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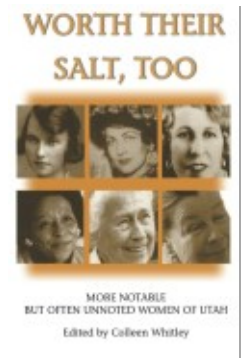
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CAMILLA CLARA MIETH COBB

Founder of the Utah Kindergarten

Catherine Britsch Frantz

Catherine Britsch Frantz has three degrees from the School of Education at Brigham Young University: a B.S. in elementary education and a M.Ed. and Ed.D. from the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations. Her hobbies include studying LDS Church history, traveling, hiking, camping, and “reading anything I can get my hands on.” Her general interest in the history of education led her to a dissertation on Camilla Cobb and her influence on kindergarten in Utah.

Camilla Clara Mieth Cobb, the founder of Utah kindergarten, was born on 24 May 1843 at Dresden, Saxony, Germany, the fourth child of Karl Benjamin Immanuel Mieth and Henrietta Christina Bakehaus Mieth. Her parents were educated and refined; her father was the principal of the first district *Buergerschulen* (public school) in Dresden, and her mother came from a wealthy, prominent, cultured family.¹ Camilla’s oldest sister, Anna Henrietta Therese Mieth, became the wife of Karl G. Maeser, well known among Utahns as the second president of Brigham Young Academy (later named Brigham Young University).²

Camilla’s father hired Karl G. Maeser to be a teacher in the first district in Dresden. He taught at Mieth’s school during 1852 and 1853 along with Edward Schoenfeldt, who later became Maeser’s brother-in-law and lifelong friend. Karl and Edward made frequent visits to the Mieth home, where they courted and eventually married the principal’s oldest daughters.³

These two men received the missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and thus altered the course of Camilla's life. On 14 October 1855, Karl G. Maeser and Edward Schoenfeldt were baptized members in the Elbe River. Five days later Camilla, her mother, her two sisters (including Maeser's and Schoenfeldt's wives), and her brother were all baptized. Soon after joining the church the Schoenfeldts and the Maesers, along with Camilla, began making plans to join other members of their newly found religion in Utah. The two families left their homes in June of 1856. Camilla went with them. At thirteen she left her mother (her father had passed away in 1853) and her homeland of Germany and remained with the Maesers until her marriage in 1864.⁴

The Maesers and the Schoenfeldts traveled to London, England, on their way to America. Soon after their arrival in England, Karl Maeser was called to serve the Germans in England and Scotland as a Latter-day Saint missionary. So the Schoenfeldts went to America, while the Maesers and Camilla remained in England for one year. Upon completion of Maeser's mission, the family sailed for America on the vessel *Tuscarora*.⁵ While en route, two days before they reached shore, the Maesers' second son, who was born in England, died. They kept his body with them and buried him in American soil. Because they lacked money to immigrate all the way to Utah, the Maesers remained in Philadelphia for several weeks.

"There we were in Philadelphia without means," remembered Camilla much later, "and Brother Maeser out of work. Thomas B. H. Stenhouse was president of the branch in Philadelphia, and he helped us. It seems someone has always come to my rescue in time of need, thanks to the help of the Lord."⁶ A descendent of that time period relates: "Once when Aunt Camilla was telling me of the harrowing experiences they passed through at this time [soon after arriving in America], I asked her, 'Aunty, how did you ever live?' And she answered, 'Well, I just don't know. But it seemed that when things came to a point where we hardly knew which way to turn something always happened to help us out, and we were able to go on a little while longer. Sometimes we had only white flour or mush to eat, but we were so hungry it tasted good, and we were thankful for it.'⁷

Karl tried to find work in Philadelphia, but foreigners were hired last, so the family often went to bed hungry. Their poverty also forced

them to live in a cellar, which was quite a change from their fine Dresden home. During this time period another child, a girl named Otilie, was born to the Maesers.⁸

