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Women In Utah History

Patricia Lyn Scott, Linda Thatcher

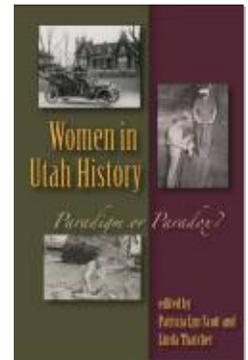
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Scholarship, Service, and Sisterhood

Women's Clubs and Associations, 1877–1977

Jill Mulvay Derr

In a Different Voice, Carol Giligan's landmark study of psychological theory and women's development, concludes that male voices typically speak "of the role of separation as it defines and empowers the self," while female voices speak "of the ongoing process of attachment that creates and sustains the human community."¹ Certainly the Utah community has been shaped in part by the networks women have built and maintained. Clubs and associations have enabled women to assume an important role in public life, at the same time providing them a means to educate and sustain each other. Surveying a century of Utah women's formal connections, this chapter samples rather than lists the variety of organizations in which women have invested.

The hundred-year period defined by the 1877 founding of the Ladies Literary Club and the 1977 International Women's Year is broad enough to show how the nature and programs of women's associations changed in response to state and national developments. The chapter groups these changes into three periods: (1) 1877–1917, when women began establishing a new network of clubs and associations; (2) 1917–45, when both new and well-established organizations for women addressed the challenges of war, depression, and peace; and (3) 1945–77, an age of discontent and discovery informed by the twentieth-century women's movement. The choice of a hundred-year span precludes dealing with a single association or club in depth or across the full duration of its existence. Fortunately, women's groups have kept good records and a number of informative studies have been completed or are underway. Associations connected to Utah churches are not examined in depth here because of the separate chapter on women in religion. (See chap. 3.) Often these associations have been involved in activities parallel to, if not connected with, those of women's secular associations. Information regarding women's political, professional, and labor associations is likewise to be found elsewhere. (See chaps. 6, 7, and 11.)

The history of Utah women's clubs and associations is best understood within the context of the ongoing national discussion about woman's role in the public sphere. During the mid-nineteenth century, as industrialization spread in the United States, the question of appropriate roles of women emerged as a burning topic. In many of the nation's homes, woman's direct contribution to the family income decreased and she assumed more exclusive responsibility for the "domestic sphere," as nurturer, homemaker, and moral guardian. Karen Blair, historian of the woman's club movement in the United States, explained that the growing apart of "man's public and woman's domestic spheres" resulted in the "virtual banishment of women from the public sphere."² The nineteenth-century suffrage movement, the women's club movement, and the twentieth-century women's liberation movement represent approaches women have taken to gain access to the public sphere. Since women themselves have disagreed about the best means of entering into the public sphere, the "woman question" has been a controversial political question. Thus, even though this discussion focuses on aspects of women's connection and attachment, tension and disagreement are important counterpoints.

THE AGE OF ASSOCIATION, 1877–1917

American women began organizing benevolent societies before 1800, and by 1840 the organizations numbered well into the thousands. Mormon, or Latter-day Saint women, whose Female Relief Society had been organized in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1842, reestablished the organization in Utah in each local ward or congregation, beginning in 1867. By 1880, more than three hundred branches of the society were carrying forward traditional benevolent work and such significant economic ventures as silk raising, cooperative merchandising, and grain storage. Mormon women established and staffed a woman's newspaper and a hospital, as well as organizations for young women (the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association, founded in 1870) and for children (the Primary Association, founded in 1878). They were vocal defenders of their practice of polygamy or plural marriage and active advocates for woman suffrage.³ Protestant women in Utah territory opposed polygamy, established schools and youth associations, and also organized for benevolent purposes. For example, Methodist women inaugurated a Ladies Aid society (1880), Presbyterian women a Woman's Aid Society (1882), and Congregational women a Ladies Benevolent Society (1887). Jewish women, a significant minority in Utah's early population, founded their Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Society around 1874.⁴ Like their counterparts throughout the United States, these benevolent, relief, and aid organizations had a religious base and administered to the sick and the poor but also taught their members important lessons about women's capability for autonomy and sisterhood.

The founding of Sorosis in New York in 1868 and of the New England Women's Club in Boston in 1870 signaled the beginning of a nationwide

change in women's networks. "It was the appearance of women's clubs all over the country," wrote Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge in 1933, "which represented the general unspecialized leisure time activity of women, for which no prerequisite in the way of education, belief, or male relationship was required." According to Breckinridge, women's clubs "marked the emergence of the middle-aged and middle class woman from her kitchen and her home."⁵

Unquestionably modern conveniences facilitated the development of clubs. Domestic plumbing, gas lighting, improved stoves, and sewing machines partially released women from the grinding physical labor of keeping a house and feeding and clothing their families. However, club women were not merely women with time on their hands. They advocated women's education and public involvement, but they differentiated themselves from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and other suffragists who were widely criticized for resisting male authority and supporting such controversial measures as birth control. Generally club women were committed to traditional religious and family values. Some scholars have termed their ideology "domestic feminism" because their strategy was "winning a place outside the home using domestic credentials . . . not by breaking out of their prescribed roles but by stretching and circumventing them when necessary."⁶ By thus appropriating, rather than denying, the ladylike ideal, club women hoped to improve the status of women, encourage self-improvement, and bring new respect to women in the public sphere.

The Ladies Literary Club

By the time the "woman question" was being seriously discussed in Utah, lines between Mormons and non-Mormons had already been clearly drawn. When Utah's Territorial Legislature, predominantly Mormon, passed an 1870 law enfranchising women, many Latter-day Saint women enthusiastically aligned themselves with the suffrage cause and argued that their enfranchisement was proof that the practice of polygamy or plural marriage did not subjugate women. National Woman Suffrage Association leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony visited Utah a few months after the vote was granted; and beginning in 1879, some Mormon delegates traveled east to attend NWSA conventions. Mormon women and men spoke in support of female suffrage, and Anthony and the NWSA lobbied against proposed federal anti-polygamy legislation disfranchising women. In contrast, Utah's "Gentile" (non-Mormon) women supported anti-polygamy legislation and opposed woman suffrage on the grounds that it would increase the Mormons' political power.⁷ Their stance simultaneously differentiated them from Mormons and from radical suffragists, placing them firmly with women in the American mainstream. In addressing the question of woman's role in the public sphere, these Utah women, mostly Protestants, followed the pattern established by their "domestic feminist" sisters in the East and began forming clubs.

Utah's first culture club appeared in 1875 when Jennie Anderson Froiseth gathered a group of friends in the parlor of her Rose Cottage in Salt Lake City. Mrs. Froiseth, a personal friend of Julia Ward Howe, who was president of the New England Women's Club, presided over the Anti-Polygamy Society of Utah, founded in 1878, and edited Salt Lake City's *Anti-Polygamy Standard*. Her attack on polygamy as a threat to the nation's morality and home life, "a curse to children and destructive to the sacred relations of the family," is illustrative of American women's broader concern with guarding the moral values of home life.⁸

The group of non-Mormon women who gathered at Mrs. Froiseth's home in 1875 organized the Blue Tea "to promote mental culture" and "literary research."⁹ The club was to be limited to twenty-five women. After meeting for a few months, some of the members expressed their desire for a "nonexclusive women's club," that is, a group "not only for the literary elite, but also for women who were just learners."¹⁰ Some members resigned in 1877 and formed the Ladies' Literary Club, a more democratic organization, which, according to its devotees, "holds the distinction of being the first woman's club west of the Mississippi River."¹¹ Jennie Froiseth, among others, became a member.

According to Eliza Kirtley Royle, founder and first president, the Ladies' Literary Club professed an "open-door" policy and its constitution excluded no one. Yet, as historian Patricia Lyn Scott observes, it was "a common understanding" that "Gentile women, a tiny minority in the entire territory of Utah, felt a need to form a sisterly enclave."¹² Apparently, it was a number of years before Mormon and Jewish women were accepted as readily as Methodist and Unitarian applicants. In 1927, club historian Katherine B. Parsons looked at the positive results of the increasingly open membership policy, explaining that the club had "been a factor in breaking down prejudices here in Utah, and in promoting a Christian tolerance and a more united citizenry, by bringing together women of all creeds and of no creed, on the common ground of desire to grow intellectually and to be helpful."¹³

Most of the club's early members were young mothers, the wives of ministers and government officials who had arrived in Utah fairly recently. Eventually club rolls would include almost all of the wives of Utah governors. Eager not to leave culture too far behind them, these women met on Friday mornings for two hours, generally discussing history or art. In 1882, when the club incorporated, its membership numbered twenty-eight. By 1897, that number had grown to 110, and different sections were established: art, current events and literature, entertainment, history, library, music, Shakespeare, and "tourist."¹⁴ In 1912, the club built its own clubhouse, planned by the Salt Lake architectural firm of Ware & Treganza, which still stands at 850 East South Temple in Salt Lake City.¹⁵

The Ladies' Literary Club, still in operation in 2005, was clearly the vanguard of Utah's clubs, the vast majority of which were organized after 1890.



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Only known photograph of an actual meeting of the Ladies Literary Club held in their original location, 20 South 300 East, Salt Lake City, ca. 1910.

By then the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had issued its Manifesto signaling the beginning of its withdrawal from plural marriage and Mormon women intensified their outreach to other women in Utah and the United States. By then, too, the culture club movement had spread to “almost every city, town, and village in the country.”¹⁶ Utah was no exception. Before the turn of the century, the number of women’s clubs in Salt Lake City, Ogden, and Provo had multiplied significantly, and clubs had been established in a number of smaller communities: Pleasant Grove (Sorosis, 1894); Bountiful (American History and Literary Club, 1895); Springville (Woman’s Club, 1893, and Inquirer’s Club, 1896); Coalville S.B.L. (1896); and Park City (Woman’s Athenaeum, ca. 1897).¹⁷ Not all of Utah’s culture clubs would be so large or so long-lived as the Ladies Literary Club, but they all offered women a means of expanding their interests and their roles within the community.

Utah’s early women’s clubs followed the national pattern: they were secular organizations in which women linked themselves to each other according to special interests. In Salt Lake City, the Women’s Club (1892) studied American government and statesmen, Cleofan (1892) studied the history of London and famous epics of the Middle Ages, and the Reviewers Club (1896) studied “current literature.” In Ogden, Aglaia¹⁸ (1893) pursued the history of drama while La Coterie (1896) took up “history and allied studies.” Provo’s

Nineteenth Century Club (1891) sought something more esoteric—meeting to study Italian history and art and parliamentary law. Another Provo club, Utah Sorosis (1897) “formed as a study club” but quickly branched out, raising funds to sponsor a public library.¹⁹

Clubs typically chose colors, symbols (often flowers), and mottos to represent and describe their ends. The name of the Reapers Club, formed in 1892 in Salt Lake City, spoke for itself. Its objective of “social and intellectual development” was once phrased with studied eloquence as “to grasp the sickle of industry and enter the fields of science and knowledge to reap and bind into sheaves, golden truths, with which to store the granaries of the intellect as food for thought and action in a daily progressive life, in all that is helpful and uplifting to the human race.”²⁰

Sometimes disparagingly referred to as “middle-aged women’s universities,” clubs in fact “served the cause of cultural enlightenment for masses of women.” Historian Karen Blair observed that, within these clubs, middle-aged women whose “primary efforts had been put into family life . . . sought an education that would not demand too much of them.”²¹ Club women had their own reading programs, and club work often initiated them into public speaking. Sometimes they listened to guest lecturers, but they also took pride in researching and writing papers to deliver to one another. In fact, the effort to find books for their research prompted their interest in founding and supporting libraries.

