releave their necessities we must be humble and overcome the power of darkness & live by faith.” The following week, Sister Billings “exhorted the sisters to be bold not timid or fearful in bearing their testimony.” Religious fervor emboldened the women to act and to act publicly.

While the national press condemned Mormon women for submitting to a patriarchal and oppressive religion, Crocheron depicted these women as active agents within their religion and society. Her biographies in the accompanying book included powerful personal testimony of conversion experiences, once more authorizing the women to believe and speak publicly in the name of their religion. Mormon women recast themselves as Mothers in Israel, the same way that Jewish women and evangelical women did. Contemporary author Edward W. Tullidge defined the female Saints as Hebrew “prophetesses,” “high priestesses,” and “seeresses” in his 1877 commentary, *The Women of Mormondom.*

Similar to Mormon women who struggled under negative stereotypes and persecution, Jewish women in the late nineteenth-century also strove to understand their

---

132 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 37.
133 Ibid., 5 August 1843, 105.
134 Ibid., 13 August 1843, 106.
history in their efforts to situate themselves in their present time. According to Pamela Nadell, progressive Jewish women in Philadelphia in 1889 argued for a female rabbi based on historical precedent, drawing on biblical examples of Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Huldah, and Esther.\footnote{Nadell argues in each era and denomination of American Judaism that women depended on their carefully selected interpretation of Jewish history. Nadell, \textit{Women Who Would Be Rabbi}s, 2.} Visually, New York City Jewish women drew on their religious heritage to advertise their refined, appropriately Americanized social and benevolent standing. A colorful lithograph depicts Esther and other traditional Purim characters advertising a benefit for the Hebrew Benevolent and Orphan Asylum Society. (Appendix, fig. 4.50) This example of ephemera revealed efforts not only of appropriate consumer refinement, but of the depiction of religious heritage through iconography—the royal figure of Esther.\footnote{Lithograph, invitation to Fancy Dress Ball, Purim Association of the City of New York, 1881, American Jewish Historical Society. Available online with the Jewish Women’s Archive at \texttt{<http://jwa.org/exhibits/wow/gratz/rg9.html>}, accessed 7 April 2008.}

Crocheron found ways to visualize LDS women’s religious participation and matriarchy within Mormon patriarchy. She drew on religious icons, some distinctly Mormon and others reflecting general trends in American religious iconography. Crocheron portrayed the women in socially-appropriate ways as suggested by Ann Douglas: agents within their social structure. Religion and culture intermingled and shaped each other, making religion cultural and culture religious.\footnote{Douglas, \textit{The Feminization of American Culture}, 6.} For example, Crocheron visually depicted the role of Mother in Israel with the divine hand of God and his light smiling down upon these representative daughters. (Appendix, fig. 4.51) The crown, clouds, streams of light, and hands of God symbolized his approval and implied glory and exaltation. Catholic iconography often included similar figures, and \textit{Noted Negro Women} intimated the value of such divinely visible

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{Douglas, \textit{The Feminization of American Culture}, 6.}
\end{itemize}
authority: “The effulgent rays of God’s glory cast their meteoric sparks upon our pathway.” The sheaf of wheat represented the gathering of the harvest, a popular evangelical motif and a Catholic symbol of the Eucharist. (Appendix, fig. 4.21) A woman blessing two kneeling figures illustrated the Pentecostal laying on of hands, indicating female participation. (Appendix, fig. 4.52) The practice of women laying hands on each other stemmed from Nauvoo. The beehive, a Utah Mormon motif, stood for industry, thrift, and resourcefulness, the kingdom of God on the earth. (Appendix, fig. 4.53) These symbols signified divine authority and connected LDS women to contemporary American religion.

Mormon literature and scriptures surrounding the portraits revealed an understanding of theology, countering accusations in the national press about patriarchal oppression and religious ignorance. Scriptural verses and a line from a popular Isaac Watts hymn indicated biblical understanding and contemporary popular religious worship. (Appendix, fig. 4.54) Around the portrait of Phoebe Woodruff, Crocheron depicted several books central to Mormon theology. (Appendix, fig. 4.55) The books surrounding Woodruff included the Doctrine and Covenants, a publication of revelations given to Joseph Smith, the Holy Bible, and the Book of Psalms. Another significant book adorning her portrait is Parley P. Pratt’s *Key to the Science of Theology*, one of the first foundational Mormon theological

139 Majors, *Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities*, ix.
142 Scripture references include “Lo, I am with you, even unto the end;” Matthew 28:20; “The Lord will provide;” Genesis 22:8; “I will lift up mine eyes from the hills from whence cometh my help;” Psalms 121:1; and “I was sick and ye visited me;” Matthew 25:36. Isaac Watts wrote “How Beauteous are Their Feet” in 1707: “How beauteous are their feet / Who stand on Zion’s hill; / Who bring salvation on their tongues / And words of peace reveal.” According to historian Karen Lynn Davidson, this Watts hymn appeared in the 1889 Manchester hymnal, printed in England, and later received a musical setting by George Careless in the 1889 *LDS Psalmody*. Personal email, 6 March 2013.
treatises, printed in 1855. In her biography of Woodruff, Crocheron maintained that the women “look upon her as one of the wisest women in the knowledge of the Scriptures and in her counsels among her sisters in the Church.” Similarly, Eliza R. Snow appeared front and center with her poem-hymn, “O My Father,” situating women as divine participants with God. (Appendix, fig. 4.17) Snow’s religious poetry and hymns both influenced and instructed the development of Mormon theology. Thus Crocheron’s visual inclusion of scripture and theological treatises located women within religious knowledge and action.

Representative Women of Deseret paid homage to the Nauvoo Relief Society not only with the visual cue of scrolls highlighting its 1842 founding and 1855 reorganization in Salt Lake City but also in the visual display of items relating to this part of the LDS female past. (Appendix, fig. 4.26) At the first meeting on 17 March 1842, John Taylor rejoiced “to see this Institution organiz’d according to the law of Heaven…. his prayer is that the blessings of God and the peace of heaven may rest on this Institution hereforth.” In a poem describing the Relief Society, written shortly after its organization in Nauvoo, secretary Eliza R. Snow proposed the mandate of refinement: “It is an Order, fitted and design’d / To meet the wants of body, and of mind— / To seek the wretched, in their long abode— / Supply

144 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, 38.
146 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842, 14.
their wants, and raise their hearts to God.”  

Seven of the women pictured were members of the Nauvoo Relief Society. Crocheron’s poster highlighted heavenly approbation from the top down with rays of light emanating from a divine crown and outstretched hands.

“So much remains to be told”—Unusable Past

Crocheron’s attempt to produce a visual representation for a broad public audience required careful selection. She chose the segments of LDS heritage which overlapped with socially accepted mainstream American culture. What Crocheron left off the poster provides additional insight into the concept of a usable past. Much of what she omitted stemmed from what set Mormon women apart from their contemporary American female cohorts.

She overlooked the Book of Mormon, central to LDS canon. Interestingly enough, the Nauvoo Relief Society did not make much use of the Book of Mormon either. Though the organization was an integral part of the LDS Church, early membership in Nauvoo generally used the Bible more than Joseph Smith’s translation of ancient American records. In addition to the Book of Mormon, the idea of Mormoness is also absent. According to Terryl L. Givens, “from the start, the record bearing Mormon’s name has served to identify and unify the Mormon people.” Yet the concept does not appear at all on the poster; even the title identifies these women as from Deseret rather than as Mormon women.

Most important, the poster omitted any reference to polygamy. While the creation of the lithograph stemmed from negative anti-polygamy press, very little on the poster referred to the Mormon practice of plural marriage, even in a positive light. The only covert reference

---

148 Eliza R. Snow, Zina D.H. Young, Prescendia L. Kimball, Mary Isabella Horne, Sarah Granger Kimball, Phoebe Woodruff, and Bathsheba Smith.
is Helen Mar Whitney’s publication, “Incidents in Nauvoo,” published as a series of articles in the *Woman’s Exponent*, defending polygamy.\(^\text{150}\) (Appendix, fig. 4.35) Representative Women’s accompanying book of biographies, however, included accounts of women witnessing of their belief in and support of the practice of plural marriage.\(^\text{151}\) According to historian Kathleen Flake, Latter-day Saints abandoned efforts in the 1880s to defend their marital practices to the outside world. She wrote, “Instead of being admonished to do the works and receive the blessings of Abraham,” Flake wrote, “the Latter-day Saints were encouraged to manifest Yankee virtues and Progressive Era values.”\(^\text{152}\) Crocheron focused instead on illustrations of socially appropriate refinement contingent with mainstream America.

Additionally, Crocheron did not illustrate the suffrage movement. Utah women were among the first in the country to vote in 1870. According to legal historian Sarah B. Gordon, territorial and federal leaders as well as an increasingly vocal number of the American public

\(^{150}\) According to historians Richard N. Holzapfel and Jeni B. Holzapfel, “Apparently, Helen Mar was responding in part to published reports about the Latter-day Saints that were sweeping the nation at this time. From the outside, Mormonism appeared as a monolithic institution where all women were enslaved by polygamy. However, Helen Mar demonstrates from the inside that LDS women’s experiences were filled with a variety of experiences and freedoms.” Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Jeni Broberg Holzapfel, eds., *A Woman’s View: Helen Mar Whitney’s Reminiscences of Early Church History* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), ix–xviii.

\(^{151}\) One woman pictured, Helen Mar Whitney, published tracts in support of polygamy, and two others, Emmeline B. Wells and Zina Y. Williams, petitioned Congress in Washington, D.C. for federal support of their religious rights. Two others, Zina D. Young and Romania Pratt, traveled to Washington in 1881 to defend their church, woman suffrage, and plural marriage. Whitney’s biography includes the personal difficulties she faced in coming to terms with the concept of plural marriage. She describes her parents’ ordeal in coming to understand and accept the principle of plural marriage, only after deep and sincere prayer. Her mother experienced a vision in which “the principle [of plural marriage] was revealed to her in all its glory.” Crocheron, *Representative Women of Deseret*, 109–110.

Crocheron, in her own autobiography, commented on the difficulties of plural marriage, concluding that the activity actually produced more refinement. “In 1870 I became the second wife of George W. Crocheron. I believed I should better please my Heavenly Father by so doing than by marrying otherwise. Any woman, no matter how selfish, can be a first and only wife, but it takes a great deal more christian philosophy and fortitude and self-discipline to be a wife in this order of marriage; and I believe those who choose the latter when both are equally possible, and do right therein, casting out all selfishness, judging self and not another, have attained a height, a mental power, a spiritual plane above those who have not. To do this is to overcome that which has its roots in selfishness, and it can be done if each will do what is right.” Ibid., 108.

initially assumed that suffrage would allow oppressed Mormon women to vote out polygamy. The majority of Mormon women continued to defend the practice as part of their religious freedoms. Many opponents contended that Mormon women voted as pawns of the priesthood. In 1880 some anti-Mormon women in Utah started publishing the *Anti-Polygamy Standard*, a newspaper opposing Mormon women. In 1884, a year after Crocheron’s publication, Woman’s Christian Temperance Union activist Angelina French Newman circulated a petition at the Methodist Home Missionary Society meeting calling for the revocation of woman suffrage in Utah. She garnered 250,000 signatures. In 1886, Senator George Edmunds claimed “the women’s voice in Utah had only increased the power of the church and its hold on political power in the territory.” The 1884 Edmunds Bill revoked Utah woman’s suffrage, passing the Senate in 1886. It joined with the Tucker Bill in the House as the Edmunds-Tucker Act. The law passed in 1887. The national woman suffrage movement distanced itself from women in Utah due to negative anti-polygamy press. Against this backdrop, Crocheron neglected to include suffrage. While Mormon women prided themselves on early suffrage, she did not include the right on this poster.

Crocheron left some significant women out altogether. Emma Smith, first “presidentess” of the Relief Society, does not appear on the poster, consigned to the “forgotten” past. Historian Susan M. Stabile discussed the role of significant elderly women as historical figures, linking past to present and acting as “living repositories of knowledge and cultural memory…. As cultural curiosities, aged women linked the past and future.”

---

Smith played a key role both in the inception of the Nauvoo Relief Society, as well as its 1844 demise. The opposition to her misuse of authority contributed to the tensions threatening patriarchal leaders. Once organized in Utah, the women of the Relief Society did not refer much to Emma Smith other than to recognize her role and her stance against polygamy. 156 Particularly through the political and social challenge to plural marriage, Emma Smith became a force to be reckoned with as women in Utah publicly supported plural marriage as instituted by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, publicly recognized in 1852 and practiced by a small percentage of the LDS population until 1890. Because of Emma’s understandable opposition to the practice, and because she did not join the Saints in their westward emigration, references to her were often polarized, used to describe trouble and opposition.

Crocheron did not visualize traditional Victorian domesticity, although family played a central role in LDS theology and society. Perhaps this omission stemmed from the distinct Mormon family structure based on plural marriage. Of the twenty women pictured, eighteen were plural wives. Four were married to Joseph Smith. 157 Two sets of mothers and daughters were included but were not connected in any particular manner on the poster. 158 Crocheron focused instead on public and civic activity.

156 That a tenuous connection seems to have lingered in the public mind is suggested by Eliza R. Snow’s statement in 1868: “It has been said that the Society in Nauvoo did more harm than good, but it was not So…. Emma Smith . . . gave it up so as not to lead the society in Error[.].” West Jordan Ward, “Relief Society Minute Book A, 1868-1915,” n.d., 7 September 1868, 3–4, Church History Library; Kimball, “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” 17 July 1880, 11; “R.S. Reports,” 53–54; “General Minutes, Harrisville Ward, Farr West Stake, Vol. 14, 1850-1914,” n.d., 67, Church History Library.

157 Eliza R. Snow, Zina D.H. Young, Prescindia L. Kimball, and Helen Mar Whitney were sealed to Joseph Smith. Only Sarah Kimball and Hannah Tapfield King were monogamous.

158 Zina D.H. Young and her daughter Zina Young Williams, and Emmeline B. Wells and her daughter Louie Wells.
Last, Crocheron did not include a visual presentation of the persecution and suffering that marked Mormon identity, either. Many of the “representative women” had been viciously attacked, raped, and driven out of Missouri and Illinois based on their religious affiliation. Their biographies mention their victimization, but Crocheron took a different tack, perhaps because she was not among the first generation who experienced the persecution. Crocheron presented these women as appropriately political, refined, civilized, and genteel. To have been so treated would diminish their value as refined ladies.

In conclusion, the reception of Crocheron’s lithograph demonstrated its value to the Mormon community. Local Utah newspapers accorded praise to the poster. The Deseret News called it “a veritable work of art in its design and execution” and a “worthy medium.” The Woman’s Exponent described it as “very pretty” and a “very unique affair” but with the caveat: “being something entirely new will naturally meet with criticism, though the effort of Sister Crocheron was a good and laudable one, and she deserves success and patronage.”

Representative Women influenced young people. Crocheron wrote in the introduction of her book about her hope to reach the youth of Mormondom, that “this work shall cause them to appreciate their honored parents more,” to acknowledge their sacrifices and experiences. The Juvenile Instructor, an LDS magazine for children, editorialized about the

---

161 “Women of Deseret: Mrs. Crocheron’s Latest Achievement.”
162 “Editorial Notes,” Woman’s Exponent 12, no. 17 (February 1, 1884): 132.
163 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, ii.
social milieu evidenced at Snow’s birthday party. While the column does not specifically reference *Representative Women*, the author spoke clearly about Mormon female identity and echoed the principles illustrated in the book and the poster: “It is not too much to say that we are engaged in laying a new foundation of a new civilization, and the ladies of our people, of whom Sister Snow Smith is the leader, are performing a noble and wonderfully influential part of the work.” The author proceeded to comment on the state of LDS women. She concluded that they were experienced and capable as well as grand and noble. She said, their “strength, dignity of character, and superiority of manner that lifts them up above the ordinary level of [their] sex. They stand on a higher plane.” Finally, the author imagined future generations looking back at the poster as an example of power and perfection.164

Six weeks after the poster’s premier, a letter from the president of the Graphic Company to Crocheron appeared in the *Deseret News*. The letter, extolling the book’s virtues, was also printed in the *Woman’s Exponent*. John Gault wrote, “I have no doubt whatever but if that book was circulated and read generally in the eastern part of the Union, a very different opinion would prevail upon the subject of Mormonism, as one cannot do else than admire the zeal with which the good women mentioned have worked for the cause in which they are interested.”165 Immediate recognition of Crocheron’s work was highly praiseworthy.

Beyond the 1884 birthday celebration and subsequent press accounts, however, *Representative Women* leaves an elusive trail. The 15 February 1884 issue of the *Woman’s Exponent*...
Exponent advertised the book for sale at their editorial office for the price of one dollar.\textsuperscript{166} While the book seems to have circulated—it now appears either in hard copy or microform in over one hundred academic and public libraries across the country and abroad, and in at least three different reprints—it is difficult to trace the readership immediately following its publication and its success at describing a more positive female Mormon image.\textsuperscript{167}

It is even more difficult to trace the distribution of the poster. Records for the Graphic Company were missing, and, because the lithograph was a limited edition, the poster probably did not have a wide circulation. Crocheron independently funded the printing of the poster (as well as her trip East to print and copyright the lithograph). And without an official institutional sponsorship, it would have been difficult to market the piece on a national level.\textsuperscript{168} The popular collection of poster-type lithographs did not begin on a large scale until the 1890s, and the craze tapered off by the end of the nineteenth century. According to Neil Harris, “the principal use of posters is no longer to impart information about events, but to impart impressions about ourselves.”\textsuperscript{169} Regardless of its lack of quantifiable success, the lithograph and the book appeared as a conscious effort to reinterpret, to instruct, and to incorporate LDS females into nineteenth-century America.\textsuperscript{170}

\textsuperscript{166} “Editorial Notes.” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} vol. 12, no. 18 (15 February 1884): 141.
\textsuperscript{168} The \textit{Woman’s Exponent} editorialized that Crocheron has “labored under an accumulation of difficulties in bringing the work before the public.” “Editorial Notes,” February 1, 1884; Crocheron, \textit{Representative Women of Deseret}, 108; Madsen, \textit{An Advocate for Women}, 22–23, 462–463; Whitney, \textit{A Widow’s Tale: The 1884-1896 Diary of Helen Mar Whitney}.
\textsuperscript{169} Harris, “American Poster Collecting: A Fitful History,” 11, 18, 29–31; Weitenkampf, \textit{American Graphic Art}, 273.
\textsuperscript{170} Crocheron closed her introduction with this: “That this work may go forth from my humble home as a missionary, a silent worker of great good is my fervent hope.” Crocheron, \textit{Representative Women of Deseret}, ii.
Representative Women has been preserved as an important piece of LDS female heritage. The Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) drew lesson plans from the book.\textsuperscript{171} Historiographically, early scholars of Mormon women’s history have made representative women subjects of study.\textsuperscript{172} Although historiographical trends have shifted, the effort to capture the original voices and intent remains strong. According to David Lowenthal, “to share a legacy is to belong to a family, a community, a race, a nation. What each inherits is in some measure unique, but common commitment binds us to others within our group.”\textsuperscript{173} Crocheron’s use of mnemonic symbols evidenced her effort to reclaim a past misunderstood by the general public. The poster and the book contributed a process by which Crocheron and her “representative women” constructed public memory of a quest for refinement.