While the Maesers and Camilla were living in Philadelphia, Karl was called on another church mission. This time he labored in the state of Virginia. After serving in Virginia for a time, he sent for his family to live with him. While in Virginia he financially supported his family by teaching music lessons to some prominent people, including ex-president of the United States John Tyler.⁹

When Karl's mission was completed, he taught piano full time to save money for his family's trek to Utah. Since Karl was a music instructor, it is likely that he taught music fundamentals to Camilla. As an adult Camilla had a beautiful singing voice, and to augment her income while in school, she played the organ and was soloist in several churches.¹⁰

In June of 1859, the Maesers returned to Philadelphia to prepare for their journey to Utah. The Maesers had now spent three years in the East, then in September 1859 they finally left Philadelphia and traveled by railroad to Florence, Nebraska. They stayed at the former Winter Quarters,¹¹ until June of 1860, when they left for the Salt Lake Valley by ox team with the John Smith Company.¹²

Crossing the plains was a great trial for the Maesers. Karl did not know how to manage animals or mend broken wagons, and, although Anna was a fine cook and housekeeper, she became discouraged keeping house in a wagon box and cooking over a campfire with ashes and sand blowing into the food.¹³ The *Deseret Evening News* wrote of their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley on 27 July 1860, quoting the names of the entire company including Karl, Anna, their son Reinhard, and Camilla.¹⁴

In the fall of 1860, Karl arranged to open a school in Salt Lake City, and by November he had secured the use of an old adobemeeting-house in the Fifteenth Ward. The *Deseret Evening News* printed a public announcement advertising the school. By the time Camilla finally arrived in Utah, she was seventeen years old. She had received good educational opportunities in Philadelphia and also private instruction under Karl G. Maeser,¹⁵ so she assisted him in his teaching at the Fifteenth Ward schoolhouse.¹⁶

Early in the spring of 1861, Brigham Young appointed Karl to head the Union Academy located in the Doremus House on the west

side of Salt Lake City. Originally built as a ward meetinghouse, the building had a few crude tables and chairs, some maps, a broken chalkboard, and a few pieces of chalk. However, Karl designed the curriculum well enough that the school attracted many students from both within and outside the Salt Lake Valley. From the fall of 1861 to the spring of 1862, Karl conducted the school. This time period was significant to Camilla because this was when her future husband, James Thornton Cobb, came into contact with the family. Karl hired James, who was not a member of the LDS Church, to help with the school.¹⁷

Meanwhile, in 1862 Bishop John Sharp asked Maeser to start a school in the Twentieth Ward. After consulting with Brigham Young, who evidently supported the move, Karl began the school known as the Twentieth Ward Seminary. Camilla also helped him teach in this school.¹⁸ Then, on 24 October 1863, Karl G. Maeser baptized James T. Cobb a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A year later, on 14 November 1864, Camilla Mieth and James T. Cobb were married by Brigham Young.¹⁹

Camilla's husband James was from Beverly, Massachusetts, born on 18 December 1833. He was a graduate of both Dartmouth and Amherst Colleges. In his earlier days he had worked as a journalist.²⁰ James was not only well educated, but he was also regarded as an expert student of Shakespeare and corresponded with Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. a longtime personal friend, on the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy.²¹

Seven children were born to James and Camilla: Ives Emanuel Cobb was born in 1867; Lucy August Cobb Ivins, 1869; Karl Albert Cobb, 1874 (died in infancy); Henry Ives Cobb, 1877; Rufus Kellogg Cobb, 1878; James Kent Cobb, 1884; and Grace Camilla Cobb, 1888.²²

In the summer of 1874, after the birth of Camilla's second child, she went to New York City to visit her husband's relatives. Regarding the trip Camilla explained: "My husband wanted me to go. I was going to visit his people. I went to get President Young's counsel and he said, 'You want me to counsel you to go, don't you?' I didn't think of studying then, so I said, 'No, I want you to counsel me just as you feel.' He then said, 'You go. You will go in safety and return in safety. You will make many friends wherever you go.'"²³

