Leave The Dishes In The Sink

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11 The University, Women, and History

Women and International Development (WID)

It seemed to me that it snowed or rained every Monday of March and April 1980, as I made my way across campus to late afternoon meetings to plan a workshop on women and international development. This workshop was the response of the College of Family Life to the challenge of Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act administered by the United States Agency for International Development (U.S. AID). The purpose of Title XII was to strengthen the university’s ability to place people in foreign assistance assignments.

The Percy amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act urged projects which “tend to integrate women into the national economies of foreign countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort.” To date these had been empty words, but we hoped to give them some meaning. We titled our workshop, “The Work of Rural Women across the World,” and held it May 1–3. It drew 120 men and women. International women on our campus from Ethiopia, Zambia, India, and Mexico described rural conditions in their home countries, and we heard from our own husband-wife teams who had worked overseas.

The College of Family Life did not have overseas projects as some colleges did, but we created a Women and International Development (WID) program that sponsored a cross-campus meeting every three weeks to hear speakers with experience in developing countries. We urged those with projects—irrigation engineers, range management specialists, animal husbandry specialists, and the agricultural education people—to pay particular attention to indigenous women’s needs in countries where they were working. And we urged them to put women on their teams. This was easier said than done.

In early 1981, I became WID coordinator, a newly invented and unpaid position. Our meetings with invited speakers had as many as twenty-five present, including two deans. I also attended an orientation on Somalia for people from Utah State University and Colorado
State University, who were planning to go to Somalia for U.S. AID. The team included eleven male agricultural engineers and agricultural extensionists and their wives. No woman was assigned to the Somalia team although I urged appointment of Flora Bardwell, extension nutritionist. I was told that the Ministry of Agriculture in Somalia refused to extend its scope to nutrition.

However, another project and very large one was the Second Phase of Water Management Synthesis, which advised U.S. AID projects worldwide on water resources and irrigation. Jack Keller of irrigation engineering, with anthropologist Jon Moris, included a strong WID component in it.

Increasingly our WID turned its attention to needs of international women on our campus. The College of Family Life created a two-year applied science associate degree called Food and Family in International Development. The idea began when Afton Tew, a counselor in the international student office (much later she became director), stopped me one day to say there were international wives marooned in their apartments, who wanted to be in classes earning degrees. A degree carried real prestige in their home countries, but they couldn’t afford the tuition and books. They often knew less English than their husbands, and the care of their small children meant they couldn’t take a heavy class load. A two-year degree might be a partial solution.

With help of Title XII money we brought Nancy O’Rourke on board in a part-time position to work on this curriculum project, which was guided by a remarkable blue ribbon committee from across campus. Dean Joan McFadden of Family Life suggested that, during the slow process of getting the degree approved, we should go ahead and offer classes. During winter quarter 1983, there were special sections of two courses: Nutrition for People, and Child Guidance.

During spring 1983 the Agricultural Education Department offered Food Production, and Molly Longstreth and I taught a new course, Family Resource Management. Eleven international wives were in our class, from Nigeria, Cyprus, Iran, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Bolivia, and Brazil. Child care was provided, but one student brought her baby girl with large brown eyes and hair in tiny corn rows, and if she became fussy the mother simply nursed her, and then the baby napped.

Half of our students already had degrees from institutions in their home countries. One was a pharmacist and one had a degree in civil engineering. Several who studied mainly physical sciences before coming to USU became interested in social science, and one decided to
make teaching home management her career. One student was an artist, with deep psychological understanding of people. Another student had operated her own day care center in her home country before coming here and would return to it. The center was her dowry, given to her by her mother when she married.\(^5\)

By the end of summer the Board of Regents had approved our degree and further courses were designed as needed. I asked to step down as WID coordinator. Nancy O’Rourke succeeded me and continued to supervise the associate degree program. Her codirector was Maxine Stutler with ten years’ experience in Latin America.\(^6\)