Mary Ann Freeze, defending clubs in the 1892 Mormon *Woman’s Exponent*, argued that while “the duties of home come first of all . . . aside from that there is much [woman] can do to bless herself and humanity at large. Through going abroad and mingling with her sisters, she will learn . . . important truths not to be learned in seclusion from society, hence I think we are not apt to appreciate too highly this important factor in the higher education of women.”²² One requirement of the Utah Women’s Press Club, organized in 1891 in Salt Lake City for women writers, was that each woman had to produce original papers. Ruth May Fox, a young mother and emerging writer who affiliated with the club, testified that her “association with the well-educated women of the Press Club” had encouraged her toward greater education and helped build a foundation “for whatever success in public life I have achieved.”²³

The clubs’ educational emphasis had such appeal that other women’s groups integrated similar study programs into their organizational work. The Unity Circle, for example, grew out of the Ladies’ Unitarian Society founded in Salt Lake City in 1891 “to promote the welfare of the church, good fellowship, charitable and intellectual endeavors.”²⁴ The weekly afternoon meetings of the circle in 1897 included time for charity sewing, for the orphans’ home, for example, followed on alternate weeks of the month by lessons in literature, music, and current events, or a social. Similarly, the LDS Relief Society continued



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Utah Women's Press Club luncheon given by Susa Young Gates upon the occasion of the club being dissolved. (Left to Right) Front row: Louise Y. Robison, Julia B. Nibley, Augusta W. Grant, Alice R. Richards, Susa Young Gates, Louisa ("Lula") Greene Richards, Annie Wells Cannon, Zina Young Card, Emily S. Richards, Jane W. Skolfield, Ellen Lee Sanders. Back row: Emma Lucy Gates Bowen, Mable Young Sanborn, Hattie C. Jensen, Margaret Fisher, Elizabeth S. Wilcox, Emma H. Jenson, Mary F. K. Pye, Florence S. Critchlow, Aimee Shiller, Ellis S. Musser, Lilian W. Robins, Marian Kerr, Clarissa Beesley, and Flora B. Horne, December 6, 1928.

its charitable work but added an educational component in 1902 when local units began sponsoring lessons for mothers. These "mothers' classes" gradually expanded to include such topics as biography, literature, and art, and proved so popular that the society's central board began a standardized educational program in 1914.²⁵

Clubs not only helped educate women but also provided a setting in which women could share their lives and support each other in difficulties. For many women, clubs replaced old support networks, particularly the institution of house-to-house visiting so prevalent earlier in the nineteenth century.²⁶ Club meetings, while more formal than visits, were generally scheduled so they did not conflict with members' home responsibilities. Whether members met in one another's homes, in rented rooms, or in their own club house, clubs "inevitably had the effect of cultivating in women an appreciation of each other."²⁷ By-laws of the Edina Literary and Debating Society specified that members should have "due consideration for the opinions and feelings of others."²⁸ Beyond courtesies,

formalities, and the parliamentary procedure often employed, “the ongoing process of attachment” described by Carol Giligan was, for many women, at the core of club life.²⁹ An original composition presented by Dr. Ellis Reynolds Shipp to the Utah Woman’s Press Club expressed this sentiment. After examining women’s right to worldly resources, the ballot, wifehood, and motherhood, Shipp concluded with a celebration of women’s right to sisterhood, to

Engage in social converse, enjoy a sweet communion,
Let heart come close to heart, and angels join our union.³⁰

Feminist author and leader Charlotte Perkins Gilman put it in so many words: “Club women learn more than to improve the mind; they learn to love each other.” It must be acknowledged, however, that some clubs spawned a sense of smug exclusivity rather than sisterhood. Indeed, “pettiness, social climbing, and cliquishness were unattractive elements that at times were evident in club life.”³¹

The General Federation of Women’s Clubs

By the time Utah became a state in 1896, women across the nation were reaching out to connect in ever-broader circles. Maria Owen, founder of the Women’s Club in Springfield, Massachusetts, appraised the movement that was affecting both men and women: “Association is the watchword of the age—associations for labor, for trade, for instruction, for entertainment, for advance of all kinds. Women naturally feel the impulse and are banding together for work.”³²

Women’s proclivity to gather reached beyond clubs, in the strict sense of that term. Many women affiliated with organizations that never carried the “club” appellation and were different in purpose. The Young Women’s Christian Association began in Boston in 1866, the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in 1874, the Jewish Women’s Congress in 1893, the National Association of Colored Women in 1896, the National Congress of Mothers (later the PTA) in 1897, the National Consumers’ League in 1899, the National Woman’s Trade Union League in 1903, and the American Home Economics Association in 1908.

Club women, too, reached beyond their own small circles to join larger state and national networks. In 1893, in a significant step, Utah’s many culture clubs in various cities and towns formed a state federation of women’s clubs—thus becoming the second such federation in the United States.³³ Two years later, many Utah clubs affiliated with the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, resolving in 1896:

That the women of Utah take the heartiest interest in all organizations tending to ameliorate the condition of women throughout the world.

That they recognize the great educational work of the Federation of Clubs, and will as far as they are able, cooperate with them.³⁴

In 1898 when *The History of the Woman's Club Movement in America* was written by Jane Cunningham Croly, founder of both Sorosis and the Woman's Press Club in New York and the single most important figure in the movement, she commented on the federation's unifying function: "No line is drawn in the Utah Federation. Mormons and Gentiles enter on an equal footing, and the work is doing much to break down the walls of ancient prejudice."³⁵ At that time, seventeen Utah clubs representing about 520 members were affiliated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

At the third annual convention of the state federation in 1896, Romania B. Pratt described the levels of association, proclaiming the Reapers Club to be "a small streamlet, singing a glad song of pride and thankfulness as it glides into the larger stream of the State Federation, and with it sweeps into the General Federation of Women's Clubs, helping to create a mighty force of woman's power which will raise the standard of morals in the world and spiritualize and refine the material and physical in man and thus hasten the era of peace on earth and good will to all men."³⁶

The December 1940 issue of the *Utah Clubwoman*, official organ of the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs, carried news from seven districts and listed state federation officers from twenty-eight separate communities, including such outposts as Marysvale, Monroe, and Moroni. The December 1939 issue of the magazine quoted a past president as saying: "Hand in hand we reach around the world; single handed we can hold only so much of the world's crust." The article emphasized that "the federation stands for every good thing," that its ideals were "Christian, endeavoring to bring more love, joy, and beauty into the Home and Community Life," and that individual club women could derive "both material and spiritual" benefits through Club involvement.³⁷

Though Croly observed in 1898 that Utah clubs "have been rather slow in doing practical work," local clubs that moved into the GFWC followed the national trend toward greater community involvement. As already noted, Utah's women's clubs were instrumental in getting the signatures required for Salt Lake City to receive state funding for its first public library.³⁸ The Ladies Literary Club energetically promoted the public good. For instance, it supported the Masonic Library during its first year, 1893, by raising the princely sum of \$3,100. It also worked for the passage of a library bill in 1897, thus ensuring the opening of a free public library in the Salt Lake City and County Building in 1898, established a traveling library, established free kindergartens, placed art in local schools, sponsored early closing hours for department stores, encouraged high school art and music contests, created Girls' State scholarships and a scholarship fund at the University of Utah, and gave early support to establish the Community Chest (now United Way).³⁹

The Authors' Club followed a typical pattern of first organizing to represent largely personal interests, then gradually integrating social concerns into its cultural program. Although the club, still meeting regularly in 2005,

never veered significantly from its study of literature and history, from the late 1890s through the 1930s it allotted ten minutes weekly for discussion of questions like these: “Can women eliminate personality from public affairs?” “Can anything be done to raise the moral tone of our Show Houses?” “How far should an able instructor go in teaching sex hygiene to high school students?” “Should not the wages of our policemen be made higher in the protection of their families in case of death . . . ?” and “What shall we do with the tramps that come to our door?” There was also a surge of activity in what its secretary called “philanthropies” after the club’s affiliation with the Utah Federation of Women’s Clubs in 1896. Members made contributions to a traveling library, contributed money to sufferers from the Scofield Mine disaster, raised money for the free kindergartens, contested public entertainments that “in any way have a tendency toward immorality or coarseness” and expressed concern with health, sanitation, and the preservation of historic sites. A member in one meeting suggested doing something “to prohibit men from taking cigars or cigarettes in street cars” and another observed that “in many of restaurants [sic], the napkins used by the people at the table were afterwards used to wipe the dishes.”⁴⁰

In 1899 the Utah Federation worked to improve public educational facilities and to establish kindergarten classes within the schools. Both the state and general federations had a strong record of public service, structuring almost all of their departments and programs around social concerns. The 1940 listing of departments and divisions within the Utah Federation of Women’s Clubs was extensive: American citizenship, the American home, education, fine arts, international relations, employment and industries, juniors, legislation, press and publicity, and public welfare. Five of these departments had more than five standing subcommittees.⁴¹

During this era of federation, the LDS Relief Society and Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association became charter members of an international alliance for women—the International Council of Women (1888)—and its United States affiliate, the National Council of Women (1891). Their purpose was to foster “better understanding among organized women of varying interests and beliefs.”⁴² The Mormon organizations maintained membership in the two councils until 1987.⁴³

As they assembled in clubs, societies, and organizations, and affiliated with state and national councils and federations, Utah women bridged differences and strengthened connections. “During the last decade of the nineteenth century Latter-day Saint and gentile women blurred their former hostilities over polygamy and joined their common community interests in collective civic action,” observed historian Carol Cornwall Madsen.⁴⁴

The “Daughters” Associations

As the U.S. population increased and industrialization made life increasingly complex, clubs and associations provided women with a sense

of identity and connection. The last decade of the nineteenth century, which coincided with a great influx of European immigrants, spurred a developing interest in genealogy, historical societies, and ancestry, which prompted men's and women's associations in lineage groups. The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution was formed in 1890, originally to protest against the exclusion of women from the Sons of the American Revolution. The Daughters of the Revolution became a break-off group the next year. The Colonial Dames of America and the National Society of U.S. Daughters of 1812 were also founded in 1891, followed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1894.

Utah women affiliated with a variety of these groups, most of which banded together to teach lessons in patriotism and good citizenship. The Woman's Relief Corp of the Grand Army of the Republic, founded in Utah in 1885, included the wives, sisters, daughters, granddaughters, and cousins of Union soldiers in the Civil War. Although its activity dwindled during the decade after its establishment, it revived significantly in 1896 and continued into the 1930s, raising money through socials to aid veterans and their families in need. By 1898, there was also a camp in Ogden. This interesting group was largely founded by non-Mormon women. When B. H. Roberts was elected to Congress in 1898, they sponsored a series of anti-Mormon seminars and passed a resolution in February 1899 protesting his scheduled seating since he was a polygamist. Expressing their belief that "the home, where one wife is its guardian, is the true foundation of the government of a free people," they resisted "the seating of this open defier of the law."⁴⁵ Their objections were similar to those formally stated by women's associations throughout the United States. He was not seated.

More frequently than political activities, the GAR sponsored educational and social activities and engaged in relief work. An 1898 program featured stereopticon views of Civil War battles. Accounts for a fund-raising card party in 1904 show that total expenditures were \$6.75 (\$2 for twenty sets of tables, 40 cents for cream and milk, 60 cents for coffee, \$1 for cards, \$2 for prizes, and 75 cents for dishwashing). They sold \$20.50 worth of tickets and received a 50 cent contribution, making their profit \$14.25, which went to the families of servicemen. In 1901, they spent \$1.37 on food for a certain Mrs. Walton, reporting that she was "still feeble but able to care for herself."⁴⁶ Minutes indicate that the group provided support for several men and women.