Today, Crocheron’s lithograph seems destined for oblivion. A single 1897 photograph shows a framed copy of Representative Women of Deseret on the wall above Joseph Horne’s casket.\textsuperscript{174} (Appendix, fig. 4.56) Another copy hangs in a crowded hallway in the basement of the DUP museum.\textsuperscript{175} Other institutions own copies of the lithograph: the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{172} Biographies, autobiographies, and reminiscences were published in the Woman’s Exponent (1872-1914). Several different series of books published by the DUP celebrated Mormon women as pioneer heroines: Heart Throbs of the West (1939-1951, 12 vols.); Treasures of Pioneer History (1952-1957, 6 vols.); Our Pioneer Heritage (1958-1977, 20 vols.); An Enduring Legacy (1978-1990, 12 vols.).
\item \textsuperscript{175} The DUP actually owns three framed copies of the lithograph. One was donated to the headquarters museum in Salt Lake City by the “Thorn” camp.
\end{itemize}
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Library of Congress, and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. Like Catholic, Jewish, and black Baptist women, Mormon women appropriated widely-used cultural symbols to present themselves as politically respectable, culturally refined, well educated, civically responsible, and religiously active. The visual representation of the women on the poster, decorated with the fruits of their efforts, continues to speak to those willing to look and listen.
Figure 4.1. *Representative Women of Deseret*, lithograph, Augusta Joyce Crocheron, 1883
LDS Church History Library, 21” x 31”
Figure 4.2. “Pure White ‘Mormon Immigration’ on the Atlantic Coast. More cheap ‘help-mates’ for Mr. Polygamist.” Thomas Nast, *Harpers Weekly*, 25 March 1882

Figure 4.3. “Ball at the Mormon Theater”
*Harpers Weekly*, 1857

Figure 4.5. “Uncle Sam’s Troublesome Bedfellows”
*The Wasp*, 8 February 1879

Figure 4.5. “The Three Troublesome Children” depicting Mormons, Chinese, and Indians. Frederick Keller, *The Wasp*, 16 December 1881
Figure 4.6. “Uncle Sam’s Nightmare,” *The Wasp*  
24 March 1882

Figure 4.7. “Don’t Believe in That.  
What the Irish Catholic Children will be Told to Do  
Next,” *Harpers Weekly*, 23 December 1871

Figure 4.8. “Two Girls of the Period”  
*Harpers Weekly* 20 March 1869

Figure 4.9. “The Roman Catholic Revival”  
*Harpers Weekly*
Figure 4.10. Matthew B. Brady, “Union Martyrs” photographs of Union Generals killed in the Civil War, ca. 1869. Gilder Lehrman Collection.

Figure 4.11. Presidents of the United States G. & W. Endicott. Library of Congress.

Figure 4.12. Sarah Kimball Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.13. Emmeline B. Wells Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.14. Zina Young Williams
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.15. Scroll, YLMIA, Primary Association
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.16. Prescenda L. Kimball
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.17. Eliza R. Snow
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.18. Deseret Hospital
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.19. Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Alamo Heights, San Antonio, Texas, 1869-1919, pamphlet

Figure 4.20. Golden Jubilee Souvenir of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Alamo Heights, San Antonio, Texas, 1869-1919, pamphlet

Figure 4.21. grain
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.22. Chicago World’s Fair
Board of Lady Managers

Figure 4.23. Daughters of the American Revolution

Figure 4.24. Young Ladies’ Christian Association

Figure 4.25. General Relief Society Presidents
*Relief Society Magazine* 6:3 (March 1920): 126
Figure 4.26. scroll, Relief Society organization
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.27. Godey’s Lady’s Book, July 1865

Figure 4.28. Godey’s Lady’s Book

Figure 4.29. The Ladies Home Journal

Figure 4.30. Mark Twain, “I Was Touched,”
Roughing It, 1872
Figure 4.32. Alexander Bassano, “Miss Hilda Hanbury”
New York Public Library

Figure 4.31. Trade Cards, Florida Water perfume company, 1876-1878, New York Public Library

Figure 4.33. Fiftieth Anniversary pamphlet

Figure 4.34. Zina D.H. Young
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.35. Helen Mar Whitney
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.36. pansy
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.37. Ellen Clawson
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.38. Eliza R. Snow, Cairo, Egypt, 1873
LDS Church History Library

Figure 4.39. lilies
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.40. lilies
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.41. Louie Wells
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.42. Noted Negro Women: Their Triumphs and Activities, 258

Figure 4.43. Gold Jubilee of the General Association of Colored Baptists in Kentucky, 138-139

Figure 4.44. American Baptist Home Mission Societies, Twenty-nine Years’ Work among Negroes

Figure 4.45. Mary Ann Freeze
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.46. Romania Pratt
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.47. Emily Hill Woodmansee
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.48. Hannah Tapfield King
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.49. Augusta Joyce Crocheron
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.50. Lithograph invitation, Purim Association of the City of New York, 1881. American Jewish Historical Society

Figure 4.51. Divine rays of light
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.52. Women blessing
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.53. Beehive
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.54. Isaac Watts hymn
Representative Women of Deseret
Figure 4.55. Phoebe Woodruff
Representative Women of Deseret

Figure 4.56. Joseph Home's funeral, 30 April 1897
Joseph Smith visited the sixth meeting of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo on 28 April 1842, where he made a prophetic statement: “This Society shall have power to command Queens in their midst—I now deliver it as a prophecy that before ten years shall roll round, the queens of the earth shall come and pay their respects to this Society.” At other times, Smith had considered LDS women to be queens and priestesses in association with temple rituals, but in 1842, his remarks reached beyond the small Mormon kingdom and predicted royal recognition from well outside Nauvoo city limits.

A little more than fifty years later, the Relief Society gained a global audience far beyond the humble church and its somewhat dishonorable reputation. From Nauvoo to Utah, Mormon women embraced their geographic and cultural isolation. The Saints were drawn into Frederick Jackson Turner’s exceptionalist interpretation of the American West. They, too, believed that as the frontier closed and the evolving national political, economic, and cultural systems expanded to include the Utah desert into an American state, part of the distinct nature and freedom of the West shifted. Just 270 miles from Nauvoo, Mormon women at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair participated on more equal social footing than they had ever before vis-à-vis their national and international female counterparts. And there

---

1 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 39, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2 Joseph Smith said “he was going to make of this [Relief] Society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day—as in Paul’s day.” Ibid., 30 March 1842, 22; Tullidge, The Women of Mormondom, 488; Eliza R. Snow, “An Address,” Woman’s Exponent 2, no. 8 (September 1873): 63.
were queens in attendance. In addition to Queen Victoria’s representatives, Queen Isabella of Castile made a symbolic appearance as women around the country, including Utah women, organized Queen Isabella Associations to pay homage to the female monarch, revered sponsor of Columbus.

Utah women, including Mormons and those of other faiths, contributed much to exhibit at the fair. Perhaps their most pivotal display piece was a hand-crafted album of poetry and artwork, *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*. (Appendix, fig. 5.1) At first glance, *Songs and Flowers* appeared similar to the hundred or so other Victorian-era poetry books in the Woman’s Building Library. The cream cover of the book, measuring at 10” x 12”, with its gold-plated title lettering and delicate pink wild roses, appears similar to a wide number of nature anthologies. Hand-painted watercolor flowers and scenic vistas trailed over the thirty-three pages of highly sentimental or romantic thirty-four poems. Verses adorned with violets, roses, geraniums, and ivy pontificated on motherhood, hope, patriotism, and love, following the Victorian treacle tradition. Themes, including geography, gender, and religion, common topics in romantic-era America, permeated its pages.

---


Careful scrutiny of the volume and its cultural context reveals much more than the sentimental affectations valorizing home and land, typical of the time. Rather, the book demonstrated a concerted presentation of refined heritage and usable past derived from the Utah landscape. The title came from the Wasatch Range, a rugged western line of the Rocky Mountains extending more than 150 miles down the center of Utah. Consisting of poetry written by the territory’s most accomplished female poets and illustrated with Edna Sloan’s hand-painted designs, the book showcased poetic and artistic skill. (Appendix, fig. 5.2) The artistry and literary sophistication sharply contrasted with the impressions of LDS women in popular media as either buxom, polygamous prostitutes or duped victims of male depravity.

In addition, *Songs and Flowers* exhibited a blend of Mormon branding with American heritage. Poems included both a theology unique to the Latter-day Saints with odes to the Utah landscape. These themes merged with appropriate nineteenth-century tributes to Isabelle of Castille, pioneer mothers, and the Virgin Mary. *Songs and Flowers* illustrated what John Bodnar called “the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions.”

The book was no best seller. Each of the three known editions was hand-painted and, therefore, each piece was a singular representation of material culture. Utah women

---

7 According to Robert Olpin, Thomas Rugh, and Ann Orton, “A spectacular grouping of rugged mountains, the Wasatch Range extends more than 150 miles, north to south, dividing and anchoring the landscape of Utah… The lofty peaks vary in appearance. Some sit buried in rocky shelves while others bask in densely packed forests. Some boast meadows of inspiring wildflowers while others struggle to sustain a single living plant. Some issue gracious invitations for exploration and adventure while others post imaginary ‘no trespassing’ notices as a warning of harsh terrain and foreboding conditions.” Robert S. Olpin, Thomas F. Rugh, and Ann W. Orton, *Painters of the Wasatch Mountains* (Gibbs Smith, 2005), 2–4.


10 Only two copies are accounted for in archival collections: one is located in the “Addition to the Emmeline B. Wells Collection,” donated by Phyllis Southwick, at L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. A galley version of the book, minus Edna Wells Sloan’s hand-painted
proudly displayed two copies at the fair: one in the Woman’s Building Library and the other in the Utah Building’s main room. More important, attention to the book’s purpose and its strategic appropriation of identity with careful display ranging from education to geography as social markers illustrated the construction of a usable past for Mormon women at a critical moment. The album focused on the environment, both showcasing the inspirational beauty of Utah’s mountains and deserts through text and image and venerating the women who successfully refined and tamed this western wilderness. As a literary and artistic portfolio, *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* celebrated Utah women as mothers, pioneers, colonizers, goddesses, poets, and queens, hardy and tenacious, yet sensitive and romantic. The album illustrated the World’s Fair combination of modern progress and nostalgic sentimentality. Besides geography and gender, *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* represented a pivotal, concerted shift away from institutional Mormon history toward a non-denominational, socially-accepted American cultural and religious heritage.

**The Chicago World’s Fair: A Crossroads of Women’s Sentimentality and Progress**

*Songs and Flowers* exhibited the tensions and paradoxes of a usable past for Mormon women at the end of the nineteenth century. The album showcased literary refinement inspired by the western wilderness. A brief overview of the Relief Society context provides insight into the transition from a Mormon institutional history to a secular western history.

---

watercolor illustrations, belongs to the LDS Church History Library. In her diary, Emmeline B. Wells wrote about three copies of *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*: “Of the three books Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch dedicated to Margaret Blaine Salisbury one is for me it is the one in the Woman’s Building—the one in the Utah Building is for Emily S. Richards and the one designed for the Liberal Arts is in the Organization of the Woman’s building is for me.” Emmeline B. Wells, “Diary, Vol. 15,” holograph, 1892-1903, MSS 1407, Box 2, folder 1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

The Latter-day Saints built the city of Nauvoo, Illinois, with the intent to escape from persecution and find a home for religious practice. The Nauvoo Relief Society existed to support and to promote female efforts in a variety of ways, religiously, culturally, and intellectually. For example, Nauvoo Relief Society secretary Eliza R. Snow published poetry often in Nauvoo-area papers such as the *Quincy Whig*, *Times and Seasons*, and *Nauvoo Neighbor*. Early church leaders highlighted intelligence as a noteworthy cause for Mormon women in Nauvoo. In 1842, Bishop Newel K. Whitney counseled Relief Society women: “I rejoice that God has given us means whereby we may get intelligence and instruction... if we have intelligence we have pow’r—knowledge is power: if we understand all things we shall not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of God.”

Once Brigham Young reinstated the Relief Society in 1866, women contributed in significant ways to community development—well beyond religious discussion. From sericulture to suffrage, from midwifery to medical school, the Relief Society advanced a progressive agenda. In 1892, the Relief Society celebrated its fifty-year jubilee anniversary, remembering their founding in Nauvoo through a carefully-planned reunion meeting held in worldwide Relief Society congregations at the same hour. In April 1893, the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated, another notable occasion for Mormon women when they joined their male priesthood counterparts in the highest form of religious ritual. In the temple, they acted as priestesses in uniting “families and kindreds in bonds inseparable.”

---

12 Newel K. Whitney “did rejoice at the formation of the Society that we might improve upon our talents.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 27 May 1842, 58.
15 A *Woman’s Exponent* editorial stated that “no event of modern time is so important, and fraught with such momentous consequences to the world and its inhabitants as the opening of this holy edifice for the
Despite their own successes in Utah, Mormon women continued to bristle at outsiders’ perceptions. Years of isolation in the West, far outside the American cultural mainstream, as well as religious and political persecution had separated Mormons geographically and ideologically. Their practice of polygamy chafed against nineteenth-century domestic propriety. While the press generally depicted marginal religious and ethnic women in a negative light, newspaper articles demonized Mormon women. Political cartoons caricatured them, and sensational romance novels portrayed them as either victims or whores. LDS women worked to countermand the existing prejudice often exhibited in racial or similar terms and manners. They mirrored their non-Protestant neighbors across the country and illustrated the use of socially appropriated tools of religion, culture, and heritage to strategically position themselves in the present mainstream.

Mormons as a whole made concerted efforts to join mainstream America. An 1890 manifesto ended the practice of polygamy. Attempts at female social networking placed Latter-day Saint women in league with their American counterparts in suffrage efforts and with the National Council of Women, an organization that worked to unite and support women’s groups across the country, who continued to question Mormon capabilities. By November 1892, Utah women expressed their desire to be numbered among their women

---

administration of ordinances that pertain to the living and to the dead, to the past and the present.” “Temple Dedication,” Woman’s Exponent 21, no. 20–21 (May 15, 1893): 156.

16 The Relief Society, Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, and the Primary Association joined the International Council of Women in 1888, “which is a Federation of women’s associations all over the world; this is a wonderful step in the march of advancement for women everywhere, uniting them in one great band of sisterhood, a common sympathy with each others’ interests and for the accomplishment of the greatest good for each and all.” Emmeline B. Wells, “The Jubilee Celebration,” Woman’s Exponent 20, no. 17 (March 15, 1892): 132. See also Rebekah J. Ryan, “In the World: Latter-day Saints in the National Council of Women, 1888-1987,” in Latter-day Saint Women in the Twentieth Century: Summer Fellows’ Papers, 2003, ed. Claudia L. Bushman (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and BYU Studies, 2003), 131–147.
According to Susa Young Gates, editor of the LDS Young Woman’s Journal, “We, the women of Utah, have been considered slave and fools, have been looked upon as without mind or intelligence. That we are true to our husbands and families has been accounted to us as a sure mark of vile inferiority of intellect.” As a result of such discrimination, the women from Utah worked hard to prove their mental acuity. In Chicago, some 1400 miles from Salt Lake City, Mormon women joined with women from around the world to participate in a global effort to recognize and value women’s contributions both past and the present. Three years later, in 1896, Utah became a state, a significant milestone in the acceptance of Mormon cultural identity.

In 1893, the world’s eyes turned to Chicago for the Columbian World Exposition. On the banks of Lake Michigan, architects Daniel Burnham and Frederick Olmstead designed the White City, a Beaux Art memorial covering 600 acres with over 200 buildings. Twenty seven million visitors immersed themselves in exhibitions of technology, science, culture, and commemoration, showcasing the progress of the past and the advancement of the future. The fair not only commemorated the arrival of Columbus in America and celebrated American exceptionalism, but it also inaugurated modernism, mingling electricity with relics and juxtaposing significant pieces of history with future technology.

17 “Every woman should make an effort to do something in this direction that Utah may not be behind any other state of equal size and population.” “Mass Meeting of Women,” Woman’s Exponent 21, no. 9 (November 1, 1892): 68.
18 Susa Young Gates, “Editor’s Department,” Young Woman’s Journal 4, no. 7 (April 1893): 326.
The fair, according to Reid L. Neilson, “marked the dramatic reengagement of the church with the non-Mormon world after decades of relative isolation in the Great Basin valleys of the American West.” Utahns contributed exhibits ranging from the popular Utah Building to the Liberal Arts Building, the Transportation Building, the Mining Building, and the Agricultural Building. While Mormon men were denied representation at the World’s Parliament of Religions, women participated in the World’s Congress of Representative Women. And the Mormon Tabernacle Choir won second place in the Grand Eisteddfod choral competition. The Columbia Exposition seemed the perfect opportunity to design a newly crafted representation of Mormon women’s identity.  

While Burnham and Olmstead erected buildings dedicated to technology and manufacturing and Utah’s committee planned its contributions, Sophia Hayes oversaw construction of the fair’s Woman’s Building. In the height of the Victorian era, women took their prescribed responsibility as guardians of history and custodians of culture quite seriously. Following an initiation of women’s public exhibition at the 1876 Philadelphia’s Centennial, women from Chicago’s social clubs organized a Board of Lady Managers to coordinate the exhibition of women’s industries. In 1893, they mediated between past and present as they constructed a glimpse at a female heritage evidenced by their material artifacts. They wanted their Woman’s Building to illustrate the progress of women through the four hundred years since the voyage of Columbus. The bulk of displays, according to

---

*Mystic Chords of Memory; Landsberg, Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture.*

21 Over seven thousand Latter-day Saints from Utah attended the fair and over two million non-Mormons visited the Utah Building, with countless others sent exhibition items. Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair,* 7, 74, 76, 106-140.