While Camilla was in New York City she read in the newspaper about a New Jersey kindergarten being run by Dr. Adolph Douai, a

well-known German educator. Camilla was familiar with the German kindergarten and was very interested in learning about American kindergartens. She temporarily moved to New Jersey, where she visited Dr. Douai at one of the schools he had established. Because she informed him that she could not stay long enough to take the entire kindergarten course, he advised her to go right into his Newark kindergarten and spend her remaining time there observing the teachers.²⁴ Since Douai's school was taught in both English and German, Camilla, a German by birth, adjusted well. Referring to her time with Douai, Camilla recalled that she enjoyed herself there and felt that what she learned was valuable.

Douai taught kindergarten principles in his school as established by the founder of kindergarten, Friedrich Froebel. Froebel preached that young children should be taught with object lessons, or real life examples. He believed in connecting the subjects and all learning into one whole; hence, much of his kindergarten theory was based upon the blending and application of all subjects. Furthermore, he taught that creative work and play should be the primary objectives of education. He named the objects that he used in his kindergartens "gifts and occupations." His materials and activities were carefully sequenced according to developmental readiness to maximize educational potential. After spending time at Douai's school, Camilla said that she was impressed with the importance of kindergarten work and began to see that other educators did not fully understand Froebel's ideas. She hoped there would come a time when justice would be done to "this great educator of childhood."²⁵

While Camilla was at Douai's school she was visited by John W. Young, a son of Brigham and Mary Ann Angel Young. He was very impressed with what he saw at the school and asked Camilla if she would be willing to start a kindergarten upon her return to Salt Lake City. He offered to help her get set up, and she readily agreed.²⁶ Camilla opened her kindergarten in the fall of 1874 in the vestry of Brigham Young's schoolhouse. The schoolroom in which she opened her kindergarten was small, and it is likely that other classes were operating in the building at the same time.²⁷ John W. Young furnished the room in which Camilla taught. Camilla also brought home from New Jersey a trunk full of kindergarten gifts and occupations.²⁸ In addition, she found some materials in Salt Lake City and "with a little ingenuity

turned many things not especially intended for this purpose to splendid account.”²⁹

The first students at the kindergarten were Camilla’s own children, the children of John W. Young, and “some others.” Among the pupils who attended were Brigham W. Young, Seymour B. Young Jr., Lulu Clawson Young, Lutie Thatcher Lynch, Katie B. Young Kraft, Lilly Young Wells, Luna Young Moore, Fannie V. Young Clayton, and Anna T. Piercey.³⁰

As part of her kindergarten curriculum, Camilla taught the students German. Camilla said she taught the German language through object lessons, “and it was surprising to see how rapidly the little ones gained a knowledge of this language, and it is not long since I heard a mother, formerly a pupil of my school, sing to her own babe the little German songs of the pioneer Kindergarten of 1874.”³¹ One of her original kindergarten students wrote that “many of her pupils speak German and can sing the old melodies in German taught them a half century ago.”³²

Besides teaching the kindergarten curriculum, Camilla also taught her students principles of the church. A former student wrote that Camilla helped them gain a strong faith in God as well as a desire in her students to be upright in all their doings.³³ Camilla sometimes told the following teaching story: “One boy I had repeatedly called to order and when he flipped papers I told him he would have to leave school. He came up after class and said: ‘Auntie can’t you forgive me?’ ‘No,’ I answered, ‘I repeatedly warned you.’ ‘But,’ he said, ‘you taught us the Savior forgave seventy times seven and you haven’t forgiven me half that.’ ‘You are right,’ I said, and took him in my arms. This taught me a lesson I never forgot and I never lost my temper again in a school room.”³⁴