A Utah chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was organized in Utah in 1897, the year after statehood. In 1990, the national DAR centennial year, there were seven Utah chapters and approximately 350 members who carried forward such educational and service programs as providing awards for good citizenship among Utah youth. About 1915, an early unwritten policy of excluding Mormon women apparently became a formal resolution to exclude from membership "descendants of polygamous marriage." It was

later rescinded.⁴⁷ In December 1897, a group of Mormon women countered their exclusion from the DAR by meeting under the direction of Susa Young Gates to propose forming a state chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution; by November 1898, they had the required twenty members and were chartered as the Wasatch Chapter by the national association.⁴⁸

Utah women also affiliated with Daughters of Veterans, United Daughters of the Confederacy, and Daughters of the American Colonists. Like the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, these patriotic societies sought to make the American heritage more readily and tangibly available to Utah's citizens. The Daughters of the Revolution, for example, donated facsimiles of the Declaration of Independence to the University of Utah and to various Salt Lake high schools, presented a hand-sewn American flag of Utah silk to the governor, and assisted with research at the Utah Genealogical Society library. Membership in the group peaked in the 1920s and declined in the 1970s; the Utah chapter closed in 1977 and the national organization disbanded in 1984.⁴⁹

Of particular significance to Utah was the founding of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers. In April 1901 a group of fifty-four women met in Salt Lake City and formed an organization to "perpetuate the names and achievements of the men, women and children who were the pioneers in founding this commonwealth."⁵⁰ Like other national lineage societies, the Daughters of Utah Pioneers was organized as a nonpolitical and nonsectarian organization with membership open to any woman whose ancestors had reached Utah before the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Its membership is primarily but not exclusively Mormon.

A national federation of local units incorporated in 1925, the International Society of Daughters of Utah Pioneers, particularly during the decades of leadership provided by its indomitable president, Kate B. Carter (1941–76) worked energetically and effectively to conserve historical sites and landmarks, to collect relics, manuscripts, and photographs, and to educate its members at monthly meetings through presentations by individual members of local and personal history. A thriving organization with an on-going publications program, by its centennial year in 2001, the DUP had published more than fifty volumes of monthly history lessons, cookbooks, pamphlets, children's book (such as the popular *Pioneer Tales to Tell*), and a four-volume collection of biographical sketches, *Pioneer Women of Faith and Fortitude* (1998). In 2001, its international membership numbered more than 19,000.⁵¹ It maintained numerous "relic halls" throughout the West, including eighty-six in Utah, with an extensive and invaluable collection in its Salt Lake City museum.

The Daughters of the Utah Handcart Pioneers was organized in 1910; and the remarks of its second president, Isabella Siddoway Armstrong, are innocently revealing about the thirst for association. The wife of Salt Lake's mayor and the mother of eleven children, she noted apologetically in her

autobiography: "Having had such a large family my time has been so taken up rearing them that I have been unable to do as much church and public work as I would like to have done." She characterized her presidency as "one of the greatest pleasures of my life to help in a small way to build up an organization which will band together and perpetuate the names of some of the most courageous people the world has ever known."⁵²

The membership of the Daughters of the Utah Handcart Pioneers undoubtedly overlapped that of the DUP to some degree. A listing of the activities of early DUP members indicates that each member also belonged to other clubs and associations. Clearly, none of these groups demanded exclusive loyalty. Multiple memberships were popular, and it was not unusual for a woman to be affiliated with four or five or more women's organizations.

Mothers' Clubs and Domestic Science

Most clubs and associations appealed to "mature" women whose children were grown, but mothers' clubs often targeted younger women. Early meetings for mothers were held in connection with kindergartens which emphasized the importance of teaching mothers about children and how they learn. Camilla S. Cobb opened Utah's first kindergarten in the fall of 1874 in the vestry of Brigham Young's schoolhouse and employed the ideas of kindergarten founder Friedrich Froebel, who emphasized the development of the child's body, mind, and spirit. In the fall of 1875, through the columns of the *Woman's Exponent*, Cobb explained her ideas about child's play and kindergarten to Mormon mothers.⁵³ The Presbyterian Women's Executive Board of Commissioners sponsored a kindergarten in 1883 and support grew steadily for a broader movement.

Since the question of control of Utah schools divided Mormons and non-Mormons at this time, for a while each group pushed forward independently. The Salt Lake Kindergarten Association, organized in 1893 by Mary A. Parsons and interested mothers, imported Elizabeth Dickey from Philadelphia to set up a kindergarten and commence teacher training.⁵⁴ In order to forward its agenda to establish kindergartens in the public schools, the association solicited support from women's organizations; and in 1894, the more broadly based Free Kindergarten Association was founded at a meeting of the Ladies Literary Club, with educator Emma McVicker as president. The association employed as a teacher trainer Alice Chapin, who had studied in Boston under Elizabeth Peabody, founder of the first American kindergarten. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, one of many groups who lent support to the Free Kindergarten Association, sponsored lectures by Chapin, inaugurated monthly meetings for interested mothers, and helped establish kindergartens. In 1894, Emma McVicker founded a WCTU kindergarten in Salt Lake City which served as a charitable day nursery for the children of working mothers; incorporated as Neighborhood House in 1911, it continued to provide services for children into the twenty-first century.⁵⁵

Latter-day Saint women organized the Utah Kindergarten Association in 1895 and installed Camilla Cobb as a teacher of mother's classes. Louie B. Felt and May Anderson, leaders of the Mormon organization for children, the Primary Association, attended Alice Chapin's class and then established their own private kindergarten. They gradually implemented the new educational methods in the Primary Association's teaching program and encouraged the creation of mothers' classes in local wards and stakes. It was the adoption of mothers' classes by the Relief Society in 1902, however, which effectively spread mother education among Latter-day Saints.⁵⁶ That movement followed the establishment of the Utah State Kindergarten Association, in which Mormon, Protestant, and other women and men combined their efforts and, in 1898, pushed successfully for legislation mandating the establishment of local kindergartens and a state kindergarten training school.⁵⁷

In 1897 the National Congress of Mothers provided national affiliation for mothers' clubs all over the United States. Established in Utah the following year was the Utah State Mothers Congress, which encouraged the kindergarten movement and sought to break down the barriers between home and school. It continued until 1914 when the Utah State Parent Teachers Association began functioning as a section of the National Education Association and, after 1925, as part of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, which had emerged from the original National Congress of Mothers.⁵⁸

Kindergartens were successfully integrated into Utah's public schools; and mothers' classes and clubs continued in various forms, providing instruction, camaraderie, and support for mothers of all ages. The Utah Young Mothers Council, for example, in an effort to strengthen the moral and spiritual foundation in the home, provided study and enrichment materials for use in informal neighborhood groups. The Utah Mother's Association underscored the importance of mothering by annually nominating a candidate for "Mother of the Year." Both groups affiliated with the American Mothers Committee.⁵⁹ Many other mothers clubs, such as the University of Utah's Mothers' Club or the Mother of Twins Club, have been geared to more specific populations.

Just as twentieth-century educational precepts informed women of possibilities for better parenting, so the new century's domestic science encouraged them to be more efficient housekeepers and homemakers. "Devices and 'contraptions' for the lessening of work in the home, arrangements to save steps, to lessen the friction everywhere in the domestic machinery . . . are the order of the day," declared Susa Young Gates in 1916.⁶⁰ Gates had established a Home Economics Department at Brigham Young University in Provo in 1894. Two years later, James E. Talmage established a similar department at the University of Utah, and Dalinda Cotey effected such a department at Utah Agricultural College (Utah State University) in Logan in 1903.⁶¹ In February 1910 several home economics teachers from around the state gathered at the Agricultural College in Logan to form a Utah branch of the National Association

for Home Economics. The Utah State Home Economics Association worked to develop a uniform course of study for the state's high schools, proposing a curriculum that included sewing, sanitation, cooking, household arts, laundry, and "housekeepers as consumers." Through USU's extension division, which truly turned domestic arts into a science, homemakers all over the state received extensive aid on household, gardening, food preparation, and food preservation. (See chap. 5.) The association also succeeded in establishing a state standard for teacher competency and for pure milk. Still a vigorous organization in 1954–55, it advocated "education in home economics for individuals of all ages and both sexes for more effective living and competent leadership."⁶²

Student and Youth Associations

Student clubs and associations developed concurrently with those of older women. Nineteen members of the Edina Literary and Debating Society first met in Salt Lake City in October 1884, determining that they would meet weekly on Wednesday afternoons and open membership to "any Ladie [sic] student of the University of Deseret" with the approving vote of two-thirds of the other members. Before the end of the year, intent upon "enlarging our fund of General Intelligence," the members had debated whether a woman were capable of being president of the United States, whether the steam engine or the printing press had "done more service to mankind," whether education was "more essential to men than to women" (they decided it was more essential to women), and whether it was more important to study botany than civil government (they decided it was). Although student organizations are notoriously ephemeral, minute books survive from as late as 1894, chronicling the activities of the society's forty-seven members. By then they had added book discussion, recitations, and spelling matches to their fare.⁶³

About the same time the first Greek women's sororities were founded at the University of Utah, beginning with Gamma Phi in 1897 (later Pi Beta Phi), Theta Upsilon in 1905 (later Chi Omega), and Delta Epsilon in 1911 (later Delta Delta Delta). Shortly after affiliating with the National Panhellenic Association in 1912, all three groups became chapters of national sororities.⁶⁴ Utah State University's Sorosis, founded as a literary society and as that school's first sorority in 1898, became a national chapter of Alpha Chi Omega in 1934 and officially disbanded. However, the original members continued to meet. In 1981, about forty members were still active, and the disbanded sorority was named grand marshal of the USU homecoming parade that year. "Since we take in no new members, our fate is eventual dissolution," said Sorosis president Ruth Layton Harrison. "However, we will continue to meet as long as two of us are left."⁶⁵

The story is indicative of the strong ties women forged during their college years. Many Greek sorority alumnae groups function as their own women's organizations, supporting and advising active student chapters and

pursuing philanthropic projects. Another indication that college alumnae wanted continuing association with other college-educated women was the May 1917 establishment of a Utah chapter of the American Association of University Women. This continuing organization, which requires a college baccalaureate for membership, unites alumnae of different institutions to promote “equity for all women and girls, lifelong learning, and positive societal change.”⁶⁶

The urge for association was felt by a generation still younger than college students. Some religious associations for younger women were well underway by the turn of the century. The LDS Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, for example, had operated local units in Utah since 1870. The Young Women’s Christian Association was established in Salt Lake City in 1906. In a secular vein, the 1911 Polk’s Directory for Salt Lake City listed a Home Economics Society at LDS High School and a High School Athletic Girls Association, suggesting the important role that clubs and associations would come to play in the lives of high school girls.