Anita Miller, were “exercises in nostalgia.” Exhibits from around the world demonstrated women’s unique handwork, arts and crafts, photographs, industrial specimens, books, relics, and domestic manufacture. At the same time the National Woman’s Suffrage Association actively promoted women’s rights and Jane Addams coordinated the progressive Hull House to Americanize Chicago’s inner city immigrants, educational displays in the Women’s and Children’s Buildings touted technological innovations around exhibits of homespun. Handwork and murals of women posing as Greek figures presented a conservative, traditional view of the role and heritage of woman.

A second-floor room with large windows, dark oak bookcases, upholstered furniture, and a ceiling mural housed the Women’s Memorial Library in the Woman’s Building. The Library catalogued more than 7,000 writings to showcase the first global collection of women in print. Books were catalogued by state and by country, all written by women. But it was not just the printed texts that proved these women to be astute authors; the specialty book-bindings, the rare manuscripts, and the actual collection—the provenance and use of women’s writing for literary clubs as well as for the average home—all revealed their worth as representative artifacts. The very collection of the Woman’s Building Library

24 Weimann, The Fair Women.
25 Ibid., 356–357.
28 The Board of Lady Managers coordinated the Woman’s Building Library but relied on boards from each state to supply the library in their own ways. According to Blanch Bellamy, chair of the Committee of Literature, requirements included “first, an historical and chronological collection of all books written by women, native or resident of the State; second, a series of chronicles prepared by and representing every literary club which had been organized for more than three years, and third, a record of the work done in the press and periodicals; the entire exhibit to be presented afterwards to the State library.” Candace Wheeler, a
indicated an infatuation with a usable past as women from each state strategically selected representations for the world’s view. *Songs and Flowers* was embedded in this context.

The Chicago Board of Lady Managers quickly evangelized their efforts across the country. According to Board of Lady Managers representative to Utah, Clara Elsie Thatcher, speaking in the Salt Lake City Tabernacle on 25 June 1892, the fair was an opportunity to promote the cause of women. She told them: “you must be so enthused with this spirit [of advancing and displaying your own resources, and showing what Utah is], that you will wish to give to Utah the highest place among her sister States and Territories.... Every man and woman of you must put your shoulders to the wheel and help to make your representation second to none.”29 Utah selected two women to serve as correspondents with the Board of Lady Managers and established committees in counties throughout the Territory.

Utah women did not easily agree on their proper representative contribution. Efforts were divided between the Utah Building, the Woman’s Building, and various other exhibitions such as the Liberal Arts Building and the Journalism Building. Silk associations throughout the territory created portieres to deck the Woman’s Building, and artists contributed paintings for various displays. A panel of Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Unitarian, Mormon, and Evangelical women from various denominations formed a committee to report their religious work.30 The final report summed up their efforts: “Their desire was to make a display that should not only be a credit to the women of Utah, but to woman. In common with their sisters of other States and

member of the Library Decorations Committee, felt the importance of making people feel “at home in a library atmosphere.” Weimann, *The Fair Women*, 355, 357.


countries, they realized that for the first time in the history of the world, women had been offered an opportunity of golden possibilities.” The silk exhibitions allowed Utah women to present creations similar to their American and international female counterparts.

The effort to represent female literacy and skill proved important. Along with Woman’s Library book contributions by African American and Native American women and Catholic and Jewish women, Utah women struggled to make their collective voice heard and valued. At the same time that the religious denominations reported their work, literary women worked to do the same. Clara Thatcher, visiting Utah in the summer of 1892 in advance of the fair, encouraged Utah women to contribute to the Woman’s Library. The Salt Lake Literary Club wrote their history and included poems and illustrations. Utah women also contributed copies of the Woman’s Exponent, the LDS Relief Society’s bimonthly newspaper. Books of poetry and fiction by several Utah women, including Augusta Joyce Crocheron’s Representative Women of Deseret, rounded out the Utah women’s contribution.

The milieu of women’s club work, local silk associations, non-denominational committees creating statistical and denominational reports, and territorial poets and artists contributed to the collaboration of Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch. Edited by Emmeline B.

33 “We shall have … a library with books written only by women, and they have written some very good ones.” Thatcher, “Women’s Work in the World’s Fair,” 2; “World’s Fair Notes,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 4 (August 15, 1892): 32.
35 The Woman’s Exponent contribution was described in an editorial: “It is handsomely bound in red morocco with the name in gold letters on the outside, and will speak better than mere words for the women of the Territory.” “Editorial Notes,” March 15, 1884.
Wells, the book juxtaposed Edna Wells Sloan’s watercolors with Utah poetry. George Q. Cannon and Sons, a local publishing house in Salt Lake City, printed *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*. Cannon was the father-in-law to editor Emmeline B. Wells’s daughter, Annie Wells Cannon. The book was dedicated to Margaret Salisbury, the chair of Utah’s Lady Commissioners. By drawing on a number of prominent women of different local religions, editors Wells and Horne demonstrated a united front. The book was completed and three copies sent to Chicago in June 1893. Hailed as “something to be proud of and every woman in Utah should have a laudable pride in the work,” the book was immediately placed in the Woman’s Building for exhibition. The combination of art and poetry in *Songs and Flowers* revealed the way in which Utah women fashioned their historical narrative within a larger global framework. (Appendix, fig. 5.2)

*Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* demonstrated a material example of the creation of a usable past by Mormon women in the strategic selection and concerted presentation of

---

36 Madsen, *An Advocate for Women*, 25–26, 387–388; Wells, *Charities and Philanthropies*. Edna Wells Sloan was the daughter of Emmeline’s sister-wife, Martha Given Harris Sloan. These family connections proved valuable to the women, enabling them to create networks of support. For genealogical information on Edna Wells Sloan, see Family Search: <https://new.familysearch.org/en/action/hourglassiconicview?bookid=p.KWJK-JTB&focus=p.KWJK-JTB&svfs=1>, accessed 17 December 2011. Sloan’s father-in-law, Edward Lennox Sloan, was the editor of the Salt Lake Herald. As editor, he encouraged and mentored the beginning of the *Woman’s Exponent*.

37 It is significant that a local Utah company printed the book, particularly because of the family connections and early Mormon heritage. Cannon emigrated from England as a teenager to Nauvoo in 1843, where he learned his trade from John Taylor in the offices of Nauvoo newspapers including *Times and Seasons* and *Nauvoo Neighbor*. Wendell J. Ashton, “The Instructor,” in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, ed. Kate B. Carter, vol. 10 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 3-5), 4.


poetry and art. The book was not just an attractive album. It presented a creation of a usable past, pointing particularly to western settlement and the display of refined literary and artistic skills. The women selected only the pieces of their past that matched present standards and to represent Utah women as culturally refined. Neither a money-making endeavor nor a souvenir, *Songs and Flowers* exhibited craftsmanship, literary skill, and Victorian sentimentality in an effort to demonstrate Mormon identity in the cultural mainstream. While the book was created for display before an international audience at the fair, perhaps its most immediate and long lasting significance was for the creators themselves. They developed relationships across town and across the country that would serve them in the future. Particularly, the book demonstrates efforts to strategically recognize and utilize social markers including literary prowess, cultural refinement, American heritage, religion, geography, and gender.

“Knowledge and intelligence shall flow down”—Education and Literary Prowess

From its organization in Nauvoo, the LDS Relief Society emphasized the value of education and literacy. Joseph Smith told the women “I now turn the key to you in the name of God and this Society shall rejoice and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time—this is the beginning of better days, to this Society.”

Sixty-five years after its founding, Emmeline B. Wells considered the fledgling Nauvoo Female Relief Society “a society for woman’s higher education and advancement,” proudly proclaiming that the LDS group predated Boston’s first female literary clubs by twenty-six years.

The Chicago World’s Fair became a location for women to demonstrate their education and literary prowess. As she encouraged the women of Utah to actively participate

---

41 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40.
in the fair, Clara Elsie Thatcher referred to education’s value to youth. “Education is the
great lever that shall lift the world from vice and degradation. Education is the great key that
shall unlock the storehouse of nature, and shall put into your hands as willing slaves, the
great power of nature. Education is the sunlight that shall drive away the mists and miasmas
of ignorance, vice and superstition. Education is the sunlight that shall show to you the face
of your God, and lead you to know his love for you.”

_Songs and Flowers_ highlighted an educated group of women on the far western outpost
of Utah. Each of the poets exhibited a desire for literary refinement above the drudgery of
everyday life. Lucinda Dalton grew up in small-town Beaver, Utah. She was according to
biographers, “an intellectual and gifted daughter of a school teacher, she was often frustrated
that the ‘mixed and ill-regulated schools of new countries’ could not provide her with more
than a scattered education.” She taught school at the age of twelve and continued for
many years. (Appendix, fig. 5.3) Ellen B. Ferguson, a doctor, was educated at Cambridge. (Appendix, fig. 5.4) Also educated in England was Hannah Cornaby. She and her husband
had owned a bookstore there before coming to Utah. (Appendix, fig. 5.5) Esther A.
Bennion’s great-great grandson remembered her as a pioneer of Rush Valley and the Muddy

---

44 Susan Howe and Sheree Maxwell Bench, eds., _Discoveries: Two Centuries of Poems by Mormon Women_ (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, Brigham Young University, 2004), 96.
45 “She was a sincere and energetic worker, and at all times brought out the best efforts of her pupils, and encouraged them to seek a higher and better education. Her students speak of her with love, and remember her untiring interest in their behalf. In the crude and rough buildings and little or none of the equipment belonging to a school room, she carried on, and kept the spirit of learning alive and active.” “Sarah Lucinda Lee Dalton,” in _Heart Throbs of the West_, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, n.d.), 155.
47 Hannah Cornaby’s husband, Samuel Cornaby, was a school teacher. Whitney, _History of Utah_, 4:595; “Poets and Lyricists,” in _An Enduring Legacy_, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, n.d.), 427.
Mission in Nevada, but “her ambition was directed more toward writing and reading well than toward acquiring more land.”

Bennion expressed her opinion in support of education for girls in a series of editorials for the *Woman’s Exponent*: “Let every mother see to it as far as she has influence, that her daughters have at least equal chance of education with her boys. My own opinion is that they ought to have better, for are they not to be the future Mothers in Zion? And if as is said mothers are mostly responsible for the moulding and shaping of the infant mind, should not our daughters be influenced mentally and physically with this in view?”

Her influence was certainly evident in her son Israel, who while sheepherding in the mountains of Utah, “carried a Bible in one saddlebag and a volume of Shakespeare in another.”

Other *Songs and Flowers* poets demonstrated the late nineteenth-century process of education for women. Ruth May Fox, whose poem concluded the album, grew up working in England’s woolen mills, operating heavy machinery. She immigrated to America and crossed the plains to Utah in 1865 at the age of twelve, where she continued to help support her family by working in Brigham Young’s wool factory. Because of a sporadic education in her youth, Fox completed correspondence courses as an adult and improved her skills enough to later be elected as president of the Utah Women’s Press Club in 1897. Her story illustrates the rags-to-riches story often celebrated in American heritage.

---

48 “As an indentured servant in England, she practiced reading the newspapers plastered to the wall of the outhouse. When her master discovered why she was taking so long, he turned the papers upside down, but that only made her reading more challenging.” John Bennion, “The Chimerical Desert,” *BYU Studies* 32, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 31.


51 Ruth May Fox also worked at the mill in Ogden and at her father’s family mill. “Ruth May Fox--104 Years,” in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, vol. 7 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, n.d.), 345.
Beyond highlighting their education, the female poets of *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* worked diligently to demonstrate their literary prowess. Emmeline B. Wells addressed the National Woman’s Relief Society Congress on 20 May 1893 on the topic of “Western Women Authors and Journalists.” Utah women exhibited several books at the fair in the Utah Building, including nine by Eliza R. Snow, three by Hannah Tapfield King, three by Augusta Joyce Crocheron, and at least four others by women contributing to *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*. This book was just one of many representing Utah women at the fair, and yet *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* epitomized their identification and self-presentation efforts.

The West, rather than stymieing intellectual pursuits, worked to fuel them. In a speech at the fair, editor Emmeline B. Wells claimed that the Utah landscape, instead of crippling literary talents, encouraged and inspired its women. “In colonizing a new country, especially one barren and desolate, whither we had gone without knowing its conditions and surroundings, gone with only scanty preparations, one would naturally suppose there would be very little poetry in the atmosphere or in the hearts of the women, who had toiled” to settle there. These rugged scenes “gave the rude material to the writer and poet,” claimed Wells. In fact, wrote Wells, it was this “germ of poesy” that enabled Utah women to survive and even thrive, weaving their experience into “the stirring and pathetic themes into song and story.”

---

52 Emmeline B. Wells, “Woman’s Relief Society,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 24 (June 15, 1893): 178. The books included Eliza R. Snow’s two volumes of poetry, *Correspondence of Palestine Tourists*, and six volumes for children; Augusta Joyce Crocheron’s *Wild Flowers of Deseret*, *Representative Women of Deseret*, and a book for children; Hannah Tapfield King’s *Songs of the Heart*, *Scripture Women*, and an epic poem; Mary J. Tanner, *Fugitive Poems*; and Emily Spencer’s two volumes of poetry. Other female authors not included in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* included Cornelia Paddock, Jennie B. Forseith, Mrs. W.S. McCormick, Mary E. Almy, and Emily B. Spencer.

53 Wells, “Woman’s Relief Society.”
The poets demonstrated these literary inclinations in their personalities, also refined by environmental inspiration. Sarah E. Carmichael displayed poetic talent at a young age. In 1866, a group of her friends and admirers published a collection of her poems. (Appendix, fig. 5.9) The introduction referred to the fear of literary numbing in Utah: “In such a secluded spot—shut out from the world at large by the frowning barriers of the Rocky Mountains… having nothing but her own heart to commune with—her songs have taken so wide and glorious a flight.” Other *Songs and Flowers* poets demonstrated natural poetic talent. Ellen B. Ferguson was described as a “remarkably gifted writer, and whatever subject she grasps handles it like a master workman. She is more concise than most women, her sentences were clear and forcible, yet altogether smooth, harmonious and skillfully polished.” Ferguson and her husband had co-edited the *Eaton Democrat* before moving to Utah and Ellen served as editor, compositor, and publisher when her husband had other obligations. (Appendix, fig. 5.4) Hannah Cornaby published an anthology of her poems, written while she was sick in bed during a four-year period. (Appendix, fig. 5.5) Not only do these women demonstrate literary prowess, but the warm reception of their work signified a literary audience in the Utah wilds.

---

54 Sarah E. Carmichael began publishing her poems in the Deseret News at a relatively young age when she was eighteen years old, in 1858. Kate B. Carter, ed., “A Great Love,” in *Heart Throbs of the West*, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, n.d.), 507.

55 “Without the advantage of books and intellectual training; without the soul-expanding influences of a cultivated and liberal public sentiment; away from the softer elements of natural beauty,” was Sarah Carmichael’s poetic spirit able to soar. Sarah E. Carmichael, *Poems* (San Francisco: Towne and Bacon, 1866).

56 “Woman Journalism in Utah,” 28.


Two *Songs and Flowers* poets had very brief affiliations with Utah. Genevieve Lucille Brown, a later transplant to California, claimed her attachment to a prominent literary magazine as a mark of her literary refinement: “The *Californian*, while making it a point to satisfy the demands of the public in the selection of matter, endeavors to preserve a certain degree of independence of character, which gives it individuality. In this it seems to have succeeded, and it is said in some of the reviews that it is the best magazine edited outside of New York.” Her experience in Utah, though short, allowed editors to claim her as one of them. (Appendix, fig. 5.10) Similarly, Nevada V. Davis briefly lived in Utah in 1893 while teaching high school and participated in the Utah Women’s Press Club during the creation of *Songs and Flowers*. She soon left the West to work for the *New York Herald*, later publishing *What a Reporter Must Be: Helps to Succeed in Newspaper Work* in 1900. (Appendix, fig. 5.11) Several of the poems published in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* were published in other anthologies. For example, William Cullen Bryant included Sarah Carmichael’s “The

---


60 “Miss Genevieve Lucile Brown who resided here for some time and made many friends while in this City, and whose pen was always busy while here writing verses or other articles for papers and magazines has assumed the assistant editorship of the New California Magazine. Doubtless our readers will be pleased to learn of her good luck, especially the ladies of the Utah Woman’s Press Club, to which she belongs and who miss her presence in the meetings.” “Editorial Notes,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 16 (February 15, 1893): 125.


62 In June 1892, “N.V. Davis suggested that the secretary furnish a list of the names of the members to facilitate a better management of dues, etc.,... read an interesting paper on the education of teachers. Ellis R. Shipp, “U.W.P. Club,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 2 (July 15, 1892): 14. In February 1893, “Miss Nevada V. Davis recited in a very pleasing style the humorous poem, “Zekiel’s Courtship,” the young lady has a very clear, well modulated voice. She has a charming naivete style which few possess and is always attractive.” “U.W.P.C. Valentine Party,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 16 (February 15, 1893): 124–125; Ella W. Hyde, “U.W.P. Club,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 19 (April 1, 1893): 150; Ruth May Fox, “U.W.P.C.,” *Woman’s Exponent* 23, no. 6–7 (October 15, 1894): 186; Nevada Davis Hitchcock, *What a Reporter Must Be: Helps to Succeed in Newspaper Work* (Cleveland: Ralph Hitchcock, 1900).
Stolen Sunbeam” in his *A Family Library of Poetry and Song* in 1878. (Appendix, fig. 5.9) Dual publication revealed value outside of Utah. *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* revealed a specific segment of time when these literary prolific women had gathered in Utah.