Each year at USU, I continued to teach the introductory women’s studies course and the graduate course “Family and Economic Change,” which by now was filled with wonderful WID materials. Both courses continued to offer credit in two departments—Sociology, and Home Economics and Consumer Education (HECE). Our associate degree program was doing well. In December 1984 a full page Salt Lake Tribune article described the program, with pictures of Nigerian women and their children, and a picture of the codirectors.\(^7\)

In January 1985 I was again teaching the international wives’ course, “Family Resource Management,” this time with Jean Lown because Molly Longstreth had taken a position at the University of Arizona. The husbands of our students were studying for doctorates in range management, agricultural education, irrigation engineering, sociology, and demography. The Departments of Irrigation Engineering and Range Management paid for tuition and books for their graduate students’ wives. Jack Keller wrote in Staff News, “If spouses can study while here in the United States along with their husbands, it will increase their abilities at home. The education these women receive enhances the degrees earned by their husbands.”\(^8\)

International agricultural economists were meeting in Spain in early fall 1985 and I decided to go with Gertrude Gronbech, whom I had known for years—we had been graduate students together at Iowa State. She worked for the Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C. and attended these international meetings, which occurred every three years. I wanted to find out if women’s work in agriculture was recognized. Not much, it turned out. The one exception was a workshop led by Irene Tinker on women’s work in developing countries, from which I learned a great deal.\(^9\)

At USU, funds for WID and our associate applied-science degree in Food and Family in International Development were drying up, and
HECE was hard pressed to continue help. Title XII funding from U.S. AID would cease July 1, 1986.

By September 1985 higher education and the public schools of Utah were in deep trouble because state taxes had not brought in expected revenue. The governor would not call a special session of the legislature because it was an election year. He ordered a new 3 percent cut. Jane McCullough, head of HECE, had already eliminated two undergraduate majors, and if our associate degree were eliminated, the department could manage. There simply were no matching funds to support our associate degree, and U.S. AID did not consider education of wives of international students to be important.

Six international women completed the associate degree, and then it vanished. Sixteen had enrolled altogether, but fortunately some who began the program were able to work toward a bachelor of science degree instead. The Sociology Department took over the WID program and the WID library, and sociologist Pam Riley, with extensive international experience, began teaching a well-attended course on women and international development. So our early efforts were not in vain.

Historical Papers and a Promotion

I got to wondering why so little had been written about the history of women in land grant colleges, so I wrote this paragraph:

Land grant colleges began in a variety of settings. Michigan’s began very early, in a forest. The Kansas college was four stone buildings and a president’s house set in a prairie with buffalo bones bleaching in the sun. Utah’s college was placed on sagebrush benchland with a canyon behind it, the source of stiff morning winds and irrigation water.

I put this into a family letter and said it was the beginning of a paper about women and home economics in the history of land grant colleges that I would present at the women’s research conference to be held at the University of Utah in October.

Earlier that year (1984), as I contemplated turning seventy years old, I decided I’d better see if I could move from lecturer to professor emeritus because I’d heard of cases on other campuses where women who had been lecturers for twenty years were summarily fired and disappeared forever. I thought I was worth a higher status than lecturer and wrote a letter to the two department heads for whom I was teaching.
Little action occurred until October, the month I presented my paper at the University of Utah conference. Dean Joan McFadden had left USU to become executive director of the American Home Economics Association. She would be there for five years and then return to USU. Bonita Wyse was by then dean of the College of Family Life. She appointed a promotion advisory committee for me, with Jon Moris of anthropology as chair. The others were Don Dwyer, head of range science; Larzette Hale, head of accounting; Eastman Hatch, professor of physics; and William Stinner, professor of sociology.

Dean Wyse told me to gather up all my materials for consideration, and in due course the committee recommended full professor status. My age made it professor emeritus. I came under the paragraph on “exceptional cases” in “Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion.” The committee’s letter of recommendation included a sentence about my “developing two new courses, one on sex roles and the other on women in development at a time when they were not yet fashionable and when there was no precedent to follow.”