Volunteers in Ogden, Utah founded the first Girl Scout unit in 1920. The local and regional councils affiliated into a statewide council in 1961; and the 2005 membership stood at 9,000 girls between the ages of five and seventeen led by some 3,500 adult volunteers.⁶⁷

Women’s Organizations and the Progressive Movement, 1890–1915

Clubs and associations had effectively moved women into the public sphere where, in fact, they had to be to address many concerns related to home life. By the end of the nineteenth century, much of the food preparation and clothing manufacture previously performed by individual women in their own homes had become social enterprises; and “the historic sphere of woman was more and more influenced by political life, as governments passed laws concerning food, water, the production of clothing, and education.”⁶⁸ Building upon their traditional home concerns and their responsibility as moral guardians, women united to become, in effect, “social housekeepers.” In the midst of the national Progressive Movement (ca. 1890 to 1915), women’s organizations waged campaigns for peace, purity, prohibition, pure food and drugs, municipal improvement, and educational reform, affirming that “the very intensity of our feeling for home, husband, and children gives us a power of loving and working outside of our homes, to redeem the world as love and work only can.”⁶⁹

Prominent among causes espoused by these women were movements to promote world peace. From 1899 when women from eighteen nations of the world had held a Universal Peace Demonstration preceding an International Peace Conference at The Hague, Utah women’s organizations, like their American counterparts, sponsored annual community peace meetings. In July 1901, May Wright Sewall, president of the International Council of Women, visited Utah where she reestablished her contacts with leading Mormon women, whose Relief Society and Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association were

council members. She urged them to organize demonstrations for peace in May 1902, the anniversary of the opening of the Court of International Arbitration at The Hague. The general presidencies of the Relief Society, Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, and Primary Association responded energetically, and also enlisted prominent Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish women throughout the state.⁷⁰ In May 1902, for example, women in Huntington, Utah, discussed “The Costs of War and Its Effects Morally.”

Following the lead of national women's organizations, that same May several Utah gatherings resolved to “repudiate war as a means of settling international difficulties,” promote “the universal brotherhood of man,” and “rejoice that women throughout the world are beginning to feel their responsibility for human conditions outside of the home, as well as within its sacred walls.”⁷¹ Annual demonstrations continued to draw thousands of enthusiastic and determined supporters. A state Peace Society was formed in 1907 under the direction of Utah Governor John Cutler and continued various activities until the outbreak of World War I. In 1917, when the United States joined the conflict, civic leaders and religious leaders, including Mormons, swung the efforts of the women toward patriotic support. Revivals of pro-peace activities in the 1930s, as historian Leonard J. Arrington points out, sadly, “proved to be only harbingers of another war of destruction.”⁷²

The founding of the Young Women's Christian Association in Salt Lake City in 1906 was indicative of the growing interest in social justice. Concerned with the welfare of wage-earning women, the “Y” established an employment bureau, lunch rooms, restrooms, and recreational facilities. Its building on Third South in Salt Lake City, designed by Julia Morgan, was erected in 1919 and provided housing and meeting rooms for YWCA-sponsored classes, workshops, and conferences. The association has served an important role in bringing together women from different racial, religious, social, and economic backgrounds.⁷³

Utah women, who had exercised the franchise from 1896 when the state's constitution went into effect, not only lobbied for Progressive Era reforms but also helped select the candidates who would enact them. In 1912, the Salt Lake City Association of Clubs sent a pointed list of questions to candidates for various offices:

1. Are you in favor of and will you support legislation—social and industrial—looking to the protection of women, children and the home?
2. Are you in favor of a minimum wage scale for both men and women and will you support such a bill?
3. Are you in favor of a workmen's compensation and employers' liability act, in the interests of men and women workers?
4. Are you in favor of the present nine-hour law for women; also a better child labor law?

5. Are you in favor of and will you support an amendment to the present marriage law, which will require a certificate of health from a reputable physician showing the applicant to be free from transmissible or communicable diseases?
6. Are you in favor of and will you support the appointment of women on all state and local boards—industrial, educational, [and] charitable?⁷⁴

In 1912–13, a Legislative and Industrial Committee of the General Federation of Women's Clubs was organized and declared itself in favor of a minimum wage law for women, a Woman Deputy Commissioner of Labor, and a mother's pension act, among other proposals.⁷⁵ Following the national lead, in 1913 the UFWC spearheaded an attempt to pass a minimum wage law for women, presenting testimony and arguing further for a commission with the power to investigate conditions and regulate wages. After a struggle, the Utah Legislature passed a minimum wage for the state.⁷⁶ Such victories reflected the conviction of Utah's voting women, expressed by the masthead of the *Woman's Exponent* from 1897 to 1913, that "The Ballot in the Hands of the Women of Utah Should Be a Power to Better the Home, the State, and the Nation."

WOMEN'S NETWORKS IN WAR AND PEACE: 1917–45

The Impact of World War I

After the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, most American women's groups directed their energies toward supporting the war, but not without a continuing commitment to principles of peace. Writing from Salt Lake City, the Relief Society general presidency advised members in Utah and elsewhere

to keep the even tenor to their ways, making homes clean, comfortable and peaceful; administer in the spirit of love and patience to your husbands and to your children; guard the little ones; do not permit them to imbibe the spirit of intolerance or hatred to any nation or to any people; keep firearms out of their hands; do not allow them to play at war nor to find amusement in imitating death in battle; inculcate the spirit of loyalty to country and flag, but help them to feel that they are soldiers of the Cross and that if they must needs take up arms in the defense of liberty, of country and homes they shall do so without rancor or bitterness.⁷⁷

Working through their various clubs, associations, and organizations, Utah women thrust themselves into the war effort, becoming part of what President Woodrow Wilson called the "great civilian army without whose backing mere fighting would be useless."⁷⁸ This army of women took its orders from two sources: the American Red Cross and the Council of National Defense,



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Young Women's Christian Association (Y.W.C.A.) truck and group during World War I, Salt Lake City, ca. 1916.

created in August 1916 to survey U.S. military resources and to increase farm and factory production for civilian and military needs.

Through its Women's Division, the Utah State Council of Defense, organized April 26, 1917, served as the clearinghouse for the "patriotic activities of the women of Utah."⁷⁹ It had four main tasks: conservation, recreation, sanitation [health], and "Americanization." As head of the new Federal Food Administration, Herbert C. Hoover was responsible for coordinating national efforts to curb waste and stimulate food production and conservation. If Americans could be educated to use substitutes for conventional materials, the armed forces could have first claim on certain commodities. Hoover's first official move was an appeal to housewives and other food preparers to "Win the War by Giving Your Own Daily Service." It encouraged wheatless meals, meatless meals, and the thrifty use of milk, fats, sugar, and perishable foods: "Preach the 'Gospel of the Clean Plate.' Don't eat a fourth meal. Don't limit the plain food of growing children. . . . Full garbage pails in America mean empty dinner pails in America and Europe," Hoover advised.⁸⁰ In response, Utah women's organizations distributed Hoover pledge cards and held "Hoover luncheons," published government recipes, and sponsored contests for raising and preserving fruits and vegetables. Federal food administrators in Idaho and Utah requested that the LDS Church sell the government the two hundred thousand tons of grains that local Relief Societies had been storing as an independent project since 1876. The Presiding Bishop and Relief Society officers and members complied in 1918.⁸¹

Women responded with energy to the call to help U.S. servicemen. The Utah Federation of Women's Clubs, among others, had canteen services

on call to provide traveling soldiers with sandwiches and coffee. The Ladies Literary Club in Salt Lake City collected 3,500 phonograph records and some phonographs which found their way through the Red Cross and YMCA to American and allied soldiers at embarkation camps in the United States and France and also in the Near East and Russia.⁸²

The Utah State Council of Defense also promulgated programs to ensure sanitation and health for home defense. For example, it designated April 1918–April 1919 as “Children’s Year,” with the goal of saving the lives of 100,000 American children through preventive health measures. The Child Welfare Department of the National Council of Defense, in connection with its state counterparts and the U.S. Children’s Bureau, carried the campaign into communities nationwide by working through local women’s groups. Utah women’s clubs, societies, and associations emphasized the importance of proper nourishment for children, set up and manned milk depots to provide fresh milk, educated women in prenatal care, and weighed and measured Utah children under five years of age. Wrote Clarissa S. Williams, chairman of Utah Woman’s Council and first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency: “While this terrible conflict is depopulating the world, every patriotic citizen—man or woman—will consider it a duty to lend every effort toward prolonging the life, and promoting the health and happiness of the rising generation.”⁸³

The council’s fourth task was “Americanization,” which included “educational work for the purpose of giving enlightenment and encouragement to the alien population.” Helping the immigrant work toward naturalization and “winning his love for our institutions and ideals” involved a cooperative effort among various men’s and women’s organizations, Utah’s public school system and universities, churches, and industrial institutions. Americanization meant enlightening native-born Americans, as well, with an aim toward turning “every knocker into a booster for freedom.”⁸⁴

Unquestionably, Utah’s women’s associations were active boosters. Almost all groups, even very small ones, purchased the government’s Liberty Bonds, which helped to finance the war. For example, each member of the Jolly Stitcher Club in Delta, Utah, donated “one fat hen,” and the club used the proceeds of the poultry sale to buy a fifty-dollar bond. The Utah Woman’s Liberty Loan Committee, comprised of representatives from various organizations, coordinated women’s efforts in the five Liberty Loan drives, all of which were oversubscribed in Utah. Some organizations “adopted” French orphans or sent money to allow children to stay with their parents, or contributed to the American Women’s Hospitals in Europe organized by the Medical Women’s National Association.⁸⁵

Women’s Red Cross Auxiliaries

The American Red Cross carried out its work within individual states through county chapters. Auxiliaries to each chapter were temporary local

organizations that could be formed wherever there were “ten paid-up [Red Cross] members including a chairman, secretary and treasurer.”⁸⁶

Auxiliaries did military support work such as knitting clothes for soldiers and refugees, making surgical dressings and other hospital supplies, and similar activities. Many church-based groups like the Catholic Women's League and Episcopal Women became individual Red Cross auxiliaries.⁸⁷ When women had their own buildings or rooms, the Red Cross helped furnish the locations with necessary supplies. For example, the Ladies' Literary Club Red Cross Auxiliary set up sewing machines at its clubhouse and turned out clothing for hospital patients and Belgian servicemen. Red Cross chapter offices provided work rooms for auxiliaries who wanted to schedule time to use them.

Minutes of the Oliver O. Howard Post of the Women's Relief Corps of the Grand Army of the Republic show that between August 1917 and March 1918, its members had worked 126.5 hours in the “gauze room.” In the “cutting room,” they had prepared 167 garments, 438 compresses, and 30 sponges. They had also made 17 bed sheets, 15 convalescent capes, 30 operating sheets, 40 pairs of bed socks, 48 pairs of ether socks, 35 abdominal bandages, and 56 towels. Knitted articles included 22 sweaters, 10 mufflers, 11 pairs of wristlets, and 9 pairs of socks.⁸⁹ These numbers are impressive, but when multiplied by the number of auxiliaries across the state and in the Mountain Division (Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming, and Colorado), the magnitude of women's volunteer contributions becomes even more significant. In January 1918, women in the Mountain Division of the Red Cross contributed 567,684 articles of the type listed above. By March 1918, Clarissa S. Williams reported, the division's “record-breaking” production had “practically doubled,” reaching 992,169 articles that would “be of great assistance in keeping old General Von Suffering from advancing his forces into allied territory.”⁸⁹

Women's organizations had a significant impact on the war effort; and the war effort, in turn, expanded their opportunities to work and serve within the public sphere. Three postwar developments have particular relevance to this study. First, World War I generated new patriotic organizations for women whose continuing emphasis on “Americanization” would be felt in Utah for the next six decades. Second, postwar passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 enabled women to continue their prewar and wartime social welfare and reform work as voting citizens. Finally, the war expanded the number of women in the work force and likewise increased the number of women who united to forward professional and career interests, a trend that would continue in the wake of World War II.