Utah women also demonstrated their literary prowess with the organization of women’s literary associations in the territory. After the effort of settlement, Utah women followed the lead of their contemporaries in the East and organized literary clubs. Initial efforts proved exclusionary. Jennie Anderson Forseith organized a Blue Tea club in 1875 which morphed into the Ladies’ Literary Club in 1877. The two groups limited their membership by excluding Mormon and Jewish women, further exacerbating the troubled Mormon-Gentile relationship. The Ladies Literary Club also published a book for the World’s Fair, an “artistic, leather-bound volume containing a very brief history of the club, written by Mrs. Eliza K. Royle; an outline of that year’s work, sketched by Mrs. Anna D. Thrall; two poems by Mrs. F.J. Fabian; pictures of the founders and of the current officers; and a list of the club’s eighty members. The book was placed in the Woman’s Building of the


64 According to historian Karen J. Blair, the first literary club originated in Connecticut in 1800. The group combined charity and temperance efforts with the desire to promote knowledge and intelligence in the community. The idea caught hold, and some years later, the Female Mutual Improvement Society of New England began to encourage girls to read useful books and exchange compositions. By the end of the Civil War, literary clubs became very popular. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist*, 12–13.

65 “Blue Tea club had a limited membership, was “avowedly exclusive in character. Among its members was a small group of women who felt that there was need in this then isolated community for an unlimited club—a club that should reach out and bring into its intellectual and democratic circle, all women who hungered for intellectual food and companionship—a club not only for the literary elite, but also for women who were frankly learners.” Katherine Barrette Parsons, *History of Fifty Years: Ladies’ Literary Club, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1877-1927* (Arrow Press, 1927), 22–23.

Columbian Exposition at Chicago. Like *Songs and Flowers*, and perhaps in direct competition with this other women’s literary club of Utah effort, the *Manual of Ladies’ Literary Club of Salt Lake City for the Columbian Exposition* contained original watercolors. Only after the fair did the Literary Club open its membership to Mormon women.

Perhaps in reaction to exclusion, Mormon women started the Utah Women’s Press Club in 1891, inviting women of all denominations to participate. One requirement for joining the Press Club was that each woman had to present original papers at club meetings. Ruth May Fox claimed that her “association with the well-educated women of the Press Club” encouraged and fueled her literary skills, building a foundation “for whatever success in public life I have achieved.” These literary associations and their output, as evidenced in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*, revealed Utah women to be literary and poetic. The groups widened intellectual circles and supported the literary inclinations so evident in Utah.

### “Like a purifying stream, refreshed every heart”—Influence of Nature and Sacred Space

The LDS concept of sacred space has long defined Mormon identity. The record of Christ’s visit to the ancient Americans prompted the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith declared Jackson County, Missouri, as both the location of the Garden of Eden and the center point for the gathering of Zion. Smith then built the city of Nauvoo, Hebrew for “beautiful place.” Brigham Young led the Saints across the plains to the Great Salt Lake Basin and pronounced, “This is the place.” One environmental historian, Jared Farmer, 

---

68 Ladies’ Literary Club, *Manual of Ladies’ Literary Club of Salt Lake City for the Columbian Exposition* is now located at Northwestern University, Chicago, IL.
69 Ruth May Fox, “My Story,” typescript, 24, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. See also Derr, “Scholarship, Service, and Sisterhood,” 254.
70 Thatcher and Sillito, “Sisterhood and Sociability: The Utah Women’s Press Club, 1891-1928.”
considered the establishment of the Mormon homeland “an endemic spiritual geography.”

The creation of Mormon identity drew upon the time of seclusion of Mormons in Utah as well as their drive for inclusion within American society.

From their days in Nauvoo, the women of the Relief Society drew upon the influence of nature and the Midwestern parkland surrounding them. They found God in nature. At one of the early meetings, Secretary Eliza R. Snow noted that the “spirit of the Lord like a purifying stream, refreshed every heart.” This romantic tendency to connect to the land linked to a popular trend in mid-nineteenth-century American literature. American poets such as Thoreau and Dickinson and English romanticists Coleridge and Wordsworth were influential. A deep spiritual respect for the land mixed with a Victorian effort to control, refine, and moralize their surroundings marked the activities of Relief Society women in Illinois and across the plains into Utah, as for other women settling the West. These two approaches to nature, the Romantic and the Victorian, permeated the pages of *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*.

First, the album celebrated Utah. Board representative Clara Thatcher extolled the western environment: “You breathe a higher and purer air than most of your brethren; your eyes constantly rest upon one of the most glorious landscapes with which God has ever blessed the vision of man; your soil yields most abundant growth; you are environed by mountains with hearts of gold and veins of silver, and sinews of iron; you have magnificent

---


72 Eliza R. Snow wrote a poem, “My First View of a Western Prairie,” in June 1839, just outside of Nauvoo. The poem praised the beauty of the prairie and symbolized its freedom, limitlessness, and westward expansion. Published in the *Quincy Whig*, 29 June 1839; Derr and Davidson, *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*, 91–94.

73 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 19 April 1842, 33.
resources. It remains for to take advantage of this opportunity to show to the world the wealth and the grandeur that God has given you.”\textsuperscript{74} In a speech to the Congress of Representative Women in Chicago, Emmeline Wells described “the grand and lofty mountains with snowy caps, the almost impassable canyons, the howling coyotes, the profound and wondrous silence of the great desert, the dead inland sea.”\textsuperscript{75} The women took great pride in their geographical challenges and in the beauty of their landscape.

\textit{Songs and Flowers} also served as a public relations tool. Mary Isabella Horne described how Edna Sloan’s illustrations included “native flowers,” and that “each one is suited to the poem as nearly as possible.”\textsuperscript{76} The natural, raw beauty of Utah inspired the poetic spirit of these women. Emmeline Wells wrote, “The very wildness and barrenness of the Rocky mountain region forced from the lips and pen of the poet the utterances that urged the people on, and helped them to fulfill the simple duties of everyday life as martial music inspires the soldiers on the battlefield.”\textsuperscript{77} Later, she described the power of Utah nature to inspire the novice female poets: “the toilsome journey, the songs of birds, the glorious sunsets, the bluest of blue canopies at night, when the stars were shining, and the moon sailing on high, these to the young, ardent and impassioned disciples of an abiding faith (and indeed to some of maturer years,) were fountains that bubbled with a charming effervescence, that set their souls to the music of nature in its broadest, highest and most exalted sense.”\textsuperscript{78} Five of the poems focused on native Utah flowers and trees.\textsuperscript{79} Two

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} Thatcher, “Women’s Work in the World’s Fair,” 2–3.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Wells, “Woman’s Relief Society,” 178.
\item \textsuperscript{76} “Editorial Notes,” June 15, 1893.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Wells, “Woman’s Relief Society.”
\item \textsuperscript{78} “Woman Journalism in Utah,” 28.
\end{itemize}
described geographical features. And four discussed meteorological activities. Illustrations depicted views of distinctive Utah landscape. Evening primroses, golden rod, violets, and poppies, as well as scenic mountain vistas embellished the margins of the poems. The majestic scenes of Utah’s nature inspired both art and poetry, following the works of American and British poetic and artistic Romanticists.

Utah landscape also prompted an improvement response in harnessing or cultivating the land. One way they accomplished this was through Brigham Young’s irrigation plans, channeling water to make the land fertile. Utah women took pride in the way they had “tamed” the West. Emmeline B. Wells described the challenges of settlement: “the women who had toiled across the burning plains without murmuring at the hardships, enduring all the trials and privations incident to a journey through an unknown country, making a new pathway where the foot of white men had not trod for ages untold.” For Mormon women, the process of settling a wilderness set them apart from their Eastern counterparts. At the same time the work of refining the rugged frontier proved Mormon women’s respectability.

After the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the number of visitors to Utah increased exponentially. Outsiders were anxious to view both the curious people and the exotic landscapes. The explosion of travel accounts verbalized the Mormon

---

82 Under Brigham Young’s settlement plan, irrigation was managed locally by bishops and required a careful stewardship over the land. Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 52–53. Farmer quoted Phil Robinson’s 1883 travel account stating that Utah irrigation, the domestication of natural water sources, was “among the wonders of the West.” Phil Robinson, Sinners and Saints (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), 132-133, 149; cited in Farmer, On Zion’s Mount, 121–123, 402 n.21.
accomplishment of making the desert blossom. According to Farmer, they “repeated the Mormon claim that they had turned a parched, pest-infested wilderness into a garden. By the end of the century, mythology had become history.” Sentimental poems, typical of Victorian literature, combined with nature and domesticity. Verses described storms, flowers, trees, rivers, sunbeams, and twilight. Rebe Pratt wrote about “My Mother’s Flowers,” linking maternal heritage with efforts to embellish the environment, a common Victorian theme. (Appendix, fig. 5.12) Augusta Joyce Crocheron’s poem “Deseret” described the transformation of their wilderness: once “dry, rocky—now desert blossoms as a rose,” demonstrating their work to bring order and beauty to the once-barren Salt Lake Valley. Even the title, “Deseret,” connected the popular Mormon self-identifying term with scriptural authority and divine order. (Appendix, fig. 5.13) Environmental historian Jared Farmer called this transformation the “desertification of Zion.” The album commemorated the concerted creation of a veritable Eden under the careful tutelage of what they saw themselves as hardy pioneer women.

Another Songs and Flowers poet, Emily Woodmansee, connected the idea of Utah’s nature with Mormon settlement: “Jubilant the song of progress! that these western valleys

83 See Thomas L. Kane, The Mormons: A Discourse Delivered Before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania: March 26, 1850 (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1850); Elizabeth Wood Kane, Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey Through Utah to Arizona (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott, 1874); Richard Francis Burton, The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861); Leslie, California.
84 Farmer, On Zion’s Mount, 105, 107, 127.
86 Rebe Pratt, “My Mother’s Flowers,” Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch.
88 Farmer, On Zion’s Mount, 129.
sing; / Through the grand old mountain gorges clear triumphant echoes ring.” Woodmansee goes on to describe the progress and accomplishment of civilization in the harsh wilderness: “Lo! where reigned primeval silence—desolation’s awful hush— / People thrive, and cities flourish, orchards bloom and roses blush; / Isolation’s veil is lifted, desolation’s day is o’er; / Western Wilds, so called for ages, are advancing to the fore.” Edna Sloan illustrated this page with wild poppies and a gushing waterfall, indicative of the rush of civilization. The illustration proved to be a distinct contrast to the rapid urbanization and squalor of the inner city with its threat to an idyllic past. (Appendix, fig. 5.14)

The adornment of a sego lily, native to Utah, highlighted distinct territorial identity. Lulu Greene Richards devoted an entire poem to the flower: “What other flower so well could represent thee, / Dear Utah,” she asked, pointing to the bulb as Utah’s “Queen Rose.” (Appendix, fig. 5.15) Farmer proposed the idea that “native flora and fauna played mixed roles in this religious drama.” Legend indicated that Native American women taught starving white settlers to utilize the edible root when starvation threatened them during the winter of 1848-1849. The flower identified Utahns as hardy, tenacious pioneers who learned to own the land. Richards’s poem recognized that the sego lily did not have the ecstasy of a rose, the charm of the Indian Paint Brush, or the dainty frailty of a marguerite, but the sego lily suggested “hardihood and Faith” in an otherwise “sterile waste.”

---

89 Emily Hill Woodmansee, “Western Wilds,” *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch.*
90 Lulu Greene Richards, “The Sego Lily,” in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch.*
91 Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount,* 128.
92 This illustrated a shift of perspective and relationship about Native Americans from objects of charity and needed civilization to hardy environmentalists and teachers of survival.
93 Brian Cannon explored the stories about the sego lily told at different times throughout Utah’s history, fulfilling needs in the present. He claimed that subsequent generations romanticized the flower, originally merely used for survival nutrition. “Removed in time from the privations of the pioneer era, these later Utah
“The Sego Lily” illustrated a significant transition in the way Mormon women used their past. According to historian Brian Cannon, the sego lily’s shift from a religious symbol of faith for a starving people to a middle-class American society revealed an effort at Americanization. Mormons denounced their religious and political practices in order to “curry favor with Americans elsewhere,” and the sego lily became, according to Richards, a symbol that gave Utah a favorable impression “in high courts, where kings may tread.” The symbol of a pure, white lily counteracted silent films, political cartoons, and sentimental novels portraying Utah as a land of harems. This celebration of a distinct Utah symbol proved important to Utah pioneer women. Not only had they established their heritage based on their experience with survival and their wilderness location, but they also presented it in true Victorian fashion. In fact, Mormon women incorporated the sego lily in their design of silk curtains for the Woman’s Building. By so doing, these women demonstrated use of their environment at the same time that they commemorated their ability to find beauty and exhibit their identity. They, in short, used their past to identify their abilities and values in the present. Mormon women emulated Romantic and improvement sentiments in nature both visually and textually.

“The Gospel of beauty”—Crafted Presentation and Cultural Refinement

This effort to refine through adornment, décor, and poetry defined the Victorian period. According to literary historian Rod Edmund, the social consequences of industrialization, urbanization, and secularization emphasized a strongly pictorial method of residents perceived the sego lily primarily as a beautiful ornament laden with symbolic significance.” Brian Cannon, “The Sego Lily: Utah’s State Flower,” Utah Historical Quarterly 63 (Winter 1995): 74, 75.

94 Ibid., 83.

95 The sego lily later became Utah’s state flower and the official emblem of the Relief Society because of “its usefulness in sustaining life in the early pioneer settlements.” Ibid., 77–79; Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 1.
British Victorian literature scholar Kathryn Ledbetter considered the ability of ornamented poetry to present superior beauty. Such an artistic effort, she wrote, “civilizes because it refines.” Although the West presented a welcome alternative or safety valve—at least in Frederick Jackson Turner’s mind—from the social threats of the East. The attitudes involved in settlement superseded the geographic distance.

Like the other books presented at the Woman’s Library, Songs and Flowers contained poetry written by local women setting with artistic depictions of the territory. The decoration of the poems with hand-painted watercolor illustrations revealed the value of nineteenth-century art and décor. Alice Merrill Horne served as head of the Liberal Arts Commission for the fair in Utah and was later elected as a state legislator, where she promoted the arts. Horne’s admonished that an “appreciation for the beautiful” proved to be an important value in Utah as settlers worked to find beauty in their desert surroundings. This quest for beauty, Horne stated, stemmed from a historic charge given to LDS women at their organizational inception. Referring to Relief Society founder Emma Smith in Nauvoo, Horne stated: “If God spoke to Emma Smith concerning music and art, should not we, the recipients of the benefits, from that ‘turning of the key’ [on woman’s behalf], be glad to preach the Gospel of beauty?”

According to art historian Richard Oman, the first LDS artists in Nauvoo in the 1840s painted portraits of the Smith family. The development of the Mormon artistic tradition arose from British converts who had studied art in their homeland:

---

before joining the Saints in America. Influenced by English Romanticism, these early Mormon artists were inspired by their landscapes.\footnote{Richard G. Oman, “Sources for Mormon Visual Arts,” in Mormon Americana: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States, ed. David J. Whittaker (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 1995), 620–623.} These artistic Saints considered the quest for representative beauty as an inherent Mormon legacy.

Soon after the initial period of settlement in Utah, Mormons turned their attention to cultivating their desert oasis. They worked to make the desert blossom as a rose both literally and figuratively. Augusta Joyce Crocheron was known for her love of flowers. (Appendix, fig. 5.13) Emmeline B. Wells commented that Crocheron’s “love for flowers was almost a passion, and wherever she lived her dooryard was resplendent in color.”\footnote{“Poets and Lyricists,” 225; Augusta Joyce Crocheron, Wild Flowers in Deseret: A Collection of Efforts in Verse (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1881).} Mormon settlers’ irrigation efforts allowed the “thirsty earth” to thrive, as described by Crocheron’s poem, “Deseret”: “Now through a city’s streets it flows, / The desert blossoms as a rose, / And garden homes reach far and wide— / The stranger’s wonder, and our pride.” The desire to refine characterized Utah cultural arts. According to artist E.L.T. Harrison, “Our circumstances as a people have hitherto constrained our attention mainly to matters of utility and necessity; but everything now indicates that Providence, which established a people in these mountains, and let out the minds of our leaders in plain practical directions, is now shaping our career as a nation towards a day of refinement and polish.”\footnote{“Prospectus of the Deseret Academy of Arts,” Deseret News, August 5, 1863.}

The union of Mormon artists began early. In 1863, artist George Ottinger organized the Deseret Academy of Arts.\footnote{“Pioneer Art and Artists,” in An Enduring Legacy, vol. 7 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, n.d.), 245.} According to their press notice in the Deseret News, “This society has for its object the extension of the various branches of the Fine Arts, by the
establishment of a Public School and Museum of art and Design.” The group opened admission to men and women. Secretary Harrison believed that such a group “puts within the reach of young and old, a combination of the best talent of the Territory for instruction in many branches of art.”104 In 1890, president Wilford Woodruff called another group of thriving young Utah artists on a mission. He sent them to Paris to learn proper techniques in order to return to Utah and paint murals for the Salt Lake Temple.105

The art coming out of Utah reflected English Romanticism, typified by landscape artists such as Joseph Turner and John Constable.106 The American Hudson River School artists, including Frederic Church and Albert Bierstadt, prompted a western version, which art historians Robert S. Olpin, Ann W. Orton, and Thomas F. Rugh termed as the “Rocky Mountain Painters.”107 Utah artists such as Alfred Lambourne presented Romanticism within Mormon culture. He intermingled a distinct western religion with western landscapes. John Tullidge painted dramatic canyon scenes with waterfalls, linking the Wasatch Mountains and the Mormon concept of Zion.108

It was against this artistic backdrop that Edna Wells Sloan, artist for *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*, grew up. The daughter of Daniel H. and Martha Wells, sister-wife to Emmeline B. Wells, Edna developed into a “noted floral painter” and friend of Alice Merrill

---

104 “Prospectus of the Deseret Academy of Arts.”
105 John Hafen, Lorus Pratt, John B. Fairbanks, and Edwin Evans became celebrated Utah artists. Some later taught art courses at the University of Deseret and then the University of Utah. Oman, “Sources for Mormon Visual Arts,” 628-630.
106 “Pioneer Art and Artists,” 240.
Horne.\textsuperscript{109} Sloan’s work on \textit{Songs and Flowers} propelled her into Utah artistic circles and soon she was publicly exhibiting her work. She showed a piece at Katie Wells’s gallery in the McCormick Building in Salt Lake City in October 1893. The show included a painting by Utah artist J.W. Clawson, \textit{Santa Maria della Salute}, which had also been displayed at the Chicago World’s Fair.\textsuperscript{110} Sloan and Horne, herself a budding artist, showed several pieces at the inaugural Utah Art Institute’s exhibition in December 1899.\textsuperscript{111} Sloan later served as secretary of the Utah Art Institute with prominent artist Mary Teasdale as president and Horne as treasurer.\textsuperscript{112}

The idea of crafted representation of a refined culture was an important one for Utah pioneer women. The exhibition of the book in the Utah Building’s main room also communicated the sense of refinement Utah women wished to present at the fair. A massive circular divan and ornate wooden chairs provided adequate seating for visitors, allowing them to examine the display of homespun handicrafts, paintings, photographs of Utah landscapes, and a flag made from Utah wool.\textsuperscript{113} Utahns took great pride in this building; one visitor wrote home that “all of the furniture is home-made, and the pictures have been made and drawn in Utah.”\textsuperscript{114} Books in this room included the finest of Utah literature housed in a


\textsuperscript{110} “Editorial Notes,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 22, no. 7 (November 15, 1893): 53.