Perhaps because Camilla was so diligent in President Young’s request that she teach religious principles in his school, Camilla and Brigham Young had a very good relationship. Although President Young was advancing in years at the time Camilla opened her kindergarten, he was aware of her work and very supportive. Camilla said, “He thought I had quite an ability to teach. I know that he was pleased with me and my teaching.” They were very good friends and he treated her like one of his own daughters.³⁵ Regarding Brigham Young, Camilla remembered that occasionally she sent the kindergarten children into

his office, which was located close by. She said that he was getting on in years, and he found pleasure in seeing what the children wrote or did. When asked if she converted Brigham Young to kindergarten work she replied that she did not think so. However, she probably talked to him about it because she was enthusiastic, and he was a very dear friend and was happy to help her.³⁶

Besides carrying out her kindergarten duties, Camilla also tried to educate the women of Salt Lake City regarding Froebel's concept of the kindergarten. During the fall of 1875, a series of her articles appeared in the *Woman's Exponent*, a newspaper published by and for Latter-day Saint women. In the first article she gave a brief history of well-known people who believed in child's play. She listed Lycurgus, of whom she wrote, "The great lawgiver of Sparta, 800 years before Jesus Christ already introduced the idea of training children from a very early age by play to the earnest work of life."³⁷ She also discussed Plato, the Roman emperor Justinian, the emperor Charlemagne, and Peter the Great as leaders who encouraged structured play among their young people.

Following her brief history of child's play, she indicated that the children in Utah would be better behaved if they had structured play. In fact, she explained that the rude habits of the majority of the children in the Salt Lake Valley could be directly traced to their unfamiliarity with the "healthy spirit of well-directed and judiciously selected plays, the absence of which forced them to indulgence of their own uncultivated making."³⁸

In the remainder of the *Woman's Exponent* article Camilla outlined how a kindergarten should be run. She explained that the teacher should be "a lady of very gentle manners, intellectual attainments and good taste" and that she should be familiar with music and drawing. Furthermore, she specified that the teacher should work alongside the child, not ruling above the child as in ordinary classrooms. Camilla also wrote that the teacher "should be the first one on the spot. . . . That her thoughts and mind be perfectly calm and composed, for she must feel herself, for the time being at least the little one's truest friend."

In addition to giving instruction regarding the attributes of the teacher, Camilla also addressed how children should dress to come to kindergarten. She indicated that fancy dress among the children encouraged inequality. She wrote, "Of all resorts a hall of learning should be the last for such displays of fancy and little children should

not be made to feel their inequalities of social position because of them.” Furthermore, she also explained and described Froebel’s meaning of gifts and occupations.

Because of a high influx of students and the need for teachers of students in higher grades, Camilla taught kindergarten for only two years.³⁹ When asked if she kept up the kindergarten after she was obliged to teach other and higher grades, Camilla replied, “Not altogether. You see, I couldn’t. So many children were older and needed more teaching. . . . I opened the doors and they came. I had to turn some of them away when I didn’t have enough room. I was like a child with the spirit of a child and I knew what the children wanted. I guess I was born that way.”⁴⁰

Camilla also taught at the Social Hall in Salt Lake City, and in her own home that was located directly south of the Social Hall.⁴¹ Heber J. Grant, in referring to his school days, mentioned, “I also went to Camilla Cobb to school before I went to the University. She had a private school south of the Social Hall.”⁴² Additionally, Camilla taught in the old Exponent Building after Emmeline B. Wells (editor of the *Woman’s Exponent*) moved from the Exponent Building to the Wells Building. Camilla paid \$10 a month for the use of the building and had approximately forty pupils in her class.⁴³ The teaching environment was sometimes difficult for Camilla. In 1930, she referred to teaching seventy-six pupils at one time, with only one book for the class to share. But, even through these challenges, she remained a popular, dedicated, and well respected teacher.⁴⁴