Patriotic Organizations

After the United States entered the war in 1917, groups of female relatives of servicemen began organizing to help their “boys” overseas, and to keep up their own morale. The War Mothers of America, incorporated in 1918,

joined with seven similar groups to form the Service Star Legion, where the initials of “Serve” were assigned the meanings of sisterhood, education, relief, vigilance, and remembrance. In April 1920, the Salt Lake County Chapter of the Service Star Legion asked the City Commission for part of City Creek Canyon and planted 300 small trees there a month later. The resultant twenty-acre Memory Grove was dedicated in 1924, and the legion’s Memorial House was erected there.⁹⁰

Utah’s Service Star Legion established an education loan fund for the sons and daughters of ex-servicemen, welcomed newly naturalized citizens, and honored Gold Star Mothers—women whose sons had been killed in the line of duty. The national organization attempted cooperation with a similar organization for men. The local history notes: “At the American Legion’s first convention [1919], we offered our services as a sister organization, but were told they ‘did not want any women.’” Two years later, however, the American Legion’s own Auxiliary Department was officially organized. Utah’s Service Star Legion remained intact, but, its historian observed, the group lost “some to the many different organizations that followed.” Through the 1940s and ‘50s, it supported better education of children, campaigned to keep American classrooms and libraries free of Communist materials, and sought to improve the attractiveness of careers in the armed services.⁹¹

In 1922 Nephi, Utah, had the honor of registering Unit #1 of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Utah. In the wake of World War I, the auxiliary, working “for God and Country,” carried out through many local units the program of the American Legion, finding numerous ways to promote Americanism and train and strengthen citizens. It addressed the needs of veterans and aided their families with direct cash assistance. Units built up welfare funds in part from the sale of poppies in commemoration of World War I during the week before Memorial Day. When the homes of three veterans were “destroyed by fire, members through rummage sales and donations furnished food, clothing, and necessities.”⁹² The auxiliary also worked for the rehabilitation of disabled veterans.

Auxiliary units supported patriotic education, including the commemoration of American involvement in the two world wars. For example, following the completion of a new football stadium at Brigham Young University in 1928, Provo Post No. 13 and its auxiliary sponsored a Fourth of July program there commemorating the “Second Battle of the Marne.” Units presented patriotic musical programs and awarded flags to schools. Citizenship training for girls through Girls State began in 1937 and for Girls Nation in 1947.

Committed to “active Americanism,” auxiliary units urged voter participation and involved themselves in community service, often helping sponsor troops of Brownie Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Campfire Girls. Some units sponsored projects for children with cerebral palsy, polio, rheumatic fever, and

other handicaps. Others contributed money, scrapbooks, games, and dolls to the Shriners' Children's Hospital, the Primary Children's Hospital, and the State Training School.

The American Legion Auxiliary, like the American Legion itself, upheld and defended the U.S. Constitution and supported U.S. military action. A 1951 auxiliary report quoted the comments of Mrs. Harry D. Ferrington, president of the Department of Utah, at the end of the Korean War's first year: "We in America, have been, and are fighting subversive activities, Communism, black market, and those who would undermine our American Democracy and our Way of Life."⁹³ At that point, ninety-two units were active in Utah, and a new district had been formed including units in Kamas, Heber City, Jensen, Vernal, Roosevelt, Myton, Altona, Duchesne, Coalville, and Park City. As of January 1986, women eligible for membership in the auxiliary included women in the service and the wives, daughters, sisters, granddaughters of American Legion members and the same women relatives of men who served during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. That year, there were eighty-seven units throughout the state and a membership of 5,000.

Organizations for Women as Citizens

Over time, many American women who maintained a strong commitment to traditional home and family values resolved to become voting citizens. These "domestic feminists" believed the franchise would enable them to more effectively carry out their "social housekeeping," or social reforms. J. Stanley Lemons described their effective blending of feminism and social concerns, observing that "as they worked for progressive reform, they advanced the status of American women. And as they fought for women's rights, they pushed progressivism along in a decade of waning reformist impact."⁹⁴

Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 marked the culmination of the united work of numerous and diverse women's organizations. In Utah, Governor Simon Bamberger called the legislature into special session in the summer of 1919 to ratify the amendment and signed it into law in October.⁹⁵ The next month, November 1919, Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, visited Utah to celebrate this local continuing victory and to organize a Utah unit of the National League of Women Voters, the designated successor of the NAWSA. Utah's "Suffrage Council was drafted almost in its entirety into the Utah League of Women Voters." Susa Young Gates represented Utah at the National League's first convention held in Chicago the following February upon the centennial of the birth of Susan B. Anthony, when ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment was virtually assured. Before adopting a plan of educational work centered on child welfare, public health, and social improvement, the league honored living pioneer suffragists from each state, including Emmeline B. Wells, Emily S. Richards, and Gates herself from Utah.⁹⁶

Neither the Utah League of Women Voters nor the National League drew the full participation of those who had worked for suffrage. In 1925, the membership of the Utah League was still small, only forty-three. After a decade of active service, it went into a period of decline until it was revived in 1952. Since that time, it has remained a significant part of social awareness in Utah. Catt had been adamant that women join the national parties rather than forming a separate women's party, and the league from its beginning focused on issues and candidates rather than lobbying for a separate women's platform. In recent times, it has undertaken such projects as measures "to improve budgetary procedures in the State of Utah," and "to promote comprehensive regional and river basin planning," and it has explored such issues as year-round schools, migrant housing, allegations of religious and racial discrimination at federal facilities, and proposed community renewal programs.⁹⁷

Civic Contributions of Women's Organizations

The fact that women did not rally again for a single issue as they had rallied for suffrage was not an indication that their interest in public issues or in exercising the franchise had declined. Quite the contrary. "Long before masses of women were deeply concerned with suffrage," Lemons explains, "they were working to make their communities more 'homelike.' When the great diversion—the suffrage crusade—ended, social feminism tended to resume its previous interests and multiple purposes. . . . Success would have to be measured by hundreds and thousands of little items from 1920 onward."⁹⁸

Women's successes were "little" because they were primarily local. Close cooperation between volunteer organizations and local governments reached a high point during the 1920s and 1930s before the severity of the Great Depression expanded the role of state and federal governments in local welfare, health, and education concerns. Small town and rural women's clubs, particularly, show the important role of women's volunteer organizations in community betterment. The main impetus in 1916 for forming the Magna Woman's Club was to "take an active interest in the civil welfare . . . and social betterment" of the community. Projects included a public playground with a trained supervisor, a library, a pre-school child clinic, and clean-up campaigns. Modestly but tellingly, its historian concluded, "As our town is unincorporated we have no city official to appeal to for help in our work, and as we are the only organization doing civic work we have many calls for help. Many of us would like to take up a line of study but as the great need of the town is for civic work we feel justified in sacrificing our desires for the good of the community."⁹⁹

In 1928, the Women's Civic Club of Bingham Canyon, reported that "a complete list of the pies in which we have had our fingers would be too long for this article," but the partial list included a better class of movies in the community, a public library, relief for miners out of work, a school cafeteria, clean-up campaigns, swat-the-fly campaigns, and fund-raising for "many objects, ranging from [the]



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Photograph taken on the twenty-second anniversary of the Jolly Stitcher Club, Delta, July 1934.

University of Utah scholarship fund to milk for undernourished children.” It is possible, reading between the lines, to see impressive leadership. The women would spearhead a project, then involve the male businessmen and civic leaders to stabilize and perpetuate the project: They “gained the cooperation of the picture producers . . . so that the Club has never felt the need of taking up the work again. . . . About this time the men of the town took hold of the matter. . . . With the assistance of the local doctors We persuaded the school board,” etc.¹⁰⁰

In the little town of Union, the Unity Club was organized in 1914 with seven members “to bring sociability, good literature and good music into the lives of the country women.” In addition to studying Longfellow, Lowell, and music, its fifteen members had, by 1927, provided solid community service as well, including buying school furniture, entertaining the teachers at an annual luncheon, purchasing playground equipment, landscaping the school ground, contributing a hundred books to its school library, and loaning it almost a hundred more. One of its members served as a member of the Women’s State Legislative Committee.¹⁰¹ This group of representatives from various women’s associations met at the capitol while the legislature was in session and engaged in “legitimate lobbying,” encouraging bills “which they consider worthy,” particularly those “affecting education and the welfare of women and children.” In 1927, for example, the committee succeeded in repealing a horse-racing act.¹⁰²

The historian of the Jolly Stitcher Club of Delta, formed in August 1913, summarized the importance of her small club’s work over a fifteen-

year period: "Our members have come from all over the United States, from Delaware to California, from Michigan to Arizona, and from Scotland and Wales. Although we have done much valuable charitable and social work, yet the main value of our club has been its broadening influence on the community life."¹⁰³

A common concern around which many Utah women united during the 1920s was maternal and child health. Women's groups had been sponsoring milk stations, school health programs, and well-baby clinics for several years before the Congress passed the 1921 Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act. After the U.S. Children's Bureau had revealed high maternal and infant death rates, women's groups had lobbied strongly for the legislation. States and individuals were free to reject the proffered aid; but through the efforts of Amy Brown Lyman (a state representative and future general Relief Society president) and others, Utah passed enabling legislation and authorized the required matching funds. Various women's associations took up the important work, sponsoring child health consultation centers, child-care conferences, and instruction in the hygiene of maternity and infancy through public health nurses. The act expired in 1929, when even women's organizations became divided over the political question of the extent to which states should receive federal funds.¹⁰⁴

The LDS Primary Association undertook another major project for children's health during this period. The LDS Children's Convalescent Hospital was opened May 11, 1922, in a home on North Temple in Salt Lake City. After thirty years of providing medical treatment for children of all races and creeds, expansion was long overdue and the Primary Children's Hospital was completed in 1952. It and its successor, the Primary Children's Medical Center at the University of Utah, have received support and contributions from many women's groups, secular as well as religious.¹⁰⁵

Between the wars, the depression took its toll of women's associations, particularly larger clubs whose dues proved too high for women in straitened financial situations. Many clubs reported a drop of membership or, in the case of state associations, a decrease in units during this time period. For instance, in 1931–32, 135 members of the Utah Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs disaffiliated, and three clubs dropped their federation membership.¹⁰⁶

For many affiliated women who remained active during this period, concern with state and national issues continued. In April 1935, at its annual district convention held at Cedar City's LDS First Ward meetinghouse, the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs discussed such topics as birth control, old age pensions, unemployment insurance, sterilization of criminals and the mentally unfit, narcotics, cancer, baby registrations, and statewide safety movements. At the convention, UFWC president Mrs. Weston Vernon, summarized achievements of the past three years, citing "cooperation with the attorney general in abolishing



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Women workers associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Victory Gardens project preparing beans, August 8, 1943: Mrs. E. E. Ericksen, Mrs. A. M. Woodbury, Mrs. LeRoy E. Cowles, Mrs. I. Daniel Stewart, Mrs. C. L. Walker, Mrs. J. J. Orme, Mrs. L. H. O. Stobbe, Mrs. Alexander Schreiner, Mrs. A. LeRoy Taylor, Mrs. William H. Bennett, Mrs. J. Albert Peterson. The gardens were scattered over hundreds of miles of the intermountain region and were tended by church members of all ages and their produce canned by women workers.

slot machines and preventing their reappearance, protest against a proposed merger of the juvenile court with district courts, an active stand on the Senate munitions investigation, and a memorial to Congress in support of pure food and drug legislation.”¹⁰⁷ In October 1935, fighting the overwhelming tide of unemployment, Salt Lake City’s six thousand club women sent hostesses to the State Fair to cooperate with the Utah Manufacturers’ Association in impressing “upon Utah women that employment can be improved by purchasing Utah-made goods.”¹⁰⁸ The December 1940 issue of the *Utah Clubwoman* included an extensive listing of departments and divisions within the UFWC, many of which (American citizenship, the American home, education, fine arts, international relations, employment and industries, legislation, and public welfare) reflected a continuing interest in social concerns.¹⁰⁹

Those concerns became more urgent as the United States mobilized military and civilian resources for the Second World War. Utah clubs and associations supported the war effort; those in Salt Lake City often worked in close collaboration with the Woman’s Board of the Conservation Division of the War Production Board, later known as the Salt Lake City Minute Women. Repeatedly, women set other interests aside and “organized waste paper drives

and collected tin cans, nylon and silk hosiery, scrap metal, rubber and other needed items.” The goal was to involve everyone in the salvage effort, and the widespread campaign was highly successful. To “illustrate the enormity of the Minute Women’s salvage efforts of household fats,” for example, in Utah, “2,262,538 pounds of fats were collected between 1942 and 1945,” which could have been “translated into any one of the following uses: alkyd resin paint for 45,600 medium tanks; or 1,140,000 pounds of dynamite; or, 9,120,000 anti-aircraft shells; or annual pharmaceutical supplies for 76,000 hospital beds.”¹¹⁰ Women’s clubs and associations, through war and depression, plainly manifested their durability and usefulness.