\textsuperscript{112} “Utah Art Institute,” \textit{Woman’s Exponent} 31, no. 17–18 (February 1903): 67.

\textsuperscript{113} Handicrafts included lacework, knitting, crocheting, embroidery, leatherwork, silk, linens, and leather goods, collected and displayed by the Utah Board of Lady Managers. Neilson, \textit{Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair}, 64–65.

\textsuperscript{114} LeRoi C. Snow, “My Visit to the World’s Columbian Exposition”,” \textit{Young Woman’s Journal} 5, no. 2 (November 1893): 66.
large bookcase belonging to the late Brigham Young, along with bound copies of Mormon periodicals including the *Woman’s Exponent, Young Woman’s Journal, Juvenile Instructor,* and the *Contributor.* Their building exhibited their finest craftsmanship as well as a distinct Utah identity. In a similar manner, the Woman’s Building, with its fine furnishings and luxurious adornment, served to elevate womanhood, according to Board of Ladies Managers President Bertha Palmer.115

Alice Merrill Horne, chair of the Utah Liberal Arts Committee for the Columbian Exposition, later expounded on the importance of the artistic medium. Such art allows the viewer to feel “a grasp of art, love of work and the power of mind over matter. The physical power to beat the metal into shape is not sufficient; the artisan’s fine individuality must be evident. In that and in that only lies the value of the finished product, establishing both its commercial and aesthetic status.”116

**From “Mother in Israel” to “Mother Pioneer”—Construction of Heritage**

*Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* depicted a transition in the development of Mormon women’s heritage. Michael Kammen highlighted this “invention of tradition” as what he called a “time-sanctioned myth.”117 Bodnar considered this relegation of unusable memory and incorporation of others as the creation of “social unity, [maintaining] the continuity of existing institutions.”118 Mormon women demonstrated their distinct LDS past until it no longer benefited them as they expanded to a larger, more global audience. The Chicago World’s Fair provided interaction with the American and international public. Mormon

---

115 Todd, “Afterword,” 156.
women wanted to align themselves with a common, crafted heritage. *Songs and Flowers* exhibited the proper Victorian concept of a shared, collective nostalgia and the requisite patriotism. Most important, *Songs and Flowers* highlighted the shift from the Nauvoo Relief Society’s “Elect Lady” or “Mother in Israel” heritage to a more American legacy of the “Mother Pioneer.”

Nineteenth-century Victorian poetry tended to valorize women in their distinct roles as custodians of culture and guardians of history. The Woman’s Building provided a significant locus for such female form of heritage. Early planners, according to Weimann, “wanted to celebrate the achievement of a woman, and they fixed upon the figure of Queen Isabella of Castile. They considered that she had enabled Columbus to make his voyage, and that she should be honored at the Fair.”¹¹⁹ Many items related to Isabella were on display at the fair. The Spanish crown loaned a portrait of her and a fifteenth-century jeweled sword. The Isabella Association built a clubhouse and the Isabella Hotel for women attending the fair. The Board of Lady Managers sold a souvenir Isabella Memorial quarter. Harriet Strong dedicated a building made entirely of native pampas grass to Isabella in the California Pavilion. A plaster statue also commemorated the Spanish queen. Isabella represented women’s New World heritage.¹²⁰

Utah women joined in the veneration of Isabella of Castile. Phoebe C. Young compiled a tribute to Isabella, published in the *Woman’s Exponent* in November 1892. Young

---

¹¹⁹ According to Weimann, “the choice of Isabella was not a universally popular one. The Isabella [Association]saw her as a woman who had pawned her jewels to help Columbus, who had spent thirty years as a head of state, and cared for her subjects with great compassion. Others saw Isabella as a religious bigot, a fanatic, the founder of the Inquisition, a ruler who had usurped her niece’s throne, and drained her people.” Weimann, *The Fair Women*, 28, 39.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 273, 67–70, 436.
called upon all patriotic American women to remember and emulate the Spanish heroine. She wrote, “Isabella still lives in the hearts of thousands as long as this vast continent shall be inhabited by the tribes of men so long as the praises of the generations of children yet unknown shall ascend to the Most High for their glorious gift of Liberty and Freedom. As long as the anniversary or discovery of this great country shall be observed, so long shall we remember and claim for our own Isabella of Castile.”¹²¹ Poet Ellen Ferguson devoted her poem in Songs and Flowers to Isabella, joining with such groups as the Queen Isabella Association and other Columbian clubs dedicated to remembering the mythic founding of the continent. (Appendix, fig. 5.4) She opened her poem by invoking the spirit of Isabella, labeling her as the “clear-eyed, lion-hearted daughter of a kingly race,” and “Columbia’s foster-mother.” Ferguson honored Isabella as a “prophetic seer and woman” who heralded in the advancements of the feminist movement. Although Isabella had no direct connection to Utah, the effort to memorialize her contributed to an institutional, rather than a vernacular, memory.¹²²

Beyond a New World heritage, Songs and Flowers revealed a strong sense of American nationalism. Emmeline Wells described the metaphoric patriot in a speech to the National Woman’s Relief Society Congress. She identified Utah, initially a frontier outpost and isolated Mormon kingdom located safely outside national borders, with an American Manifest Destiny. “Then when the dear old flag with its stars and stripes was unfurled, . . . the heart of the poet-patriot woman burst into a song that immortalized the glorious and

---

¹²¹ Phoebe C. Young, “Isabella of Castile,” Woman’s Exponent 21, no. 9 (November 1, 1892): 65–66; “Isabella of Castile,” Woman’s Exponent 21, no. 10 (November 15, 1892): 75.

¹²² Bodnar, Remaking America, 14.
significant event.” Syntitha Dickinson’s poem, “The National Emblem,” honored liberty and freedom and explained the symbolism behind American red, white, and blue. Edna Sloan carefully visualized the Utah brand of patriotism with red painted cup, white yarrow, and bluebells. (Appendix, fig. 5.16)

American patriotism combined with Victorian nostalgia to yield such poems as “Memorial Hymn,” by Rebecca Palfrey Utter, and “Memorial Day,” by Hannah Tapfield King. Utter, a Utah Unitarian, professed pacifism in her poem. “A swordless army rises / … No clash of arms, no war-cry / In all the peaceful throng; / Our only arms are flowers, / Our cry is prayer and song.” (Appendix, fig. 5.17) Utter implored readers to remember fallen comrades in the same way that Hannah Tapfield King did. King memorialized fallen soldiers in a patriotic homage to Columbia. King was an Englishwoman, but she commandeered the American historical tradition as her own: “Her Constitution and her flag to save… we love our country.” (Appendix, fig. 5.18) Together these women of disparate nationalities and religious beliefs mourn loss from war.

Utah women had escaped the ravages of the Civil War as a result of their remote geographical distance and territorial status. When King implored “that war no more shall desecrate our land, / That love fraternal may impel each hand,” she may have referred to the cultural rejection of Mormon women. Multiple layers of potential meaning reflected a multi-faceted heritage. Each verse exemplified heroic qualities in order to demonstrate a shared American heritage as well as a contribution to a patriotic social order.

---

123 Wells, “Woman’s Relief Society.”
125 Bodnar considered this a type of “elite manipulation, symbolic interaction, and contested discourse,” with the intent of producing an orderly public. Bodnar, *Remaking America,* 19-20.
Last, Mormon women constructed their heritage as “Mother Pioneers.” The pioneer, according to Bodnar, was an important national symbol, representing “ordinary people from the past… recognized for the role they had played in preserving traditional values.”

Mary Isabella Horne spoke at the National Woman’s Relief Society section of the Women’s Congress on “Pioneer Women of Utah.” She impressed many with her tales of pioneer heroics. Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon also described the pioneer legacy: “High tribute we pay to our noble pioneer mothers. They did the arduous formative work and laid the foundation upon which their daughters will rear a superstructure that the world will recognize.”

*Songs and Flowers* elaborated on the celebration of the pioneer spirit. Ellen Jakeman dedicated her poem to the “Mother Pioneers,” mythologizing the women who crossed the plains, shod in the armor of God, bound to hew out a new civilization. (Appendix, fig. 5.19) Edna Sloan’s sunflowers illustrated a hardiness as well as gentility.

Born and raised in Utah, Jakeman demonstrated the qualities of a modern pioneer. Not only did she write poetry for the *Young Woman’s Journal*, but she also acted as its business manager. The *Journal* described her as “a lady whose life-long journalistic experience, fortified by a fund of intuitive knowledge and natural literary ability, qualifies her for the arduous field work for which she was selected and in which she is now actively engaged.”

Jakeman also exemplified the second generation of Mormonism. She neither lived in Nauvoo, nor met Joseph Smith, nor crossed the plains. Only one woman appearing in *Songs and Flowers* was actually a member of the Nauvoo Relief Society—Eliza R. Snow—and she

---

126 Bodnar considered pioneers as the “most powerful historical symbol.” Ibid., 33.
128 Ellen Jakeman, “The Pioneers,” in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*. This poem was published in the *Woman’s Exponent* on 1 August 1892. Ellen Jakeman, “The Pioneers,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 3 (August 1, 1892): 17.
died several years before the book was published. Yet no history of Utah women is complete without a nod to Snow. Like the majority of women at this point included in *Songs and Flowers*, Jakeman and others developed Mormon women’s heritage as it folded into American heritage. According to Jared Farmer, “Utah’s pioneer community was increasingly commemorated as the pioneers themselves became an older and smaller part of their citizenry.” The shift from Elect Lady or Mother in Israel to Pioneer Mother relegated one conceptualization of Mormon womanhood to memory, usable only for particular audiences. This conceptualization was not mean for the international audience in Chicago.

“*My heart to my Maker with gratitude fills*”—Religion at Work

Planners, contributors, and presenters engaged in the discussion of religion at the Chicago World’s Fair. Two of many auxiliary congresses at the fair examined religion. The inaugural World’s Parliament of Religions and the World’s Congress of Representative Women facilitated dialogue across the aisle. Officials of the Parliament, however, hesitated to invite Mormon representatives to participate because of their “heretical” beliefs, well outside mainstream Protestantism. Mormon women, on the other hand, proudly participated in the World’s Congress of Representative Women. Reid Neilson claimed that this group “privileged feminist values over religious beliefs,” focusing on gender equality rather than religion. Congress organizers scheduled day-long sessions for both the Relief Society and the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, providing ample time for

---

130 Utah absorbed a high number of Mormon converts from Europe, mostly Britain and Scandinavia. The migratory stream peaked in the 1860s. By 1890, immigrants and their children made up two-thirds of the territory’s population. Farmer, *On Zion’s Mount*, 128.

131 Neilson, *Exhibiting Mormonism: The Latter-day Saints and the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair*, 142–143. Neilson described the experience of self-conscious Mormon priesthood leadership, aware that the Latter-day Saints were the only religious group in America that had not been included, despite invitations to all other Christian denominations. B.H. Roberts stirred up negative press about the exclusion. Ibid., 141-175.

132 Ibid., 78.
Mormon women to expound and exhort, as Emma Smith had been charged in Nauvoo.\textsuperscript{133}

Utah published two ecclesiastical reports for the fair: \textit{World's Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah}, and Emmeline B. Wells’s \textit{Charities and Philanthropies: Woman’s Work in Utah}.\textsuperscript{134} Both books provided detailed reports from multiple denominations, listing statistical information on membership and financial holdings. The World’s Congress of Representative Women produced a proceedings volume: \textit{The Congress of Women: Held in the Woman’s Building, World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, USA, 1893: with Portraits, Biographies, and Addresses}.\textsuperscript{135} Organizational narratives, photographs of leaders and church real estate, and charters and records of incorporation filled these pages.

\textit{Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch} presented a different version of Utah religion from the personal experiences of various women from around the Territory. It consciously presented a secular, non-denominational poetic and artistic endeavor. According to historian Ann Douglas, religious undertones permeated any effort to identify the nineteenth-century female experience.\textsuperscript{136} Only two of the thirty-four poems of \textit{Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch} reflected formal religious belief. One whispered of a rich Mormon theology, distinct from contemporary Protestant belief. Eliza R. Snow’s “Invocation” highlighted an intimate connection between woman and God: “When shall I regain thy presence, / And again behold thy face?” Snow emphasized the divine female role, situating Mormon women in an equal relationship with male priesthood and heavenly parents. “In the heavens are parents

\textsuperscript{133} “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 17 March 1842.
\textsuperscript{134} Representatives of Religious Denominations, \textit{World’s Fair Ecclesiastical History of Utah}; Wells, \textit{Charities and Philanthropies}.
\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Programme of the World’s Congress of Representative Women, May 15 to 21, Inclusive, 1893: Memorial Art Palace}.
\textsuperscript{136} According to Ann Douglas, “as the secular activities of American life were demonstrating their utter supremacy, religion became the message of America’s official and conventional cultural life.” Douglas, \textit{The Feminization of American Culture}, 6.
single? / No, the thought makes reason stare! / Truth is reason, truth eternal / Tells me I’ve a mother there.” Such a bold, egalitarian proclamation, elevating women to the Divine, provided a stark contrast to the public’s concern about the degradation of polygamy.\(^{137}\) (Appendix, fig. 5.20) Traditionally, Mormons considered female figures as a Heavenly Mother as a pattern or type of emulation in much the same way they viewed Eve or Mary, historic women empowered by their sacrifice, obedience, and purity.\(^{138}\) Their theological emphasis, however, which most sets them apart from their religious contemporaries, was a belief in godly accomplishment for mortals, male and female.

In contrast to Snow’s thoroughly Mormon poem opening the album, Ruby Lamont wrote “Sonnets of the Virgin Mary.” “Sonnets” highlighted another venerable woman exalted by Catholics and revered by Protestant denominations as well. (Appendix, fig. 5.21) Lamont’s Mary appeared as a “peer” to mothers, questioning the depth of maternal love.

Lamont, the penname of a woman living in Richmond, Utah, contributed frequently to LDS publications.\(^{139}\) This attention to religious female devotion or adoration, with different traditions and practices among Protestants, Jews, and Catholics, exemplified the Victorian era, where women were set apart in their “sphere” as both inherently religious and domestic.\(^{140}\) Historian Colleen McDannell pointed to the influence of Catholic devotions to

---


\(^{139}\) For example, “Woman’s Sphere” was written for the *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 18 (March 15, 1893): 137. Emmeline B. Wells described her as “a Utah girl of Scandinavian parentage, is somewhat classical in style.” “Woman Journalism in Utah.”

Mary as what she termed “feminized Protestantism.” The morphing and sharing of religious customs of veneration and symbolism across denominations indicated an interfusion of Americanized religious customs.  

Mormon women’s presentation of their religion staked out common ground among American women.

*Songs and Flowers* illustrated a conscious shift from denominational to secular history with a celebration of Utah and its landscape and pioneer past without religious undertones. Following the lead of Romantic artists who found the divine in nature, poets and artist also worshipped, finding God in the mountains and on the plains. The album closes with a poem by Ruth May Fox commemorating Utah: “O Utah, lovely Utah, thou art my theme, / ’Tis of thee I would sing, of thee that I dream.” And yet religious undertones fill this dedicatory song to the state: “My heart to my Maker with gratitude fills, / That thou, once a desert so lovely and drear, / Hast now ’mong thy sisters no rival nor peer.” Fox called on prophets to sing to honor Utah’s hills and mountains. (Appendix, fig. 5.7) Religion shifted from church to the realm of nature. Neilson called this concluding poem by Fox a summary of “all that both the women (and men) of Utah were trying to advertise to outsiders at the fair, … extolling the natural resources and hidden treasures of the Utah Territory.”

While only two poems explicitly addressed institutional religious topics, many poems reflected religious overtones and sentiments. Most significant, though, was the concerted

---


142 Ann Taves noted that in the mid-nineteenth century, Catholics tended to isolate themselves in order to institutionalize. This had obviously changed by the end of the century. Taves, *The Household of Faith*, 133.

143 “These paintings reflect the religious faith of the painters, who saw the face of the Lord in nature and Zion in the purity of the western wilderness.” Oman, “Sources for Mormon Visual Arts,” 622.

144 See Ruth May Fox, “Utah,” *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*.

effort of the editor to refrain from overt Mormon overtones. In fact, several contributors
did not publically profess a particular religious belief, including Rhoda Celestia Nash,
Syntitha Dickinson, Sarah Russell, or Mary J. Tanner. Mell C. Woods left the LDS Church.
The one poem reflecting unique Mormon theology did so in understated tones. Poets from a
cross-section of religious belief throughout the Territory contributed. While most happened
to be active LDS women, a few belonged to other churches. Some had even spoken out
publicly at various times against their Mormon counterparts. The effort to create *Songs and
Flowers* indicates a cross-the-aisle attempt to showcase the culture and refinement and
sentimentality that transcended religious difference, an organizing principle of the Woman’s
Building and the Chicago Exposition in general. These women in Chicago shared a bond
of poetry, environment, and an effort to construct a usable heritage.

“The female part of the community”—The Work of Gender

The Chicago World’s Fair provided a location and audience for Mormon women to
join others around the world and celebrate the achievements of women. In the company of
queens and women from a wide range of ethnic and religious backgrounds, the fair allowed
Mormon women to come into their own. Joseph Smith told the Relief Society in Nauvoo
that “this is the beginning of better days, for this Society.” More than fifty years after the
founding of the Relief Society, *Songs and Flowers* encapsulated a celebration of gender.

---

146 Rebecca Palfrey Utter, author of “Memorial Hymn” in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*, was the wife of a
Unitarian minister living in Salt Lake City in the 1890s. She delivered a speech belittling her LDS neighbors at
the annual meeting of the National Woman’s Alliance in Boston, later published. Rebecca Palfrey Utter, “The
Mormons at Salt Lake,” *The Unitarian: A Magazine of Liberal Christianity*, August 1893. Mary Grant Major also
spoke publicly against Mormon women, as reported in the local newspaper. “Under False Pretences,” *Deseret
Weekly*, January 24, 1801, 142.