Considering Camilla’s training and experience working with children, it is not surprising that she spent a large portion of her adult life serving in the Latter-day Saint Primary Association. The Latter-day Saint Primary Association, an organization for young children, was founded in 1878 in Farmington, Utah. The purpose of the Primary Association was to assist parents in the training of their young children by providing weekday religious training. On 19 June 1880, the women of the Salt Lake Stake, which at the time included the entire Salt Lake County and several outlying counties, met together in the Tabernacle for a two-day conference. At the conference church president John Taylor announced the calling of Louie B. Felt as president over all the smaller primaries established by ecclesiastical or ward boundaries, and as such she was officially named the Primary general president.⁴⁵ In addition, the first stake Primary board was

organized in the Salt Lake Stake that day. Ellen Spencer Clawson was called to serve as president of the Salt Lake Stake Primary Association. She chose Camilla C. Cobb and Lydia Ann Wells to serve as her counselors. Camilla served as a counselor to Clawson until Clawson's death in 1896, when President Cannon called Camilla to be president of the Salt Lake Stake Primary.

To illustrate the magnitude of her responsibility, the report of the Primary Association for the Salt Lake Stake recorded on 30 June 1897 that there were forty-six Primary associations, 309 officers, and 3,901 Primary children in the stake with average attendance of 2,001. Between June 1896 and June 1897, there were ten Primary conferences, three fairs, and thirty-three entertainments.⁴⁶

Camilla addressed the Primary leaders and children at annual conferences, where she encouraged and advised them. For example, in the 4 January 1902 Primary conference Camilla said that she saw great improvement in Primary work. She also expressed gratitude for the previous Primary conference, and she urged the officers in the Primary to subscribe to the *Children's Friend* and to teach children the words to the songs.⁴⁷

On 25 March 1904, the Salt Lake Stake was divided, and four stakes were created from the thirty-eight wards. The Eighteenth Ward, in which Camilla resided, was made part of the newly created Ensign Stake. Hence, Camilla, after serving in the Salt Lake Stake Primary presidency for twenty-four years, was released from her position as Salt Lake Stake Primary president.⁴⁸

In 1895, Louie B. Felt, general president of the Primary Association for the church, and her good friend and Primary associate May Anderson became interested in the pedagogical principles of the kindergarten. Camilla had probably introduced kindergarten pedagogical practices and ideas to Felt and Anderson, as they were all involved in Salt Lake City Primary work. Previous to 1895, the Primary classes followed the same pattern as education in the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century, where children learned by drill and by rote. Primary children often recited questions and answers and catechisms written by Eliza R. Snow. However, after 1895 the Primary was divided into developmental groups or grades.⁴⁹

In 1898, while Camilla was serving as Primary president of the Salt Lake Stake, she was called to be a member of the general board of the Primary Association. In the October 1899 General Conference

report for the church, Camilla is listed as a member of the “Primary Board of Aids.”⁵⁰

On 23 February 1917, after thirty-seven years of Primary service, Camilla was released from the Primary general board. As a member of the Primary general board, Camilla had participated in the first annual officers meetings, the beginnings of the *Children's Friend* magazine, and the dividing of Primary children into three basic groups or grades. Additionally, she had helped establish the Primary Annual Fund, the annual general conferences for all Primary workers, programs for enlistment and improved attendance at Primary, and the beginnings of the Primary Children's Hospital program.⁵¹

Camilla's service in the Primary Association occurred at the same time that she taught school to Salt Lake City children. Her dedication and devotion to children is depicted in the following quotation that her nephew, Reinhard Maeser, included in his *Relief Society Magazine* article about her: “To my mind, you [referring to Cobb] have done more for the uplift of the child than any other woman I know; first, because you introduced real Kindergarten work into the state; second, you were associated at the head of the largest child organization in the Church, the Primary association; but these are not alone the reasons why I say you have done more than others; but because of your interest in every child whom you called by name.”⁵²