CONTENT, DISCONTENT, AND DISCOVERY, 1945–77

In July 1946, addressing the women’s Society of Christian Service assembled at Park City’s First Congregational Church, a Reverend Gravenor opined: “A generation ago women worked only for equality. That equality has not made the world better.” He affirmed that “men and women together must be trustees of the future,” emphasizing “the importance of women being good mothers and keeping a Christian home. Woman’s duty,” he concluded, “is to preserve the goodness in the world by raising God-fearing children.”¹¹¹

The minister’s statement typifies the emphasis on women’s traditional role as wife and mother that characterized popular culture in the United States during the period after World War II. For many women, the years that followed war, depression, and war again, seemed a blessed return to normalcy when peace and prosperity allowed home and family values to be firmly established rather than merely longed for. It was an era when Americans prized “togetherness,” when, as *McCall’s Magazine* observed in 1954, “men, women and children are achieving together . . . not as women alone, or as men alone, isolated from one another, but as a family, sharing a common experience.”¹¹²

A different type of women’s organization reflected this commitment to achieving together: wives’ auxiliaries. These groups, determined by a husband’s occupation rather than by the wife’s interests, provided women with a means of associating with other women who faced similar challenges in supporting their husbands’ work. For example, women who joined the University of Utah Medical Students’ Wives could commiserate over their husbands’ grueling schedules or their de facto single parenthood while engaging in their own educational activities or service such as the March of Dimes or the Festival of Trees.

Other groups forwarded the work of their husbands. The Utah Dental Association Women’s Auxiliary assisted the Utah Dental Society in public dental health efforts; the Utah State Bar Auxiliary supported Utah State Bar activities and goals; the Salt Lake Jaycees Women’s Organization supported the Jaycees’ community projects; and the Consulting Engineers Council of Utah, Women’s Auxiliary, worked to support council projects and promote “whatever may contribute to the welfare of the community.”¹¹³

At the same time that wives' associations and auxiliaries were multiplying, the trend toward professionalization for women was also intensifying. During the wartime labor shortage, women had moved into positions in trades, industries, and professions, which previously had been reserved for men. Leaving behind their domestic service, or restaurant or laundry work, women were quickly trained to operate linotypes, lathes, and elevators, and to work as typesetters, electrical linemen, blacksmiths, mechanics, and bricklayers. Women lawyers were asked to serve on exemption boards and legal advisory committees. The percentage of women in the civil service more than doubled during World War I, reaching 20 percent.¹¹⁴ In many cases, women held on to their positions after the war ended. The same trend was magnified in the wake of World War II. An estimated 24,000 Utah women joined the work force, nearly 30 percent of them in war industries.¹¹⁵ Unlike post-World War I, World War II working women tended to remain at their jobs; by 1950, one-fourth of Utah's women "held remunerative jobs."¹¹⁶

As the percentage of women working increased, so did the interest in organizations for working women. The Business and Professional Women in Utah had organized in 1913 with the stipulation that 75 percent of its membership be actively engaged in business and professions. During the 1920s, the BPW maintained representation on the Utah Women's Legislative Council, lobbying for legislation to advance educational and professional opportunities for women. It marshaled its forces to eliminate policies that discriminated against hiring married women, provided scholarships and professional guidance for young people, and made community service an important component of local BPW club work. In 1937, its Beaver club was raising money for city recreational facilities. In Bingham Canyon, it bought equipment for a community house. In Ogden, the group had a project to help children with disabilities. The Brigham City club bought a piano and flower boxes for Bushnell Hospital. In Cedar City, the BPW sponsored scholarships. In Coalville, it supported a public library, a safe skating pond, and an eye clinic.

"The projects in which they were involved developed ingenuity, team spirit, interest, civic pride, and a sense of accomplishment for the clubs as a group and the members individually in addition to the visible community improvements," wrote Olive Davis Fagg in her 1979 study of the organization. "These organizations and their work lent courage and guidance to other groups with like aspirations."¹¹⁷

A healthy organization, the BPW continued to thrive throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In December 1977, it numbered thirty-three active units in the state with 1,132 members, including clubs in towns as large as Salt Lake City and as small as Lakeview.¹¹⁸

Many other organizations for professional women likewise emphasized the importance of service. In November 1923, twelve Salt Lake City women formed the Altrusa Club to foster "vocational training." Both the Salt Lake

City club and its sister club in Ogden were offshoots of Altrusa International, organized nationally in 1917 to “help girls and women adjust to the demands of the business and professional world.” Starting with an initial loan fund of \$400, by 1935 Altrusa of Salt Lake City was offering fifty-dollar scholarships to young women interested in social services graduate work. It also sponsored job clinics for older women but its main purpose has been to involve business and professional women in addressing “civic and social welfare problems in the community.” Similarly, Utah chapters of Zonta and Soroptimist provide business and professional women opportunities for community service.¹¹⁹

Given the plenitude of service-oriented groups, some women’s organizations focused more expressly on helping women forward their professional careers. A 1981 partial listing of Utah women’s organizations and chapters suggested the number of associations developed to support women in specific professions, including: American Society of Women Accountants, Credit Women International, Executive Women International, National Association of Women in Construction, Insurance Women of Salt Lake City, Utah Women’s History Association, Women in Social Work, Women’s Architectural League, Women Entrepreneurs Association, and Women’s Law Caucus.¹²⁰

Appealing to women in a range of careers, the Wasatch Chapter of the American Business Women’s Association, was chartered in 1968, an affiliate of the national organization founded in 1949 to “promote the professional, educational, cultural, and social advancement of women.” In 1984, a Utah woman, Lois Yoakam, was elected national first vice president.¹²¹ At that time, through its seminars, monthly meetings, and fund-raising to sponsor scholarships (which nationally provided more than \$2.5 million annually), the group offered women “the opportunity to exchange information and ideas with other working women in a variety of professions, to build self-confidence, and to advance their education in both their business and personal lives.”

The organizations for business and professional women that proliferated in the wake of both World Wars helped heighten awareness of women’s continuing economic and legal disabilities, problems not resolved by the amendment granting suffrage. Many women’s groups began campaigning for equal pay for equal work and equal opportunities for women in jobs, promotion, and training. Organizations for professional women were among the first to support the efforts of the National Woman’s Party to work toward complete equality by “amending specific laws, blanket equality bills in all the states, and an amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing equal rights.”¹²²

In 1923, the Utah Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs indicated a keen awareness of the need for equal rights for women in employment, in wages, and in legal treatment. The national federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs would not endorse the proposed Equal Rights Amendment until 1937. Though it had allowed state federations to act as they pleased in the matter, for a sixteen-year period it had remained

neutral, siding neither with those who favored equal rights for women nor with those who favored protective legislation for women. For, as Stanley Lemons explains, "The feminist movement divided into warring factions on the question of how best to continue women's progress after winning the vote. Given the particular climate of legal opinion, labor legislation generally meant laws for women to protect them from abuse in the industrial system. Social feminists preferred to pursue this line; however, the national Women's Party wanted a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equality even though the amendment would destroy labor laws for women."¹²³ Both sides took strong stands and both sides could argue intelligently and persuasively on behalf of women, making it difficult for women's organizations to unilaterally endorse either position. The general Federation of Women's Clubs, for example, opposed the amendment in 1921 but endorsed it in 1944. There was clearly no consensus about "how best to continue women's progress"; and though the years following World War II brought prosperity and provided women's organizations with the opportunity to channel their energies into less controversial issues, the question of women's progress remained and opposing viewpoints and warring factions were destined to reemerge.

Since the majority of women's clubs and associations had their roots in nineteenth-century domestic feminism, they had long fostered rather than opposed traditional home and family values and did not find themselves out of step with post-war emphasis on the nuclear family and woman's mother-housewife role. Affiliated women had an advantage in having learned that homemakers did not need to be isolated, that on-going connections with other women could complement rather than damage family life. Most of these organizations had lost their fervor for social housekeeping some time between the failure of the child labor amendment in 1925 and passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, which included provisions for child and maternity welfare; but they did not discontinue community service. There were still immunization campaigns to be waged, youth groups to be financed, trees to be planted, legislators to be lobbied, historic sites to be marked, hospitals to be supported, arts to be sponsored, schools to be supplied with books and equipment, and dozens of drives for health research to be staffed by volunteers. And Utah's affiliated women accomplished this. For the most part, their work was neither controversial nor highly visible. They blended, perhaps too unselfconsciously, into the background.

For example, in 1962, Salt Lake City hosted the golden jubilee conference of the central Pacific Coast Region of Hadassah, the women's Zionist organization. Coverage of the event brought the organization and its local chapter momentarily into the limelight and revealed the purpose and complexity of a women's organization whose work was probably unknown to large numbers of Utahns. The group, established in 1912, "to raise health standards in what was then Palestine," had grown to include some 318,000

women in thirteen hundred chapters. Over a fifty-year period, the Hadassah program had “expanded to include an intricate system of healing, teaching and medical research, child rescue work, vocational education, social welfare and land redemptipion [sic].” In addition, Hadassah sought to “protect democratic ideas at home,” its chapters “disseminating information on civic and political issues, economic projects, and welfare programs.”¹²⁴

The New Feminism

Hadassah was unique but it was not alone among women’s organizations in its substantiality. Issue-oriented and community-conscious women continued associating, learning, and serving during the 1950s and early 1960s, but these interests were out of harmony with the era’s popular interests. “By the time I started writing for women’s magazines, in the fifties,” wrote Betty Friedan, “it was simply taken for granted by editors, and accepted as an immutable fact of life by writers, that women were not interested in politics, life outside the United States, national issues, art, science, ideas, adventure, education, or even their own communities, except where they could be sold through their emotions as wives and mothers.”¹²⁵ Attacking the past decade’s glorification of women’s occupation as housewives, Friedan’s 1963 bestseller, *The Feminine Mystique*, lamented the shattering of “the image of the American woman as a changing, growing individual in a changing world” and called upon women to turn from an immaturity that has been called enmity to full human identity.¹²⁶ In 1965, she joined others in founding the National Organization for Women (NOW) to “take *action* to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof, in truly equal partnership with men.”¹²⁷ The emerging women’s liberation movement, like the contemporary civil rights movement and student protest movement, challenged the values of “the establishment” and demanded revolutionary societal change.