147 The book is dedicated to Margaret Blaine Salisbury, the Utah representative to the Board of Lady Managers.
Salisbury was the wife of a prominent miner and not a member of the LDS faith.

148 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 42.
The female organizers of the World’s Fair Woman’s Building took great pride in their work. Utah board representative Clara Thatcher proclaimed that “this was a great stop in advance for women... to give us great opportunities and full scope. They put into our hands all the interests of women all over the world....This opportunity was seized upon to bring out everything that would elevate and show the value of women in the world.”¹⁴⁹ The Woman’s Exponent reported back to those unable to attend the fair of this sense of celebration: “There was quite a large number of very celebrated women representing great organizations and others who had attained such national and international distinction as to stand alone and independent conscious only for the achievements made in science, art, theology or some other equally noble and important work.”¹⁵⁰ Mary Isabella Horne reported her attendance at the World’s Congress for Representative Women at a Relief Society meeting, with minutes published in the Exponent. She said, “It was an unprecedented opportunity—it presages advancement for all women in the future.”¹⁵¹

The women’s celebration drew from their rich history. The Woman’s Building and Library included selective historical exhibitions. According to Clara Thatcher, “We expect to show that women have always been a great factor, though unsuspected, in the history of the world.”¹⁵² The Utah women drew upon a firm heritage of literary achievement and effort. According to Emmeline B. Wells, “It was the inspiration of the Hebraic type of the woman

¹⁴⁹ She went on to say: “We are making great efforts to have in the competition exhibition everything that women have every done. It will be a great surprise to these gentlemen to find how generally women have occupied all positions, if I mentioned to you that we have discovered women blacksmithe, women wagoners, and one of the best ranches in California is owned and run by a woman. We have found women shoemakers, and in fact the women nowadays are doing about everything they please.” Thatcher, “Women’s Work in the World’s Fair,” 2.


¹⁵¹ “Editorial Notes,” June 15, 1893.

of the nineteenth century. From that time the spirit of poesy, crude perchance, compared with the finished songs and hymns of those whose lives were cast in more pleasant places, yet rich enough in rude imagery, and true to life in that which touches the depths of the human soul.” Part of this connection to the past stemmed from the Nauvoo Relief Society, where women believed that their association stemmed from ancient holy women.

Several poems in *Songs and Flowers* demonstrated this female pride in the past. Eliza R. Snow’s “Invocation” referenced a primordial existence in the presence of a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother, with a hope to return to them after death. (Appendix, fig. 5.20) Ellen Ferguson’s “Isabelle of Castille” and Ellen Jakeman’s “Mother Pioneers” praised a distinctly female heritage. (Appendix, figs. 5.4, 5.19) Ferguson exalted Isabella as a “prophetic seer,” crediting the Spanish Queen with heralding “the grand achievements of the Woman’s Age.” Ferguson, one of the first female doctors in Utah, had eschewed a fervent brand of nineteenth-century first wave feminism at a Relief Society conference in Salt Lake City in 1881, celebrating women’s characteristic abilities. “The time may come,” she stated, “when we may be called to celebrate a woman’s day of independence, and as women of this Republic let us be alive to our duties.” Her participation in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* demonstrated the fulfillment of this earlier prophecy. This group of women worked diligently to be heard and valued as women.

---

153 Wells, “Woman’s Relief Society.”
154 Joseph Smith taught, “the Society should move according to the ancient Priesthood… said he was going to make of this Society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day—as in Paul’s day.” “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 30 March 1842, 22. Two months later, Newel K. Whitney said “In the beginning God created man male and female and bestow’d upon man certain blessings peculiar to a man of God, of which woman partook, so that without the female all things cannot be restor’d to the earth it takes all to restore the Priesthood.” Ibid., 29 May 1842, 58.
155 Ellen B. Ferguson, “Isabella of Castile,” in *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*.
Another distinctly female role described in the poems was motherhood. Snow’s poem describing a Heavenly Mother set the tone. (Appendix, fig. 5.20) Ellen Jakeman wrote of “Mother Pioneers” as a symbol of domesticity. (Appendix, fig. 5.19) Reba Beebe Pratt’s “My Mother’s Garden” captured the memory of her mother with flowers: “When sunshine cheereth winter’s gloom, / When flora reigns in summer bowers, / May true friends place upon my tomb / A wreath of my mother’s fairest flowers.”

Pratt connected herself to this relationship by requesting these same flowers, planted and tended by her mother, at her own funeral. Hester Ann Beebe, who died on 25 June 1885, was memorialized as a talented florist. Pratt had sustained a serious spinal injury on 24 October 1878 from which she never fully recovered. She wrote poetry while in bed. Pratt died on 1 September 1886, just ten days after her own volume of poetry, *The Sheaf of a Gleaner*, had been published. The inclusion of her poem in *Songs and Flowers* paid tribute to the author, her mother, the society of women around her, and hope in the future. (Appendix, fig. 5.12)

*Songs and Flowers* was just one demonstration of Utah women’s work at the Chicago World’s Fair. Their singular participation in the World Congress of Representative Women

---

157 Reba Beebe Pratt, *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*.
158 Hester Beebe was memorialized as “a great admirer of what was most lovely in nature; was passionately fond of flowers, and spent much of her time in laboring to beautify her home, which she made a bower of beauty and loveliness. She often contributed her floral offerings to decorate the dead, and adorned the stands of our Tabernacle on Sundays and other occasions.” “Obituaries,” *Woman’s Exponent* 14, no. 5 (August 1, 1885): 40.
159 Sarah Jane Cannon, “Sketch of the Author’s Life,” in *The Sheaf of a Gleaner*, by Reba Beebe Pratt (Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1886), x. When friends visited her sick bed in January 1886, Pratt read them a poem, “portraying her appreciation of her life on earth, and also most beautifully her resignation to await the Father’s call, and the joy of the kiss of loved ones on the other bright shore. A tear of sympathy glistened in the eye of every listener, and each heart felt strengthened and edified in the contemplation of the beauty and grandeur of her ‘blessed hope for the future.’” A Tin Guest, “Tin Wedding,” *Woman’s Exponent* 14, no. 16 (January 15, 1886): 126.
160 “Reba Beebe Pratt,” *Woman’s Exponent* 15, no. 8 (September 15, 1886): 61; Reba Beebe Pratt, *The Sheaf of a Gleaner* (Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1886).
afforded them a national and international audience. Historian Andrea Radke-Moss proposed that the Chicago World’s Fair actually provided a platform for Mormon women to outshine their male counterparts. Participation in the World’s Congress of Representative Women proffered them “an unparalleled public opportunity to assert their identity as modern women who were moral, progressive, patriotic, and stood on the cutting edge of suffrage activism.”

161 Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch encapsulated this celebration of nineteenth-century female experience.

“We shall not be barren or unfruitful”—An Unusable Past

On 27 May 1842, Newel K. Whitney taught the Nauvoo Relief Society women, “We must prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.” In encouraging the women to discern truth and seek for quality, trustworthiness, and dependability. He went on to say, “We shall not be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of God.”

162 Seeking “good” implied discarding the bad. Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch presented a selection of the “good” in Utah. The album left out references to polygamy, scandal, and nature’s deadly force.

163 At least two Songs and Flowers poets had publicly spoken against polygamy.
working to rescue women from what they considered dangerous Mormon relationships. Nevertheless, not a word or image commemorated this part of the Mormon past that had so often caused rifts with national women’s groups.

The practice of polygamy, while a seemingly oppressive practice according to critics, allowed Mormon women freedom from domestic constraints to pursue a wide course of activity. According to Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, polygamy required that individual women “act as heads of households, that some of them pursue professional careers, and that they cooperate economically and personally, but its defense also gave them impetus for public action.”

Not one contribution to *Songs and Flowers* referenced public action. Instead, the album presented a collection of sentimental Victorian treacle, underestimating the political and other contributions of Utah women. While the domestic sphere certainly played a significant part in the Mormon female culture, such a presentation did not take into account that these same women were among the first to attend medical school, vote and promote woman suffrage, publish a woman’s newspaper, and participate in other political and educational endeavors. Rather, *Songs and Flowers* presented Utah women more simply as mothers, field-and-mountain wanderers, flower-
gatherers, poets, and artists. By casting themselves as full participants in the nineteenth-century female culture, they traded, in one sense, their progressive activity and empowerment for social acceptance.166

In addition to the absence of polygamy and public activity, Songs and Flowers excluded mention of scandal or improper behavior. Such was the case with Dr. Ellen B. Ferguson. Her contribution, “Isabelle of Castille,” highlighted her literary skill, not the 1884 accusation for theft of opium and morphine from a Utah hospital where she was director of surgery.167 (Appendix, fig. 5.4) Instead, this showpiece emphasized her literary advancement. Another Songs and Flowers poet, Sarah E. Carmichael, had suffered debilitating mental decline, perhaps due to the fact that her parents were “double cousins.” She spent twenty years at a state mental hospital.168 Her best poetry was written well before the 1893 World’s Fair, in fact, even before the 1870s. Emmeline B. Wells and Alice Merrill Horne selected a poem, “Stolen Sunbeams,” written years earlier and published in a prominent national publication. Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch highlighted both Carmichael’s short-lived poetic genius as well as her national recognition as a tribute to Utah, rather than her eventual and unfortunate demise.169

166 Derr, Cannon, and Beecher referred to the transition from leadership within a progressive theological organization, encouraging political defense of suffrage and polygamy, to connection to the larger American female culture as a difficult ideological shift. “Torn between their need for separation as part of a covenant people and the potential for good implied by association with their sisters not of the fold, collectively and individually they sought the golden mean, the happy equilibrium.” Ibid., 149–150. Later, issues of expansive growth led to internal correlation and the loss of female power as the LDS Church initiated institutional control over previously autonomous female activity, mirroring other outside organizations of the time. The transition of power, according to Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, produced an organization more compatible with contemporary American standards.


169 According to one 1888 editorial, “Miss Carmichael gave every promise of becoming one of the most gifted poets of the century, but, alas for fate, a cloud more dreadful than death fell upon her, and ‘her thoughts were
Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch also presented a rather loose selection of “Utah” poets. Some of the “Utah” poets had little if any connection to the territory. Utah women claimed Genevive Lucile Brown as one of their leading poetic forces. Editor Wells included Brown’s poem, “Ballad of Lilies.” (Appendix, fig. 5.10) Brown had transferred, however, to California after a period of only a few months in Utah. Her “Ballad of Lilies” appeared seven years later in a California publication, Readings from California Poets. The Woman’s Exponent remembered her fondly after she left. Nevada V. Davis lived in Salt Lake City in 1893, where she taught high school and participated in the Utah Women’s Press Club, but she moved to the East to work for the New York Herald in 1894. (Appendix, fig. 5.11) At least seven poets were natives of England. Another nine came from the eastern United States. Only five were born and raised in Utah. A few of the poets died before publication; their contributions memorialized a Utah past.

Last, Songs and Flowers presented a very positive view of nature. Julia A. McDonald praised the desert in “Cactus Blossoms.” (Appendix, fig. 5.22) “I my humble off’ring bring / To the lovely Shrine of the Desert Queen. / ’Mong bare red rocks of the barren hill, / ’Mid desert sands so lone and still, / Where the rabbit, wolf, and lizard roam, / Thou delightest most to make thy home.” This southern Utah desert was also a home to failed settlements, starvation and disease, and frontier violence, most notably the infamous Mountain Meadows combinations of disjointed things,’ and ‘the glance of melancholy is a fearful gift.”’ Cannon, “The Women of Utah,” 25.


171 “Miss Genevive Lucile Brown who resided here for some time and made many friends while in this City, and whose pen was always very busy while here writing verses or other articles for papers and magazines has assumed the assistant editorship of the New California Magazine. Doubtless our leaders will be pleased to learn of her good luck, especially the ladies of the Utah Women’s Press Club, to which she belongs and who miss her presence in the meetings.” “Editorial Notes,” February 15, 1893.

Massacre.⁷³ Again, the album, as well as everything else displayed at the Chicago World’s Fair, showcased progress.

Emmeline Wells and Alice Merrill Horne produced a careful selection of “Utah” poets, poems, and imagery. *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* avoided the rough pieces of Utah’s past and focused instead on the geological marvels of Utah. While Bodnar considered the “expansion of government power” to influence the distortion of “all expressions of vernacular memory,” *Songs and Flowers* provided an instance in which the vernacular, or Mormon women, actively chose to distort their vernacular memory to fit the national culture.⁷⁴ Other memory historians claimed that the preference for a shared celebratory past outweighed the need for accuracy.⁷⁵ These omissions provide insights into what composed an appropriate sense of heritage.

In conclusion, three copies of *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* appeared in Chicago: one in the Woman’s Library in the Woman’s Building, one in the Utah Building, and one in the Literary Arts Building.⁷⁶ Mary Isabella Horne reported that the book was “something to be proud of and every woman in Utah should have a laudable pride in the work. It is very handsome and those who have seen it in the Woman’s Building, are gratified to place it on

---


¹⁷⁴ It wasn’t just the officials planning national commemorations, but the desperate desire of Mormon women to interpret the past in a way that would “reinforce citizen loyalty to a nation-state and diminish attachments individuals may have held toward a region, a locale, or a communal group.” See Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 41, 243.

¹⁷⁵ Carol Reardon, *Pickett’s Charge in History and Memory* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 1, 63, 68; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 367.

exhibition.”177 But the book’s presence in these buildings did not guarantee an active readership. According to Sarah Wadsworth, the library functioned more as an exhibition rather than a fully operational library, “experienced chiefly as spectacle and display by the countless visitors of 1893 who gazed at the walls and walls of gleaming oak bookcases, peered into the display cases of autograph manuscripts and other literary artifacts, or simply admired the portraits and busts of famous women writers.”178 In fact, the book did not continue as part of the permanent Women’s Building Library memorial collection. After the close of the fair, Utah women packed up their contributions and returned home.179

The value of *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* as a strategic tool of cultural refinement and usable past began with its inception and creation among Mormon women. Their efforts to unite both LDS women and women of other faiths in a grand project that demonstrated their desert achievements, their poetic refinement, and their artistic ability for a broad American public indicated their understanding of the role of culture within society as well as their awareness that the combination of word and image could transcend the social markers of religion, gender, and geography. These women utilized their networks and their literary and artistic skills to produce *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* in an effort to use their past to embed themselves strategically in what they considered the American mainstream, reinforcing their loyalty to the nation-state.180

177 She added, “Mrs. Margaret Blaine Salisbury to whom the book is dedicated is delighted with its beautiful appearance.” “Editorial Notes,” June 15, 1893.
179 The Salt Lake City Ladies’ Literary Club’s contribution to the Woman’s Library, including a history of the organization and two poems and original watercolor images, remained with the memorial library. Only one copy exists at the Northwestern University Library in Chicago. Ladies’ Literary Club, Salt Lake City, Utah and World’s Columbian Exposition, *Manual of Ladies’ Literary Club of Salt Lake City*.
It is difficult to mine the results of such an endeavor. Did *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch* enable a new attitude toward Utah women? Historian Robert W. Rydell claimed that “one did not have to attend a fair to be affected by the World’s Fair movement.”

Commemorative merchandise and daily press releases in local newspapers brought the Chicago experience home. Local auxiliary committee work spread ownership to the contributions for the fair as well as the influence of the fair on American culture.\(^{181}\) Were female Latter-day Saints then viewed on the same social, cultural, and religious standing as their Protestant counterparts? Not immediately. Certainly important national and local ties were established in Chicago. The warm reception of Mormon women at the World’s Congress of Representative Women facilitated an environment of acceptance. Carol Cornwall Madsen wrote that the Chicago Fair, “which was to be a showcase of women’s cooperative enterprises, became both the catalyst and a stage for demonstrating the newfound cooperation of Utah women.”\(^{182}\) But even in Chicago, Mormon women experienced discrimination.\(^{183}\)

Utah women continued to participate in national suffrage associations and the National and International Councils of Women. And Utah women of many faiths continued to work together in various endeavors. The exclusively non-Mormon Salt Lake City Ladies’ Literary Club invited prominent LDS leader and literary extraordinaire Emmeline B. Wells to their meetings after having seen firsthand Wells’s ability and poise in national literary

---


\(^{183}\) “Almost every phase of women in journalism was presented in the Press Congress held in May in Chicago, except that of women in the Rocky Mountain region, the barren desert of the great inter-mountain country lying near the American Dead Sea,” reported a *Woman's Exponent* editorial. The article then described countless examples of female pioneers in journalism in Utah, proving a strong Utah contribution to the field. “Woman Journalism in Utah,” 28.
circles. The *Woman’s Exponent* reported the harmony of women working together on various committees in preparation for the fair: “The ladies have worked together in the Board and in Committees in harmony, and have really become much endeared to each other through the pleasant associations.”

Utah became a state in 1896, the ultimate badge of political acceptance. According to Madsen, this “decade of détente” did not end women’s geographical isolation and cultural shunning. Groups such as the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union and the Daughters of the American Revolution continued to ban Mormon women, and the National and International Councils of Women shifted their commitment and support according to the press and local influences. But certainly the LDS Relief Society women had made their presence felt at the Chicago World’s Fair.

LDS women expanded their presence to include a global audience. Motivated by Joseph Smith’s prophesy to “command Queens in their midst,” they augmented their own Mormon congregations to a secular public at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. They shifted the way they expressed their history and their commemorative work at the end of the nineteenth century. For truly Mormon women had become queens in the midst of this land.

---


185 “Editorial Notes,” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 20–21 (May 15, 1893): 156.

186 Madsen, “Decade of Detente.”

187 For information on the Relief Society relationship with the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, see Madsen, *An Advocate for Women*, 161, 200, 212, 241; Ryan, “In the World: Latter-day Saints in the National Council of Women, 1888-1987.”

188 As illustrated by Ruth May Fox’s poem, “Utah,” the concluding poem of *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch*, the women considered Utah as their queen: “With scepter of peace which thou hold’st in thine hand / Thou sittest a queen in the midst of this land.” Ruth May Fox, “Utah,” in Horne and Wells, *Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch.*
Appendix 5

Figure 5.1. cover, Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch

Figure 5.2. title page, Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch
Figure 5.3. Lucinda Dalton, “The River”

Figure 5.4. Ellen B. Ferguson, “Isabella of Castile”
Figure 5.5. Hannah Cornaby, “Truth”

Figure 5.6. Esther Bennion, “My Heart”
Figure 5.7. Ruth May Fox, “Utah”

Figure 5.8. Emmeline B. Wells, “At Evening”
Figure 5.9. Sarah Carmichael, “The Stolen Sunbeam”

The Stolen Sunbeam.