The first public recognition of Camilla's kindergarten work appears to have been at the National Education Association luncheon at the Hotel Utah in 1920. Camilla, at age seventy-seven, was the guest of honor. She briefly spoke about her first kindergarten, saying that the first kindergarten in Utah was established in Brigham Young's old schoolhouse with a class of twenty. She also mentioned that education in the state at that time was entirely in private schools using crude equipment. The children were taught kindergarten games and told human interest stories and stories of the pioneers.⁵³

Further recognition came in 1922 when Camilla was honored by the University of Utah kindergarten department “as the real pioneer of their special work in this section.” An article mentioning the occasion in the *Deseret News* reported, “Mrs. Cobb is now a charming, modest woman of 79, who declares her accomplishments were very small and can only be considered as a part of the general pioneer life here. . . . This pioneer teacher comes of a family of educators, her father having been a high school instructor in his native land, and other relatives having

held similar positions there. She was also connected with the Primary Association of the Church from its early days.”⁵⁴

Additionally, in 1928 Camilla was the guest of honor at a banquet at the Hotel Utah hosted by the Utah Educational Association. Besides the recognition granted Camilla at the Utah Education Association banquet, 1928 was also the year in which the Utah State Kindergarten-Primary Association formally declared that Camilla had opened the first Utah kindergarten. The Utah State Kindergarten-Primary Association “presented the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers with a picture of Camilla Cobb and an affidavit of her students verifying the existence of and attendance at the kindergarten.”⁵⁵ Camilla signed the affidavit that states, “Camilla C. Cobb, being first duly sworn deposes and says: That in the early seventies she went East and took a kindergarten course under Dr. Dorris [Douai] of Newark, New Jersey, and upon her return to Utah about the year 1874, she taught kindergarten in the private school building of President Young, located near the Eagle Gate, on the North-east corner of State and South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah.”⁵⁶

In addition, Susa Y. Gates and Zina Y. Card signed the following written statement:

Susa Y. Gates and Zina Y. Card, being first duly sworn depose and say: That they have, for many years, been personally acquainted with Mrs. Camilla C. Cobb, and know that she went East and took a course in kindergarten training under Dr. Dorris [Douai] of Newark, New Jersey, and that upon her return to Utah she taught kindergarten between the years 1874 and 1876 in the private school building of President Brigham Young, located near the Eagle Gate, on the North-east corner of State and South Temple Street, Salt Lake City, Utah. And Zina Y. Card further testifies that she visited said kindergarten and saw and handled Froebel gifts which were used in said kindergarten.⁵⁷

Several of Camilla’s first kindergarten students, including Brigham W. Young, Seymour B. Young Jr., Lula Clawson Young, Lutie Thatcher Lynch, Katie B. Young Kraft, Lilly Young Wells, Luna Y. Moore, Fannie V. Young Clayton, and Anna T. Piercey signed a statement that said they were in Cobb’s first kindergarten class. All of these statements were signed and notarized on 30 April 1928.⁵⁸

Apparently the affidavit was supposed to settle some controversy regarding who started the first kindergarten in the state. However, the affidavit did not end the dispute. Protestants maintained that in the 1880s Elizabeth Dickey resigned her work in Philadelphia and went to Salt Lake City to start the kindergarten movement there—claiming that the school Camilla ran was an “infant” school or nursery school and that it was not taught by Froebelian methods.⁵⁹

The debate regarding who started the first Utah kindergarten continued for some time and remained divided along religious lines. In 1930, Marie Fox Felt wrote a brief history of the Utah kindergarten movement and asserted that Camilla had started the first kindergarten. Marie’s history was sent to Charlotte Anderson of Los Angeles, who was associated with the early Utah Presbyterian kindergartens. Charlotte wrote to Marie and said that she knew Camilla Cobb, and although she felt that she was a cultured and refined lady, she did not consider the kindergarten she ran to be a Froebelian kindergarten. Additionally, Charlotte Anderson wrote a letter to a professor in the education department at the University of Utah asking for her opinion regarding Camilla’s kindergarten work. Unfortunately, the reply to her letter is not available.⁶⁰