In the meantime I pursued the matter of women and land grant colleges, showing how often women were invisible. A month after giving my paper at the University of Utah, I repeated it for the Logan branch of the American Association of University Women at a public meeting held in the Logan City offices. A very good crowd attended. There was a lot of back and forth discussion as I proceeded because so many of the women had had matching experiences. It was an exciting meeting.

Sarah Ann Skanchy, who was on the city council and not a faculty wife, said that military wives faced a similar situation. And Nancy Williams, younger than my generation, said she was at Los Alamos, and there were wives with masters degrees and higher and absolutely no employment available to them, and consequently there was a lot of alcohol abuse.

For the Seventy-second Faculty Honor Lecture, which I was invited to give, I elaborated on my paper on women in land grant colleges. The first woman to give the lecture had been Almeda Perry Brown, research associate professor in home economics, who gave the third lecture in 1944, on the nutritional status of some Utah population groups. Fifteen years later another nutrition scientist, Ethelwyn Wilcox, gave the twentieth lecture on good nutrition for the family. Ethelwyn was the graduate student at Iowa State who loaned me her typewriter when the dorm fire destroyed mine. Another fifteen years later, in 1974, the third
woman to give the lecture was Veneta Nielsen, a poet in the English Department. I would be the fourth woman, eleven years after Veneta.

The honor lecture was always printed before the event so it could be given out the evening of the lecture. It was always printed in a six by nine inch size with a paper cover, often in light blue, although mine was light green. The cover listed me as Professor Alison Comish Thorne. Most lectures didn’t highlight rank on the cover, but this was the voice of women faculty telling the world that another woman had made it. In 1985 there were six women full professors at USU, not counting retired ones. In 1972, when the women’s movement began on campus, there were also six. Not much progress, but we did have women in the pipeline.

The title of my lecture was “Visible and Invisible Women in Land-Grant Colleges, 1890–1940.” Linda Speth, director of the Utah State University Press, edited my manuscript with great care and sensitivity, and I presented it October 8, 1985, in the Student Union auditorium.

My children came home ahead of time for it. We had lots of visiting and merriment and good meals, especially when Lance did the cooking. We spent Sunday at the cabin, a gorgeous day with autumn colors at their best.

On Tuesday I taught my Sex Roles class of fifty students and introduced Sandra and Carolee (Kip’s wife), who were sitting back in a corner as spectators, while Barrie and Avril sat up front because they were to describe their research. Kip and Lance wanted to come but there just were not enough chairs. Barrie, who was on the faculty of Michigan State University, told about her work with school age children, and then told about Carol Gilligan’s analysis of the way men tend to think, and the way women tend to think. Then Avril, who was on the faculty of Wellesley College, told about her research with introverts and extraverts, and that she had asked faculty why it matters whether people are one or the other.15

At the lecture that evening the family sat on the second row. I was out in the foyer greeting people, many of whom were retired faculty members and their wives. Younger faculty were there in overwhelming numbers and there were students. Jerrilyn Black of the American Association of University Women handed me a bouquet of pink and white carnations. All the board of Planned Parenthood were present. This was the night of their monthly meeting but they postponed it so they could come. The auditorium was filled. President Stanley Cazier and Shirley Cazier were there, the provost, vice-provost, assorted
deans, and the two men who had won the Wynne Thorne Research Awards at commencement.

Jane McCullough introduced me, and then I had the platform to myself. I stood behind an oak podium. It was all very informal. I spoke the lecture, reading only what was vital, ad libbed considerably, and from time to time the audience broke out into laughter. I invited questions at the conclusion and there were quite a few, some being not questions but comments, as when William Sigler of the College of
Natural Resources said he and his family survived six years in Ames, Iowa by making good use of the free buttermilk spigot.

Historical writing was becoming my thing because I had discovered how many unread sources there were. Faculty Women’s League asked me to speak on the history of the league in commemoration of its seventy-fifth birthday. In preparing my paper I read all of the league’s past minutes—fascinating stuff. Allie Burgoyne had given a historical paper, “Our University as I Know It,” on the occasion of Faculty League’s fiftieth anniversary in 1958. I found a copy of her paper in Wynne’s files and made good use of it in both my Honor Lecture and my paper for the league. Ann Buttars of University Archives promptly photocopied Allie’s paper for their collection.