There’s a light that beams with a supernatural glow,
In the sky serene moments of such glory;
Like the fire that burns on the Yosemite cliff,
In the moon’s torch of the night’s calm.

Shining forever, eternally bright;
Bound forever, so well and truly.
Forever, forever, we will love you;
Forever and forever, till we die;
Forever and forever, without a why.

A Specimen from a Dreamland Steppe;
And Tracy’s hand comes more still and more.
While open bath room for the comforting breeze.
It lacks but fellows to fill the silence
Of the wind that kept that lights the night.

He stood on the height when the sun was down,
He leaned on plane from the dark bright tower.
And he watched it come from the heavy hill,
And the beams of beauty from the same hill.

Lonely be longed, “Is the world not mine
Through the lilies of the shadow shall she come;
Lighted with gems shall its companions be;
But the cause of the beauty shall pass to me.”
That splendid light in the north grew cold.
And the fiction of aurora bath called it “BOLIS.”

Figure 5.10. Genevieve Lucile Browne, “Ballad of Lilies”

Ballad of Lilies.

Whose flower the flaming fire of passion maddens,
Who’s like to it, but happy, blending its unison,
The fire is quenched in repeated love;
With smiles, which but increase grace, with hope.
What need of—yet our smile may then expand;
Destined, then, musing thus, how deigning day;
What’s more like a day than she, her eyes may cry.
The moon, soft, sweetness altered fly.

Figure 318.
Figure 5.11. Nevada V. Davis, “Life in Death”

Life in Death

When you gently pass to death, my love,
And raise your head to meet the sky above,
I'll feel your love, as I bend down below,
And bid you rest, and sleep in death's embrace.

My quiver sleep, on life's eternal rest,
In peace, forevermore.

My soul it grieves, when you do depart,
And leave your love on earth beneath your feet.

On wings of love, I follow you away,
And bid you rest, and sleep in death's embrace.

My soul it grieves, when you do depart,
And leave your love on earth beneath your feet.

My soul it grieves, when you do depart,
And leave your love on earth beneath your feet.

My soul it grieves, when you do depart,
And leave your love on earth beneath your feet.

My soul it grieves, when you do depart,
And leave your love on earth beneath your feet.

My soul it grieves, when you do depart,
And leave your love on earth beneath your feet.

Figure 5.12. Reba Beebe Pratt, “My Mother’s Flowers”

My Mother’s Flowers

When my sweet shelved dream, I sent to sleep, it’s time to leave.

The year that takes to brighten’s keen,

When shadows deepen more and more.

And yet, I’m not alone tonight.

The memories of long past years.

My love by mother’s gift of flowers.

When comes for me the angel of rest.

When love’s true light that long is broken.

When sunshine shines with mother’s grace.

When true friends place upon my tomb.

A wreath of mother’s loved flowers.

—Reba Beebe Pratt.
Figure 5.13. Augusta Joyce Crocheron, “Deseret”

Figure 5.14. Emily H. Woodmansee, “Western Wilds”
Figure 5.15. Lula Greene Richards, “The Sego Lily”

Figure 5.16. Syntitha Dickinson, “The National Emblem”
Figure 5.17. Rebecca Palfrey Utter, “Memorial Hymn”

Memorial Hymn.

To God, our Heavenly Father,
Throughout our country free
And where the brave in war,
To give their lives in honor,
We raise the banner of victory.

For them we sing a hymn
That bears the name of freedom.

We sing of valor and heroism.

Rebecca Palfrey Utter

Figure 5.18. Hannah Tapfield King, “Memorial Day”

Memorial Day.

God bless the brave who fought for freedom.
May their sacrifice be remembered always.

Hannah Tapfield King
Figure 5.19. Ellen Jakeman, “The Mother Pioneers”

Figure 5.20. Eliza R. Snow, “Invocation”
Figure 5.21. Ruby Lamont, “Sonnets on the Virgin Mary”

Sonnets on the Virgin Mary.

Among the swarthy virgins of the courts
In the great Temple, Mary served, the poor,
In beauty and in holiness untamed.
Most frequent to the altar she coursed,
And often with the adoration of her face
Let the dawn of great divinity aspire,
Just a tear and perfect, in standing form
Of glory, clothed with God.
Heigh-ho! blessed brown,
Fonicated into white, with spirit and spirit
Because her flesh of west, and angel tones
With sweet melody, her sweet voice is law
With thought and kindness, the pure love of God.
Her brightest joy; his high, pure path also bowed.

Figure 5.22. Julia A. McDonald, “Cactus Blossoms”

Cactus Blossoms.

There have sung with bountiful joy
Of the ray hair, of the madam’s spring;
But, my humble spring bring
To the Kenny shores of the distant Queen.

They have sung with bountiful joy
Of the sun in the eastern skies;
That sweet noise we hear and still
Where the rabbit, well, and twisted ears,
Their delight most to make thy home.

Paint art theo of a regal line
In big rows, with soft and fine;
Set on a throne of emerald green,
And guarded their arms both between.

Writ on thy throne, our sermon list,
Pink mandarin, “Flowers that we touch me eat,
Or the lesson learns, I’m in the country lane.
No needs must breed who the praise would gain.”

On the dressing Quebec of woods and boughs,
They art like a smile must angry friendly
The plume of hope that forbids despair,
To a dream of love in our world of rear.

—Julia A. McDonald.
CONCLUSION: “LET US BOLDLY GO FORWARD”

On Thursday 17 March 1892, Mormon women gathered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle and in their various congregations around the world to celebrate the Relief Society Jubilee. Fifty years after its inception, the fledgling organization had grown from the original twenty-two members to 25,300 members in over four hundred branches. The Relief Society was hailed by the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve Apostles, members of the General Relief Society presidency, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. They paid tribute to the Relief Society’s founders in Nauvoo and listed the accomplishments of the extraordinary things Mormon women had done and continued to do. At high noon, presiding authority Joseph F. Smith, nephew of Joseph Smith, offered a prayer: “We invoke thy blessing at this time upon the aged mothers of the Relief Society.” His words alluded to the few surviving members of the original Nauvoo Relief Society, their names recorded in the minute book. The blessings he called forth included all members.

The Jubilee commemorated the fifty-year anniversary of Relief Society. In that fifty-year span, founders and followers contributed to the creation of Relief Society heritage. They shared the organizational creation story, not only through word, but also through material culture, including hair wreaths, quilts, buildings, posters, and albums. With each retelling,

---

1 Romania B. Pratt presented the current membership statistics at the Jubilee celebration. Romania B. Pratt, “The Present Administration of the Relief Society,” Woman’s Exponent 20, no. 18 (April 1, 1892): 137.
2 Smith continued: “Many have passed away and those that remain who witnessed the establishment of that society by thy servant Joseph Smith, are few, aged, and feeble. Wilt thou continue thy mercies upon them and preserve their lives. Let thy spirit fill their hearts with joy and peace. Sanctify unto them every dispensation of thy providence… we pray thee from this time forth to preserve thy saints, and these aged mothers until they are satisfied with life.” “Relief Society Jubilee,” 143. Joseph F. Smith was the son of Hyrum Smith, brother of Joseph Smith.
certain themes emerged: refinement, religion, family and sisterhood, education, and unity. These repetitive themes provide insight into how the women of the Relief Society fashioned and refashioned their identity and their heritage in the first fifty years.

First, Mormon women worked to refine or elevate themselves and their surroundings. The improvement concept stemmed from a biblical injunction: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion... over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Not only did Mormon women do their part in replenishing the population, thanks to the practice of polygamy until 1890, they also worked to improve the landscape with the concept of settlement. By taming and controlling the arid Utah wilderness, the Saints participated in an Edenic narrative similar to the pilgrims with their “City set on a hill” in the New World. Under the pragmatic direction of Brigham Young, Mormon settlers improve or refined the territory with the careful diversion of mountain streams and the constant discipline of cooperative religion. Women contributed to the transformation of the dark, disorderly wasteland to a light, ordered civilization. They nurtured flowers and gardens in the land. Then they formed flowers from hair, silk, ink, and watercolor to identify themselves as significant participants in the improvement narrative. They constructed women’s buildings to establish permanence in their taming of the western landscape. The desire to refine or improve was clearly not a singular Mormon effort. Women in the West as well as religious and ethnic minority women outside the American mainstream worked to emulate the popular practices of middle class women in the East. They hoped that

---

3 Genesis 1:28.
their refinement efforts would place them on par with contemporary cultural standards and remove social biases. Mormon women demonstrated their nineteenth-century skills common with mainstream America, but with a distinct Mormon veneer. Relief Society women used, then, the tools of their Victorian time to reclaim the landscape and their own past.

A second theme repeated throughout the heritage of the second half of the nineteenth century was the use of religion. Religion infiltrated everything these women did, informing their motivation as well as their methodology. At the Jubilee celebration, Relief Society president Zina D.H. Young reminded the women, “as sisters we have to work out and secure our salvation.”

Mormon Restorationist theology provided them with an identity as holy women, linked to holy women of the ancient past and the priesthood men of the present. This distinct religious ideology set the Relief Society apart from other American religious women’s groups but united Mormon women as believers. The hair wreaths suggested the physicality of life in the West as well as the LDS belief in resurrection and the practice of temple work for the dead. The quilt witnessed individual religious testimonies in stitched blocks. While the poster included religious iconography that set these women apart, the album focused on interdenominational similarities. The women selected the ways they would use their religion at different points manifesting how they owned that religion.

A third theme repeated in the artifacts is community involvement. The Relief Society encouraged economic, political, and literary activity on the civic level. The Twentieth Ward quilt epitomized Relief Society efforts to care for the poor and provide charity. Relief Society halls indicated women’s involvement in Utah’s economy, both bolstering Mormon business over business with Gentiles at the behest of Brigham Young and highlighting women’s place

---

6 “Relief Society Jubilee,” 140.
in stores and granaries. Representative Women of Deseret positioned Mormon women directly in the middle of public activity, illustrating them as significant community leaders. Utah’s poets collaborated in Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch, joining the flurry of public activity in Chicago at the World’s Fair. The artifacts showcased Mormon women as active, intelligent, and political, making their voices heard. As Emmeline B. Wells observed in 1892, the Relief Society had “championed their causes and advocated their various improvements, and their results, all along the line of march in which women are steadily advancing to the higher plane of education, progress and development, socially, politically, and spiritually.” The Relief Society was a vehicle encouraging public involvement and activism.

A fourth theme evident in the artifacts is education, or intelligence. The popular press depicted Mormon women as duped, incapable of thinking for themselves. The artifacts present a different identity. The quilt blocks included literary and scriptural references. Relief Society stores and granaries revealed economic acumen; Mormon women learned how to research and manage markets and money. Representative Women illustrated Mormon women poets and authors as prominent organizational leaders. Songs and Flowers presented a community of literary scholars anxious to showcase their intellectual talents. The artifacts demonstrate a highly educated group of women who not only thought and acted for themselves, but who made conscious decisions about the construction of their identity and their heritage.

The last theme, unity, found its way into all these pieces. The practice of polygamy suggested new configurations of women as sister-wives within families. The Relief Society provided women with an association that extended beyond family. The hair wreaths

---

demonstrated a format typically utilized for family memorials to commemorate Relief Societies, depicting a matriarchal order. The Twentieth Ward friendship quilt linked women of diverse nationalities and generations in one effort. The display of leading women in the poster served to encourage all Relief Society members to emulate their practice and to take pride in their Relief Society association. Wells encouraged the expansion of this sisterhood: “One individual alone, or one organization alone may not get their ideas presented in such a way to be heard and considered, but when a combination of great organized bodies come with their expressed views and desires, it carries with it a power and significance, that is bound to get recognition and representation.”

Mormon women’s connection with each other over their shared mission and efforts created a community of holy women that extended across time and space.

The themes of refinement, religion, community involvement, education, and unity demonstrate Mormon women as Victorian custodians of culture and guardians of heritage. As practiced nineteenth-century women of their time, Mormon women utilized Victorian tools of refinement to construct their heritage through material culture. Relief Society memorabilia does more than contribute to a kitschy pioneer display. The history of Relief Society material culture started with the display and use of the Nauvoo minute book by Eliza R. Snow in Utah when she helped organize ward Societies there. The book provided a sense of authority and legitimacy from Joseph Smith. Formal exhibits expanded with the settlement. Mormon women presented handwork at annual territorial fairs with reports and

---

8 Ibid.
prizes listed in local newspapers. The first official women’s exhibition occurred in 1876, when the Utah Territorial Legislature failed to fund shipping for a Utah women’s collection to the Philadelphia Women’s Pavilion. Instead, Eliza R. Snow organized a Women’s Centennial Territorial Exhibition in Salt Lake City. Snow requested “curiosities of all kinds—specimens of Art and every variety of manufacture &c.”\(^\text{10}\) Relief Society cooperative and commission stores allowed women to both display and market their skills. The 1892 Relief Society Jubilee demonstrated institutional commemorative material culture: portraits of Joseph Smith, Emma Smith, Eliza R. Snow, and Zina D.H. Young, as well as an American flag, a floral key, Easter lilies, and calla lilies. The display on the pipes of the tabernacle combined civic institutional symbols, cultural flourishes, and their own Mormon icons of female religious authority.\(^\text{11}\) In 1901 women organized the Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP), mirroring similar matrilineal associations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Like these and other historical organizations, the DUP collected pioneer artifacts to preserve regional heritage. Subsequent exhibitions of artifacts occurred for the Relief Society Centennial in 1942 and the Sesquicentennial in 1892, and at the LDS Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City. Relief Society women have long valued and displayed artifacts representing their past.

The metaphorical gallery presented here provides contextual insight and analysis. Although the artifacts are not contained in one physical gallery, this particular collection allows for a compact view of Relief Society commemoration and, most important, an interpretation of how commemoration changed over time. The most significant

\(^{10}\) Snow, “Women’s Centennial Territorial Fair,” 141.

\(^{11}\) “Relief Society Jubilee,” 140.
metamorphosis during this era was what Ethan Yorgason termed the “transformation of the Mormon cultural region.”\textsuperscript{12} Armand Mauss considered the loss of Mormon distinction by the turn of the nineteenth century a mark of assimilation.\textsuperscript{13} Thomas Alexander identified Mormon success at the beginning of the twentieth century to join mainstream American life.\textsuperscript{14} “To do something extraordinary” adds the experience of women during this transition.

The first transition occurred within the Relief Society. As Mormons moved from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake City, Utah, and its environs, and as time passed, the scope of Relief Society and its members expanded. Soon the majority of Relief Society membership had no direct experience with Nauvoo. Many came from abroad, mostly England and Scandinavia. Others had been too young. For example, Emmeline B. Wells was a fifteen-year-old newlywed in Nauvoo in 1844. She did not join the Relief Society then, but she later led the grain storage movement in Utah and edited the \textit{Woman’s Exponent}.\textsuperscript{15} She was one of eight women who addressed the 1892 Relief Society Jubilee celebration and the only one who had not been a founding member. She claimed that “distance lends an enchantment to the view,” meaning that with time and space, the significance of their Nauvoo roots became more clear.\textsuperscript{16} Wells linked to the second generation. She, along with the founding generation, Eliza R. Snow, Zina D.H. Young, Margaret T. Smoot, and Sarah Kimball, encouraged new iterations of the Nauvoo experience in Utah. Younger generations provided additional interpretations of the origin story based on their own needs and experiences.

\textsuperscript{12} Yorgason, \textit{Transformation of the Mormon Culture Region}.

\textsuperscript{13} Mauss, \textit{The Angel and the Beehive}.

\textsuperscript{14} Alexander, \textit{Mormonism in Transition}, 307.

\textsuperscript{15} Madsen, \textit{An Advocate for Women}, 27–28.

\textsuperscript{16} Wells, “The Jubilee Celebration,” 132.
A second transformation involved an expanding audience. Two of the hair wreaths discussed in chapter one hung on the walls of temples where only approved adult Mormons in good standing could enter. The other hung in the Relief Society building, generally frequented only by Mormon women. Those who saw the hair art represented a small, restricted audience—Saints who believed, respected, and celebrated Mormon female religious authority as a companion to patriarchal priesthood. The Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward quilt appeared in a slightly less circumscribed setting, Margaret T. Smoot’s home. Smoot’s bedroom was reserved for her closest family, although this location allowed for ready display to guests, friends, and family. Relief Society halls, granaries, and commission stores opened their doors to an even larger population—the Utah territory. Curious travelers from out of state commented on their encounters with these economic endeavors. Augusta Joyce Crocheron created her Representative Women of Deseret poster with the intent of exposing Mormon women to a larger American public. Utah women’s contribution to the Women’s Building Library at the Chicago World’s Fair, Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch, entered a global atmosphere. Although the book’s limited editions and display on a shelf in the library and the Utah Building precluded wide exposure, the fact that the album was included with the collection of American women’s writings is significant. In preparation for the 1892 Jubilee, Wells described the band of Relief Society women around the world, starting in Illinois, then moving west. The global Society expanded to include branches on the Pacific Islands and in

---

17 Mrs. Frank Leslie, California: A Pleasure Trip from Gotham to the Golden Gate. (April, May, June, 1877) (G. W. Carleton & Company, 1877), 79.
18 Crocheron, Representative Women of Deseret, x–xi.
19 Horne and Wells, Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch.
Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. Although the bands of sisters spread throughout these exotic locations were small, leaders in Salt Lake relished in a “worldwide” expansion.