Notwithstanding the controversy, recognition of Camilla’s kindergarten work continued into the 1950s. The Utah Association for Childhood Education met on 21 June 1934 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the kindergarten organization. The association “extended a tribute to the late Mrs. Cobb.” Eighty members were present at the meeting that was held at the Administration Office of the Salt Lake City Board of Education Building.⁶¹

Additionally, in May 1936, the Utah State Kindergarten-Primary Association celebrated its fortieth anniversary with a banquet. Several people gave toasts in honor of early kindergarten workers including a tribute to Camilla with a toast titled “A Children’s Garden: Aunt Camilla.”⁶²

In 1937, The Utah branch of the Association for Childhood Education was renamed the Camilla C. Cobb Branch of the Association for Childhood Education. Several years later, following a period of inactivity of the Camilla C. Cobb Branch, Mrs. Addie J. Gilmore called a meeting at her home on 4 September 1953 to reorganize the association. Four objectives were proposed at the 1953 meeting: “1. To place

the name Camilla C. Cobb, Utah's first kindergarten teacher before the public. 2. To see that the dues of at least ten members were fully paid, our national building allotment paid and other obligations met. 3. To make two interesting meetings a year available to all those who desire them. 4. To work for a permanent memorial to honor Camilla C. Cobb by presenting to the Salt Lake District Boards of Education groups the interesting life story of Mrs. Cobb and her earnest efforts in behalf of little children that they might grow through 'self-activity.'"⁶³

Camilla Clara Mieth Cobb died on 19 October 1933, at age ninety. Heber J. Grant, church president at the time and Camilla's former pupil, was one of the speakers at her funeral. Additional speakers were Levi Edgar Young, another of Camilla's former students, and Thomas A. Clawson, bishop of the Eighteenth Ward in which Camilla resided. Camilla's body was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery.⁶⁴

Camilla's German background was a very important factor pertaining to her contributions to childhood education in Utah, especially because it influenced her interest in the kindergarten. Additionally, because she spoke German she could observe and teach in Douai's school, one of the earliest in the United States. Camilla became something of a heroine to both the members of the Utah State Kindergarten-Primary Association and the Utah Association for Childhood Education. Perhaps it was because they so highly valued kindergarten and were so eager to see kindergarten as a permanent fixture in Utah schools that they so emphatically regarded Camilla's work as a significant and truly pioneering effort.

Camilla spent the majority of her life working with children. She taught kindergarten and elementary school to hundreds of Salt Lake City youth for most of her adult life. She spent thirty-seven years working in the Latter-day Saint Primary Association, and she mothered her own seven children. Marie Fox Felt wrote of Camilla: "She was an efficient officer and tender mediator between the children and whatever difficulty arose in regard to lessons or play. Her intelligence was equaled only by her devotion to the work and her sublime power for love and sympathy. Brigham Young once said of her that she was the type of mother under whose care all children of the Latter-day Saints might profitably be trained."⁶⁵

Camilla's life is representative of Utah working women in the late 1800s. She was not a pioneer of women's rights, nor was she one who

ventured into a traditionally male career. Teaching was a common and acceptable occupation for women of the time and in some respects her teaching career epitomizes educational careers of the time. However, although Camilla epitomizes some aspects of Utah women teachers, she was not an ordinary teacher. Her specialized training, her child advocacy—including her background, study, and writings of child-centered theory—and her lengthy teaching career were all atypical. Additionally, her writings are proof that she was an articulate, intelligent advancer of education. Furthermore, by founding the first kindergarten, Camilla began a long-lasting kindergarten tradition in Utah and, hence, had an immeasurable positive impact on Utah children.