At first, the new movement distanced itself from the long-standing women’s networks, clubs, and associations which had upheld traditional roles for women as homemakers and volunteers, criticizing them, much as earlier radical feminists had criticized clubs for upholding the ideals of “ladydom.”¹²⁸ A growing number of women sought self-understanding in lieu of social betterment. They wanted the economic power that came with university degrees and jobs, not literary club scholarship or community service. They developed alternative women’s organizations: consciousness-raising groups, health centers, political caucuses, and educational groups.

Other institutions, too, were addressing women’s concerns. The President’s Commission on the Status of Women, established in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, explored “education; home and community services; private employment, in particular that under federal contracts; employment in the federal government; labor standards; federal social insurance and taxes as they

affect women; and the legal treatment of women in respect to civil and political rights."¹²⁹ The commission's 1963 report detailed the discriminatory wages and salaries women were earning (about three-fifths the average for men), and the declining ratio of women in professional and executive jobs. The commission recommended, among other measures, that women be counseled to use their abilities in society, that they receive equal opportunity in hiring, training, and promotion, and that child care centers and other services be available to women at all economic levels.¹³⁰

Utah's own Governor's Commission on the Status of Women, established as an informal committee in 1964, was permanently established by executive order in 1968 by Governor Calvin G. Rampton.¹³¹ In addition to several reports on the challenges of "employment opportunity, threats to the family, housing, and gender and minority discrimination,"¹³² it also sponsored a groundbreaking study on adolescent pregnancy in the state and, in 1986, published a resource handbook, *Utah Women and the Law*, which had been in preparation since 1979. In 1989, this group's name was changed to the "Governor's Commission for Women and Families."

State universities likewise sought to address women's issues, including the concerns of middle-aged women, many of whom were returning as "nontraditional" students to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees. At the University of Utah in 1971, a new Women's Resource Center was established to help break down sex-role stereotypes and provide a flexible forum for addressing education, counseling, and personal needs for women.¹³³ Utah State University established a women's Center for Life-Long Learning in 1974. Within a few years, both schools also initiated new programs in women's studies.

The International Women's Year

The insistence of new feminists that women reopen the discussion of their rights, particularly biological and economic rights, revealed the disparity of women's opinions on those issues. Neither the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment nor the legalization of abortion was an exclusively legal question. Both were discussed in terms of their ramifications for women's lives in the private sphere as well as in the public sphere, and rarely was that discussion successfully separated from the perennial question: What is woman's role?

Profound disagreement surrounding that question emotionally charged the atmosphere in which women discussed their concerns and developed support networks. A radical anti-male faction of the movement successfully disrupted conferences, won publicity, and polarized positions. Traditionalists recoiled, sometimes overreacting. One bizarre manifestation was the name selected by some Utah women who united in opposition to the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment: Humanitarians Opposed to Degrading Our Girls (HOTDOG).¹³⁴ As concern became widespread, the viewpoints became more polarized and organizations sprang up on both sides of the issues.

If consensus seemed unlikely, dialogue seemed imperative. The concerns of Utah women reflected worldwide debate and discussion. The United Nations created a commission on the status of the women of the world in 1972 and proclaimed 1975 the “International Women’s Year.” That year, from June 19 to July 2, the International Women’s Year Conference and Tribune—1,300 official U.N. delegates from 133 nations—assembled in Mexico City. An additional 7,000 unofficial observers, including 41 Utah women, also attended. The conference officially urged governments “to dedicate themselves to the creation of a just society where women, men and children can live in dignity, freedom, justice and prosperity.”¹³⁵

In the United States, a National Commission on the Observance of the International Women’s Year was created by executive order in January 1975, with a mandate “to spread the word about IWY as widely as possible throughout the United States and to stimulate appropriate activities by nongovernmental women’s organizations.”¹³⁶ The commission scheduled a national IWY conference to convene in Houston in 1977, to be preceded by state meetings. The national and state meetings were to explore a variety of women’s issues and to consider recommendations proposed by the commission.

Utah was allotted fourteen delegates to the Houston meeting, but the selection of those delegates and the discussion of proposed recommendations brought tensions and tempers to the eruption point and strained the state’s sisterhood to its limits. Utah’s IWY Coordinating Committee, charged with organizing the state conference, was purposefully drawn to represent a variety of political, social, ethnic, religious, and geographical backgrounds. It hoped “to capitalize upon that diversity so that we might better address ourselves to the variety of interests, needs, and concerns unique to Utah. . . . As a committee we are determined to be an example to the rest of the women in the state, showing that diversity doesn’t have to divide people.”¹³⁷

Members of the coordinating committee, who had hoped to have two thousand women attend, were not prepared for the nearly fourteen thousand women who ultimately registered at the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City to attend “The Voice of Womankind: Utah’s First State-Wide Women’s Meeting on 24–25 June.” The convention was the largest in the nation with more than twice the attendance at any of the other state meetings. And it was one of the most contentious, split largely along religious lines. “In states that had not yet ratified the ERA, the IWY conferences were poisoned by emotional and impassioned confrontations and turned into forums for continuing the battle,” observed historian Martha Sonntag Bradley.¹³⁸ Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, state by state, had been pending since its approval by the U.S. Senate in March 1972. The Utah Legislature defeated the amendment in February 1975, two months before the National Commission on the Observance of IWY met for the first time and “chose ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment as its top priority issue.”¹³⁹



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Utah delegation to the National Women's Conference, November 18-21, 1977 held in Houston, Texas.

However, the commission intended much more than a popular referendum on the ERA. State meetings were to vote on twenty-six national recommendations, addressing issues categorized under the headings of Arts and Humanities, Child Care, Credit, Education, Female Offenders, Legal Status of Homemakers, International Interdependence, Mass Media, Equal Rights Amendment, Older Women, Rape, Teenage Pregnancy, and Women in Elective Appointive Office.¹⁴⁰ As in other states, Utah's coordinating committee set up task forces to discuss the national recommendations and draft local recommendations.¹⁴¹

Though Utah's population had grown in numbers and diversity during the twentieth century, the majority of Utah women were still LDS or Mormon and, since 1971, all Latter-day Saint women were automatically enrolled as Relief Society members. The LDS Relief Society, like all other known women's organizations in the state, received information about the conference and an invitation to have its women participate. With encouragement from the IWY coordinating committee, Relief Society general officers, led by President Barbara Bradshaw Smith, encouraged their members in Utah to attend IWY's preliminary mass meetings, slated as opportunities to present information about the meetings and discuss varying opinions, but the turn-out was disappointing.¹⁴² Subsequently, a letter sent through male ecclesiastical channels suggested that ten women from each ward unit attend the IWY meeting. Although church officials denied any conscious effort to "overwhelm" the convention, certainly

its official letter brought forth the throngs who attended.¹⁴³ “The LDS Church unwittingly provided large numbers of sheep, and some opportunistic shepherds stepped in to manipulate the women toward one side of the issue before the conference,” observed one dismayed LDS participant.¹⁴⁴

The church’s positions opposing the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion were already well known to its members.¹⁴⁵ These positions coincided with the private political agendas of such non-church groups as the Eagle Forum and the Conservative Caucus who, during the two weeks preceding Utah’s IWY meeting, set up their own “informational” mass meetings directed at Latter-day Saint women in Kearns, Provo, Logan, Bountiful, and Salt Lake City. Implying official church sponsorship, playing on fears that “the national IWY was staging the conferences to pass a national agenda, including the ERA and pro-abortion laws,” and warning of increased federal interference, political organizers passed out lists of “approved” delegates and instructed the women “to vote no on all recommendations on the ballot.”¹⁴⁶ Consequently, most delegates did not come to the June 24–25 IWY meeting prepared to discuss issues or work together toward a common agenda. They had decided a priori to vote against proposals put forward by IWY organizers. “The acrimony that prevailed at the convention overrode nearly every attempt at a thoughtful discussion of women’s issues,” observed a *New York Times* reporter.¹⁴⁷ Utah’s IWY convention came to epitomize the polarization its organizers had hoped to reverse.

Sixteen organizations picketed the convention, protesting that “right-wing and Mormon viewpoints were the only ones that the convention tolerated. They also accused the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and specifically . . . the Relief Society of interfering with the conference.”¹⁴⁸ These organizations included the National Organization for Women, the Equal Rights Coalition of Utah, Order of Women Legislators, Utah Women’s Political Caucus of Price and Salt Lake City, League of Women Voters, Women’s Democratic Club, Parents for Good Day Care, Women Aware, Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, ACLU, Equal Rights Legal Fund, National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), YWCA, Women Entrepreneurs, the Phoenix Center, and Utah Welfare Rights Organization.

Utah’s IWY convention rejected “by overwhelming majorities resolutions favoring the equal rights amendment, abortion on demand, and more than a score of other women’s rights proposals put forward by the I.W.Y. organizers.”¹⁴⁹ Other resolutions that they voted down were sex education in public schools, welfare, day care, and bilingual and cultural school programs. Several of the workshops moved that there be no discussion of the resolutions and went on to bring up other agendas. When the final count was in, the convention had rejected all of the national recommendations put before them, usually by at least seven thousand votes.¹⁵⁰ The fourteen delegates elected to attend the national convention in Houston represented these majority views.¹⁵¹ Eight other women,

who had “spoke[n] for the minority” at the Utah meeting, attended the Houston convention at their own expense as Utah delegates at large.¹⁵²

The political polarization in the state created or gave new energy to several political organizations, many of them single-interest groups and many of them also including men. These groups included Right to Life of Utah, Minority Women's Coalition, Equal Rights Coalition of Utah, Women Aware (which worked to improve the status of gay women), and the Utah Association of Women (which opposed the Equal Rights Amendment but more generally promoted the exchange of ideas and fostered research on political issues).

Another organization formed in the aftermath of the IWY was the Women's Information Network. According to Pam Wilson-Pace, a member of the group's steering committee, “Our major goal is to coordinate women's groups to let everybody know what everybody else is doing. After IWY, we were all aware of the lack of unity in the women's movement.”¹⁵³ *Network*, a thriving tabloid-sized monthly newspaper (1978–89), spoke to and for women in the business community, and took strong editorial stands on legislation and social issues affecting women.¹⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

Perhaps it is precisely because women value “the ongoing process of attachment” that a lack of unity is disappointing and painful. It is ironic that a century of women's association in Utah, which began with a sharp division between Mormon and non-Mormon women, should close the same way; but the intervening history is instructive. The differences so apparent in 1877 confronted women with a challenge that their clubs and associations helped them meet. Over time, the Ladies Literary Club, originally exclusively non-Mormon, succeeded in bringing “strongly diverse elements together.” Likewise, before the end of the nineteenth century, the work of the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs “did much to break down the walls of ancient prejudice.”¹⁵⁵

Still, though Utah women united in movements for peace and social reform, wartime support, and postwar community service, their common goals never dissolved significant differences, however much prevailing cultural images might have obscured them. “If ever a culture set up a grindstone, it is in Utah,” acknowledged Mormon Emma Lou Thayne, poet and essayist, five months after Utah's IWY convention. “And paradoxically, if there were a place where living the many-faceted-life was encouraged, it is also here Is it possible to let the grindstone polish, not flatten, and the shaping of facets enrich and not fragment? Is it possible simply to fit?—and retain difference comfortably?”¹⁵⁶

Both connectedness and identity are essential. “Unity and Diversity” is the longtime motto of the Utah Federation of Women's Clubs. It is an ideal but elusive combination, a challenge that continues to beckon Utah women of varying races, classes, and religious and political persuasions, to find commonalities during a second century of association.