The next significant change was the transition from a distinct Mormon identity to an Americanized cultural identity. The relative isolation of early Utah allowed for the development of Mormon political, economic, religious, and social standards in their own space. As the frontier “closed,” according to the 1890 census and exaggerated by Frederick Jackson Turner’s thesis, also presented at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, Mormons accepted and embraced American cultural standards. Mormon women identified themselves differently with diverse audiences. After the reorganization of the Relief Society in Utah, the members rallied in its name, creating album quilts and building halls and granaries. By the time Crocheron developed her poster in 1883, she located her women in Deseret, the original Mormon name of the Utah territory. Utah poets exhibited their album from the Wasatch Mountains, a range in the western cordillera of the Rocky Mountains. The Woman’s Exponent also demonstrated this shift through its changing mastheads over time. Each term

---

20 “This great and grand organization of the Relief Society that has almost made a band around the world is joined and linked in all its several branches in one great whole, one almost perfect circle; beginning in Illinois on the banks of the Mississippi it has gone westward, into the vastness of the Rocky Mountains, and South West to the Sandwich Islands, and from thence to Samoa, and across the continent, thence East to the kingdoms of Europe, taking in Great Britain and Holland, the countries of Scandinavia, Germany and Switzerland to Asia Minor, extending southward to Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand.” Wells, “The Jubilee Celebration,” 132–133.

21 Armand L. Mauss discussed the “two opposing strains: the strain toward great assimilation and respectability, on the one hand, and that toward greater separateness, peculiarity, and militance, on the other.” Mauss, The Angel and the Beehive, 5.

22 Turner, The Significance of the Frontier in American History.

23 For the first few years, there was no subtitle. Issues in 1879 switched various biblical verses for subtitles including “A Word fitly spoken is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver,” “Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.” From 15 November 1879 until 1 October 1897, the Exponent proclaimed, “The Rights of the Women of Zion, and the Rights of the Women of all Nations.” In 1897, after Utah received statehood and the women once again gained suffrage, the subtitle changed to “The Ballot in the Hands of the Women of Utah should be a power to better the Home, the State and the Nation.”
progressively relinquished a type of Mormon identity at the same time it welcomed integration within a larger public. They made Utah a proper American home. Mormon poet Emily Hill Woodmansee presented a new Americanized Relief Society heritage in her rendition of the opening song at the 1892 Jubilee, sung to the rousing tune of “The Star Spangled Banner”: “Oh! blest was the day when the Prophet and Seer... / form’d the Daughters of Zion’s great organization.”24 Such changes illustrate the transition from the “Elect Lady” of the Nauvoo Relief Society to the “Pioneer Mother” so prominently displayed at the DUP.

Changes in technology and popular commemorative formats indicate another significant transformation in Relief Society artifacts. Hair wreaths represented the height of Victorian craft; the physicality of remembrance beyond death changed as medical treatment and sanitation improved. Photography soon replaced hair for mementos. Modern wheat storage overtook Relief Society granaries, and the correlation and efficiency of standardized ward and stake buildings dismissed Relief Society halls. The industrialization of manufactured goods undercut women’s handmade items, rendering them outdated. Technology designed to mass-produce books, newspapers, and advertisements relegated the Representative Women of Deseret poster and the hand-painted Songs and Flowers of the Wasatch album to repositories to join other objects no longer usable. The one format that continued to be cherished was the quilt. Quilts fulfilled utilitarian needs as well as provided artistic outlets. Even with the mass-production of manufactured blankets, quilts remained popular.

---

The last few issues, starting in September 1912, stated: “The Organ of the Latter-day Saints’ Woman’s Relief Society.”

24 The chorus included: “Oh! The Daughters of Zion, the friends of the poor, / Are exemplars of faith, hope and charity, pure.” Emily D.H. Woodmansee, “The Daughters of Zion, the Friends of the Poor,” Woman’s Exponent 20, no. 17 (March 15, 1842): 129.
due to a national colonial revival at the end of the nineteenth century, the ravages of the Depression, and the celebration of the American bicentennial. Relief Society women continue to make quilts and give them to others.

Mormon women used their past to illustrate a dynamic history with both gains and losses. Many of these Relief Society artifacts reveal material forms relegated to what can be considered an unusable past. By situating the objects in their proper context, however, their relevance as heritage items in their time becomes clear. New settlements allowed western women to participate publicly in ways different from women in the East. Utah women settled the desert with their suffrage work, economic efforts, and with education and medical practice, collaborating with similar women’s efforts around the country. Mormon women extended beyond the ways Mormon men engaged with communities outside the church and the territory. In early Mormon practice, female religious authority extended to temple worship, exhortation, administration, and glossolalia. But the process of Americanization and the centralization of church leadership in Salt Lake City weakened Mormon women’s autonomy. While they retained participation and authority in the temple, by the turn of the century, Mormon women no longer engaged in administration or speaking in tongues.

The loss of Mormon female autonomy can be attributed in part to the transition of male priesthood leadership. For example, Brigham Young’s exodus and colonizing vision did


26 Jeffrey R. Holland, “Because of Your Faith” (presented at the LDS General Conference, Salt Lake City, October 2010). In the last few decades, the emphasis has shifted to humanitarian quilt donations sent to people in need around the world.
not mirror Joseph Smith’s idea of biblical restoration. Young’s masterful settlement of Utah and beyond significantly incorporated Mormon theology into its own singular secular political and economic practice. Young’s style of polygamy, moreover, freed women from domestic constraints and opened up new public opportunities. Subsequent LDS Church presidents John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff had different conceptions of the role of women in their leadership. Through time, as the Church increased in numbers, Mormon women appeared to lose autonomy and voice. Even as they enjoyed acceptance by non-Mormon American organizations, they relinquished their autonomy and space at home.

All along, Mormon women considered themselves progressive. At first glance, the historical narrative told by Relief Society artifacts presents itself as a downward spiral of lost opportunity and lost autonomy. On closer inspection, however, the objects represent a renewed effort to embody founding principles from Nauvoo. The organizational creation story of the Nauvoo Relief Society permeated activity in new ways throughout the subsequent fifty years and illustrated a continued direction guided by the past. Mormon women acted as veritable historians and agents of their own story. In their careful selection, bound by their understanding of their audiences, the women constructed an evolving identity based on current needs. In this sense, truly they did “something extraordinary.” Joseph Smith told the women in Nauvoo that “this is the beginning of better days, to this Society.”

Woodmansee’s Jubilee song marked this as the “key of advancement.” Wells wrote, “It is to be hoped that this Jubilee will wake up those that are indifferent to the

27 “Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” 28 April 1842, 40, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

28 “Oh! Daughters of Truth, ye have cause to rejoice, / Lo, the key of advancement is placed in your keeping.” Woodmansee, “The Daughters of Zion, the Friends of the Poor.”
growth and development of women in this age and to the needs of active help in the present.” In so doing, Mormon women contributed and continue to contribute to the larger historical fields of memory, material culture, religion, and the West. Their tools of construction of Relief Society heritage reveal female agency in determining a conscious selection of the past.

Memory provides a lens through which to understand the creation of Relief Society heritage. Each of these artifacts contributes a different mode of utilizing the Nauvoo past. The hair wreaths illustrated the creation of a new female collective history. The legacy of sisterhood followed the tradition of family heritage pieces exhibited with the intertwining of hair. Most of the British, Scandinavian, and American converts to Mormonism living in the boundaries of the Salt Lake City Twentieth Ward had not experienced the Nauvoo Relief Society. By virtue of their conversion and emigration to Utah as well as their subsequent membership in the Twentieth Ward Relief Society, they shared a prosthetic memory of the collective Relief Society, as evidenced in their quilt. Relief Society halls and granaries acted as lieux de mémoire, locations where Utah women could enact activities and principles born in Nauvoo but set according to Utah territorial needs. Crocheron utilized mnemonic symbols in her Representative Women poster, encoding and decoding popular American cultural and religious symbols to illustrate the political heritage of the Nauvoo Relief Society. Compilers of Songs and Flowers constructed a new institutional memory that mirrored contemporary American women at the World’s Fair. Not only does the academic study of memory inform the creation of Relief Society heritage, but Mormon artifacts help illustrate important theoretical frameworks pertaining to memory.

Wells, “The Jubilee Celebration,” 133.
The continual re-telling and multi-faceted use of the Relief Society’s organizational creation story suggests the conception of an “imagined community,” supported by material tokens of membership. As part of the larger LDS community, women fell under the institutional mandate given to Joseph Smith and John Whitmer on 6 April 1830: “Behold, there shall be a record kept among you.” Along with Mormon men, women furiously documented their conversions, their emigration, and their Utah settlement. Their material culture, however, allows an additional insight into Mormon history. And the material connection to their founding provided them with legitimacy in remembering Joseph Smith. Careful scrutiny of the creation, use, preservation, and memory of these pieces adds another significant layer to women’s textual record.

At the close of the 1892 Jubilee meeting, Emmeline Wells preached that “the spirit of woman’s future destiny rests upon the sisters, and they obey the impulses of the time in which they live! the voice of the hour! the fulfillment of prophecy! They repeat the hallelujah of woman’s redemption; that has been echoed down the ages.” As Joseph Smith suggested,

---

33 In her examination of the Salt Lake City Fourteenth Ward Relief Society album quilt, Laurel Thatcher Ulrich noted that “a single artifact can yield unexpected insights. Like other forms of micro-history, an object-centered inquiry enlarges details, allowing us to see connections that might otherwise be invisible.” Ulrich, “An American Album,” 1.
34 “Relief Society Jubilee,” 144.
the beginning of better days for women in Nauvoo was at hand. As his wife Emma Smith
demonstrated, they were going to do something extraordinary. And they did, leaving
mementoes behind to mark their passage.
WORKS CITED


“A Refutation.” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 18 (February 15, 1884): 142.


“A Woman’s Convention.” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 10 (October 15, 1876): 77.


“Anti-Mormon Measures.” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 18 (February 15, 1884): 140.


Baldwin, George C. *Representative Women from Eve, the Wife of the First, to Mary, the Mother of the Second Adam*. New York: Sheldon, 1860.


“Boston Female Penny and Sewing Society.” *The Prophet*. February 8, 1845.

“Box Elder Stake Relief Society Minutes,” 1884 1875. LDS Church History Library.


Cannon, George Q. “Female Relief Societies.” Deseret Evening News, December 8, 1867.


Carmichael, Sarah E. Poems. San Francisco: Towne and Bacon, 1866.


“Circular of Instructions: To Officers and Members of the Relief Society.” *Relief Society Magazine* 2, no. 3 (March 1915): 111–141.


Crocheron, Augusta Joyce. *Representative Women of Deseret, a Book of Biographical Sketches to Accompany the Picture Bearing the Same Title*. Salt Lake City: J. C. Graham, 1884.


Derr, Jill Mulvay, and Carol Cornwall Madsen. “Preserving the Record and Memory of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, 1842-92.” Journal of Mormon History 35, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 88–117.


“Editorial Notes.” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 17 (February 1, 1884): 132.

“Editorial Notes.” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 20 (March 15, 1884): 156.

“Editorial Notes.” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 16 (February 15, 1893): 125.

“Editorial Notes.” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 20–21 (May 15, 1893): 156.


Gates, Susa Young. “Editor’s Department.” *Young Woman’s Journal* 4, no. 7 (April 1893): 326–327.

———. *History of the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from November 1869 to June 1910*. Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1911.


“General Record of the Seventies, 1844-1847.” LDS Church History Library.


“Great Indignation Meeting.” *Deseret Evening News*, January 14, 1870.

Greenhalgh, M.A. “Y.L.M.I.A. Fair.” *Woman’s Exponent* 15, no. 7 (September 1, 1886): 54.


Hitchcock, Nevada Davis. What a Reporter Must Be: Helps to Success in Newspaper Work. Cleveland: Ralph Hitchcock, 1900.


“Home Affairs.” Woman’s Exponent 5, no. 7 (September 1, 1876): 52.

“Home Affairs.” Woman’s Exponent 5, no. 10 (October 15, 1876): 76–77.

“Home Affairs.” Woman’s Exponent 6, no. 9 (October 1, 1877): 68–69.

“Home Affairs.” Woman’s Exponent 9, no. 22 (April 15, 1881): 172.


Howard, Elizabeth. “Salt Lake City.” Woman’s Exponent 10, no. 4 (July 15, 1881): 30.


Ice, Joyce, and Linda Norris, eds. Quilted Together: Women, Quilts, and Communities. Delhi, NY: Delaware County Historical Association, 1989.


Kimball, Sarah M. “Auto-biography.” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 7 (September 1, 1883): 51.

———. “Relief Society Record, 1880-1892,” 1892 1880. LDS Church History Library.


“Kind Words.” *Deseret News*, February 13, 1884.


Madsen, Helena. “Gunnison, Feb. 4, 1877.” Woman’s Exponent 5, no. 19 (March 1, 1877): 152.


“Man and Woman.” Ladies' Literary Cabinet 1, no. 17 (September 4, 1819): 136.

“Mass Meeting of Women.” Woman’s Exponent 21, no. 9 (November 1, 1892): 68.


McAllister, A. “Letter to the Editor, 15 October 1844.” The Prophet, October 19, 1844.


“Mormon Wives and Mothers.” *Woman’s Exponent* 19, no. 16 (February 15, 1891): 124.

*Mormon Women’s Protest: An Appeal for Freedom, Justice and Equal Rights. The Ladies of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Protest Against the Tyranny and Indecency of Federal Officials in Utah, and Against Their Own Disfranchisement Without Cause. Full Account of Proceedings at the Great Mass Meeting.* Salt Lake City, March 6, 1886.


Morse, Rebecca F. *Young Women: A History of the American Committee of the Young Women’s Christian Associations*. Chicago: The American Committee of Young Women’s Christian Associations, 1901.


Nauvoo Female Relief Society. “Petition to Governor Thomas Carlin, Springfield, IL.” Ms. Nauvoo, IL, July 1842. LDS Church History Library.

“Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes, 1842-1844,” LDS Church History Library.


“Notice.” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 11 (November 1, 1876): 85.

“Obituaries.” *Woman’s Exponent* 14, no. 5 (August 1, 1885): 40.


364
Pratt, Parley P. *Key to the Science of Theology Designed as an Introduction to the First Principles of Spiritual Philosophy: Religion: Law and Government: As Delivered by the Ancients, and as Restored in This Age, for the Final Development of Universal Peace, Truth and Knowledge.* Liverpool: F.D. Richards, 1855.


Pratt, Romania B. “The Present Administration of the Relief Society.” *Woman’s Exponent* 20, no. 18 (April 1, 1892): 137.


“Prospectus for Vol. III.” *Young Woman’s Journal* 2, no. 6 (March 1891): 285.


“R.S. Reports.” *Woman’s Exponent* 9, no. 7 (September 1, 1880): 53–54.


“Reba Beebe Pratt.” *Woman’s Exponent* 15, no. 8 (September 15, 1886): 61.

Relief Society. *A Centenary of Relief Society, 1842-1942.* Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1942.
“Relief Society Jubilee.” *Woman’s Exponent* 20, no. 18 (April 1, 1892): 140–144.


Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake. “Relief Society Minute Books.” Church History Library, 1869-1875.


“Sarah Lucinda Lee Dalton.” In Heart Throbs of the West. Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, n.d.


Smith, George A., Lorenzo Snow, Paul A. Schettler, and Eliza R. Snow. Correspondence of Palestine Tourists: Comprising a Series of Letters by George A. Smith, Lorenzo Snow, Paul A. Schettler, and Eliza R. Snow, of Utah: Mostly Written While Traveling in Europe, Asia and Africa in the Years 1872 and 1873. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Steam Print, 1875.


———. “Joseph Smith’s Addresses to the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, as Revised for Publication in the History of the Church.” Deseret News Weekly, September 5, 1855.


Smith, Mary Fielding. “Mary Fielding Smith to Mercy Fielding Thompson,” July 8, 1837. LDS Church History Library.


———. “Female Relief Society.” Deseret Evening News, April 2, 1868.


———. “To the Relief Society.” Woman’s Exponent 5, no. 22 (April 15, 1877): 173.

———. “Women’s Centennial Territorial Fair.” Woman’s Exponent 4, no. 18 (February 15, 1876): 141.


“Some of the Remarks of John S. Reed, Esq., as Delivered Before the State Convention.” Times and Seasons 5 (June 1, 1844): 549–552.

“Sons and Daughters of Indian War Veterans.” Richfield Reaper, July 9, 1925.


Stuart, F.E. “Pleasant Grove, Feb. 18, 1877.” Woman’s Exponent 5, no. 19 (March 1, 1877): 150.


“Temple Dedication.” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 20–21 (May 15, 1893): 156.


Thatcher, Linda, and John Sillito. “‘Sisterhood and Sociability’: The Utah Women’s Press Club, 1891-1928.” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (Spring 1985): 144–156.


Thompson, Mercy Fielding. “Autobiographical Sketch.” *Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1880.


“Two Days Meeting at St. George.” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 22 (April 15, 1877): 172.


“Utah County Silk Association.” *Woman’s Exponent* 9, no. 7 (September 1, 1880): 56.


———. “A Touching Tribute--Ma Smoot.” *Woman’s Exponent* 13, no. 8 (September 15, 1884): 91.

———. “Be Wise and Hearken to Counsel.” *Woman’s Exponent* 5, no. 11 (November 1, 1876): 84.


———. “Diary, Vol. 15.” Holograph, 1903 1892. MSS 1407, Box 2, folder 1. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.


——. “Sisters Be in Earnest.” *Woman's Exponent* 5, no. 10 (October 15, 1876): 76.


——. “Women as Manufacturers of Business.” *Woman's Exponent* 5, no. 12 (November 15, 1876): 89.


Whitney, Orson F. *History of Utah, Comprising Preliminary Chapters on the Previous History of Her Founders, Accounts of Early Spanish and American Explorations in the Rocky Mountain Region, the Advent of the Mormon Pioneers, the Establishment and Dissolution of the Provisional Government of the State of Deseret, and the Subsequent Creation of the Development of the Territory*. 4 vols. Salt Lake City: G.Q. Cannon, 1892.


Woodmansee, Emily D.H. “The Daughters of Zion, the Friends of the Poor.” *Woman’s Exponent* 20, no. 17 (March 15, 1842): 129.


———. *Deseret Evening News*, December 8, 1867.

Young, Phoebe C. “Isabella of Castile.” *Woman’s Exponent* 21, no. 9 (November 1, 1892): 65–66.


*The Wasp*, February 8, 1870.
CURRICULUM VITAE

Jennifer Reeder graduated from Timpview High School, Provo, Utah, in 1992. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Brigham Young University in 1998. She received her Master of Arts in Human Communication from Arizona State University in 2001. She was employed as a research-historian/documentary writer for the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS History at Brigham Young University for three years. She received her Masters of Arts in History, Archival Management, and Documentary Editing from New York University in 2006. She completed internships at the American Jewish Historical Society, the Gilder-Lehrman Collection at the New-York Historical Society, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the New York 4th Universalist Unitarian Church, and the LDS Church History Library.