NOTES

1. Carol Giligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 156.
2. Karen Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868–1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1980), 3. Feminist historians have questioned the reality of “separate spheres.” See, for example, Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female World, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History,” in *Toward an Intellectual History of Women: Essays by Linda K. Kerber* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 1959–99.
3. Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 23–126.
4. See John Sillito, “Conflict and Contributions: Women in Utah Churches, 1847–1920,” chap. 3 in this volume; see also Leon Laizer Watters, *The Pioneer Jews of Utah* (New York: American Jewish Historical Society, 1952), 98–99.
5. Sophonisba Preston Breckinridge, *Women in the Twentieth Century: A Study of Their Political, Social, and Economical Activities* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933), 17.
6. Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, 10, 12.
7. The conflict has been discussed by numerous scholars, many of whom are represented in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Battle for the Ballot: Essays on Woman Suffrage in Utah, 1870–1896* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997).
8. Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Robert Joseph Dwyer, *The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict, 1862–1890*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1971), 194. Another women's organization created in opposition to the Mormon's “peculiar institution” was the Industrial Christian Home Association of Utah, organized in 1886 to maintain a capacious refuge and rehabilitation center for plural wives seeking to escape their husbands. Three years later, it housed only three women and six children; and despite ardent lobbying, it closed its doors in 1893. Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 20–31, 87–90; Dwyer, *Gentile Comes to Utah*, 209–11; see also Gustive O. Larson, “An Industrial Home for Polygamous Wives,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 38 (Summer 1970): 263–75.
9. “The Minutes of the Blue Tea,” September 14, 1876 to May 2, 1883, September 14, 1876, and September 28, 1878, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, as quoted in Patricia Lyn Scott, “Jennie Anderson Froiseth and the Blue Tea,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 24, 28.
10. Katherine Barrette Parsons, *History of Fifty Years [of the] Ladies' Literary Club, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1877–1927* (Salt Lake City: Arrow Press, 1927), 24.
11. Hazel S. Parkinson, “Ladies Literary Club Notes 100 Years of Tradition” *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 20, 1977, W-1.
12. Patricia Lyn Scott, “Eliza Kirtley Royle: Beloved Club Mother,” in *Worth Their Salt: Notable But Often Unnoted Women of Utah*, edited by Colleen Whitley (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 51.

13. Parsons, *History of Fifty Years*, 153.
14. Jane Cunningham Croly, *The History of the Woman's Club Movement in America* (New York: Henry G. Allen & Co., ca. 1898), 1109.
15. Parsons, *History of Fifty Years*, 104.
16. Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, 62.
17. Croly, *History of the Woman's Club Movement*, 1109–11.
18. In 1940, the first Junior Club in Ogden—an organization of young women that the district federation strongly encouraged—again chose Aglaia as its group name, apparently not realizing that an older namesake had preceded it. Mrs. W. H. Peck, “Achievements,” *Utah Clubwoman* 4 (February 1940): 17.
19. Croly, *History of the Woman's Club Movement*, 1109–11. Another club, also named Sorosis, was a social and literary club, organized in Pleasant Grove in 1894, to study the pronunciation of words, U.S. history, and popular authors. Grace Mayhen, “Woman's Social and Literary Club,” *Woman's Exponent* 23 (July 15, 1894): 163.
20. “Utah Federation of Women's Clubs, Reapers' Club,” *Woman's Exponent* 25 (June 1896): 2. See Sharon Snow Carver, “Salt Lake City's Reapers' Club,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 64 (Spring 1996): 108–20.
21. Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, 58.
22. “Benefits of the Club,” *Woman's Exponent* 20 (April 15, 1892): 150.
23. Ruth May Fox, “My Story,” typescript, 24, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. See Linda Thatcher and John R. Sillito, “‘Sisterhood and Sociability’: The Utah Women's Press Club, 1891–1928,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 53 (Spring 1985): 144–56.
24. Unity Circle, First Unitarian Society of Utah, Minutes, September 10, 1891, 18–19, Utah State Historical Society. The group was known by various names including Ladies Unitarian Society, Unity Circle, Lloyd Alliance, Alliance of Unitarian and Other Liberal Christian Women. Irma Watson Hance and Virginia Hendrickson Picht, *In Commemoration of Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the First Unitarian Church, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1891–1966* ([Salt Lake City: First Unitarian Church], 1966), 163.
25. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 157–61, 188–89.
26. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1 (Autumn 1975): 9–11; see also Jill Mulvay Derr, “Strength in Our Union: The Making of Mormon Sisterhood,” in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 155–57, 169–70.
27. Annette K. Baxter, quoted in Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, xiii.
28. “Constitution and By Laws of the Edina Society,” October 15, 1884, Edina Literary and Debating Society, Minute Book and Attendance Record, 1884–85, 1890–94, Special Collections, Marriott Library.
29. Giligan, *In a Different Voice*, 156.
30. Ellis R. Shipp, “Sphere of Woman,” *Woman's Exponent* 22, no. 4 (September 1, 1893): 27.

31. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, quoted in Blair, *Clubwoman as Feminist*, 69, 71.
32. *Ibid.*, 61.
33. Croly, *History of the Woman's Club Movement*, 1112.
34. "Woman's Day at Saltair, Final Resolution," *Woman's Exponent* 25 (September 1, 1896): 38.
35. Croly, *History of the Woman's Club Movement*, 1117. See also Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Decade of Détente: The Mormon-Gentile Female Relationship in Nineteenth-century Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 63 (Fall 1995): 298–319.
36. "Utah Federation of Women's Clubs, Reapers' Club," *Woman's Exponent* 25 (June 1896): 1.
37. Mrs. Ernest Urien, "What Federation Means to Us," *Utah Clubwoman* 5 (December 1939): 10, 17.
38. Croly, *History of the Woman's Club Movement*, 1116.
39. Parkinson, "Ladies' Literary Club Notes," W-1. For more on the civic work of Utah's early clubs, see Sharon Snow Carver, "Club Women of the Three Intermountain Cities of Denver, Boise and Salt Lake City between 1893 and 1929" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 2000).
40. Authors Club Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, quoted in Donna T. Smart, "Sage Green and Paintbrush Red: Symbols for the Authors Club, Established in 1893," ca. 1986, 6, 11. Used by permission.
41. "UFWC Directory," *Utah Clubwoman* 4 (February 1940): 18–19.
42. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 137–38. The Relief Society was incorporated as the National Woman's Relief Society in 1892 and maintained the name until 1945, when it again identified itself as Relief Society. It enrolled members and, from 1898 until 1971, charged dues. All Latter-day Saint women of eighteen years and older automatically became Relief Society members in 1971 and dues were eliminated. *Ibid.*, 144–46, 345.
43. Carol Cornwall Madsen, "'The Power of Combination': Emmeline B. Wells and the National and International Councils of Women," *BYU Studies* 33, no. 4 (1993): 646–73; 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* (Provo, Utah: BYU Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History, 2004), 131–48.
44. Madsen, "Decade of Détente," 299.
45. Grand Army of the Republic and Women's Relief Corps (Department of Utah Records, 1885–1931), Minutes, December 1894–March 1901, February 8, 1899, Utah State Historical Society.
46. *Ibid.*, February 24, 1904.
47. The National DAR's committee for Welfare of Women and Children reported in 1915: "In view of the grave importance to the society of all questions relative to pure marriages and lawful genealogy . . . the committee in its report to the Continental Congress recommended the adoption of a resolution indorsing [sic] legislative, judicial, and moral remedies for the great American social problem of the instability

- of the family." *Eighteenth Report of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, October 11, 1914, to October 11, 1915* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), 136–37. A decade earlier, the Utah DAR's Spirit of Liberty Chapter reported: "In March 1905, the chapter joined the National League, agreeing to support its efforts to protect the country against treasonable practices and to maintain the Christian idea of marriage." *Eighth Report of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, October 11, 1904, to October 11, 1905* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 178.
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 135. *Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year* (New York: United Nations, 1976), 58, as quoted in Martha Sonntag Bradley, "The Mormon Relief Society and the International Women's Year," *Journal of Mormon History* 21, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 110.
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 138. This quotation and preceding information in the paragraph drawn from Bradley, "Relief Society and the International Women's Year," 114.
 139. "Report of Equal Rights Amendment Committee," ". . . *To Form a More Perfect Union . . .*" *Justice for American Women: Report of the National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year* (Washington, D.C.: National Commission, 1976), 219.
 140. "Appendix B: Utah IWY Conference Votes on the Twenty-Six National Recommendations," in Bradley, "Relief Society and the International Women's Year," 156–61.
 141. "Appendix C: Summary of Recommendations Drafted by Pre-Conference Task Forces, Discussed in Workshops and Voted on in Plenary Session at Utah's IWY Conference,

- June 24–25, 1977,” in Bradley, “Relief Society and the International Women’s Year,” 161–67.
142. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 370–72.
 143. Ibid.; Bradley, “Relief Society and the International Women’s Year,” 126–28.
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 145. Not all Latter-day Saint women supported their church’s position on the Equal Rights Amendment. See, for example, Mormons for the ERA, *The Equal Rights Amendment Is Not a Moral Issue* ([Salt Lake City]: Mormons for the ERA, 1979).
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 147. John M. Crewdson, “Mormon Turnout Overwhelms Women’s Conference in Utah,” *New York Times*, July 25, 1977, 26.
 148. “Protesters Picket IWY Meet,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 26, 1977, 1.
 149. Angelyn Nelson, “Women’s Convention Hostility Mounts,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 26, 1977, 1.
 150. “Majority at Women’s Meeting Disagrees with All National Recommendations,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 26, 1977, 1.
 151. The delegates were Belva Ashton, Delores Bennett, Elaine Cannon, Margaret Cassun, Jennie Duran, Ruth Funk, Carol Garbet, Dixie Nelson, Stella Oaks, Jaynann Payne, Georgia Peterson, Lois Pickett, Belle S. Spafford, and Naomi Udall. Alternates were Gloria Firmage, Florence Jacobsen, Ann Leavitt, Amy Y. Valentine, and Dona Wayment. Ashton was a member of the LDS Relief Society General Board and Spafford was its past general president; Jacobsen, Funk, and Cannon were respectively past, present, and future general presidents of the LDS Young Women, formerly the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association.
 152. Nelson, “Women’s Convention Hostility Mounts,” 1–2. The at-large delegates included Esther Landa, Jan Tyler, and Kathleen Flake, all of whom had been among the conference organizers. Lynne Van Dam, Alberta Almada, Joan Draper, Eloise McQuown, Reba Keele, and Sandra Haggerty were also at-large delegates but had not been conference organizers.
 153. Robbie B. Snow, “Two Groups Aid Utah Women in the ‘Ole Girl’ Network,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 9, 1977, W-1.
 154. *Network Magazine Records, 1978–89*, Special Collections, Marriott Library.
 155. Croly, *History of the Woman’s Club Movement*, 113, 117.
 156. Emma Lou Thayne, “Ashtrays and Gumwrappers: Women in Utah Mormon Culture,” *Task Papers in LDS History, No. 19* (Salt Lake City: LDS Family and Church History Department, November 1977), 3; copy in LDS Historical Department Library.