The league paper became a long one, and when I finally presented it, on March 7, 1986, I could give only excerpts. It was heralded as part
of Women’s History Month. I considered it a unique paper because I concluded with thumbnail sketches of five women active in Faculty Women’s League and in university affairs: Allie Burgoyne, Edith Bowen, Ethelyn Greaves, Almeda Perry Brown, and Jennie Israelsen.16

Commencements

When we were young, my sister Elaine and I sometimes attended commencement with our mother, walking across the Oregon State campus—usually it was sunny and warm—so we could watch our father march in cap and gown, and sense the excitement of crowds of people. So when I had my own youngsters I repeated the ritual, I suppose to imbue them with pride in the academic. I knew I was entitled to wear a doctoral gown and was a little envious of the marching faculty as I herded my young fry along the roadway between Old Main and the Field House.

Later I stopped taking them to campus, and myself sat with the wives of officials because Wynne was in administration. The Field House got very crowded and the ceremony got very long when Franklin S. Harris was president because he insisted that every graduate had the right to walk across the stand. Sometimes it got fearfully hot in the top of the balcony where many young mothers with babies sat, and I worried about them.

After the Spectrum, with its basketball floor and vast seating, was built, there was plenty of room for everyone. I especially remember the 1964 commencement because Juanita Brooks received an honorary doctorate. I sat beside Will Brooks in the reserved section, enjoying his presence because he was one of the warmest and friendliest men I had ever known. When the degree was conferred on Juanita—she looked so small and so far away from us—I turned to Will and said, “We are so proud of Juanita.” He squeezed my arm and looked into my eyes with those big brown eyes of his and said, “Oh, we are proud of her!”17

After Wynne’s collapse on the stand at the 1971 commencement, he refused to march again or sit on the stand, but made an exception in 1975 when he received an honorary doctorate. Wynne was often away on international assignments at commencement time, so sometimes I marched, wearing the Iowa State University hood that he bought when he took his degree there. We never owned a gown. We rented.

After Wynne’s death and the creation of the annual D. Wynne Thorne Research Award, I tried never to miss commencements, even going in 1982 though I disapproved of the choice of the commencement speaker,
former USU student Paula Hawkins who was a United States senator from Florida. She was against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and her talk was mostly about “see what a great woman I am, and anybody can do it in America,” with quotations from even Herbert Hoover. She gave no consideration to current unemployment. Jane McCullough observed that Hawkins’s talk was bound together with cliches.

Early on as commencement was planned, Dean Joan McFadden refused to help hood Hawkins because she had accomplished nothing of distinction to warrant such an academic honor. Joan told this to J. R. Allred, who was chair of the commencement ceremonies, and he was nonplussed. So Dean Lye of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (HASS) did it in her place. A young woman receiving a master’s degree in range management had taped ERA in white on the top of her cap. My friends and I hoped that Paula Hawkins got a good look at that ERA as the young woman walked back to her place, diploma in hand.

In great contrast, we heartily approved when Esther Peterson spoke at the 1985 commencement and received an honorary doctorate. I wrote the citation, detailing her work in the labor, women’s, and consumer movements. She had served under Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter and was then working for the United Nations on international guidelines for consumer protection. I described that commencement in a letter to Duncan Brite, retired from the history faculty and living in California. I thanked him for sending me materials for the citation, and then, because I knew he missed USU and wanted details, I wrote:

Esther Peterson gave an excellent talk, and the audience responded at particular points with applause; afterwards she got a standing ovation! The only time any of us can recall that a commencement speaker received a standing ovation. She really took the Reagan administration to task. Had a nice sense of humor, and knew when to emphasize her LDS upbringing.

Nancy O’Rourke and I had sent her the brochure for our associate degree in food and family in international development, and she had expressed an interest in meeting with our international wives who are students in the program. So we had lunch the day before commencement, as soon as she arrived on campus . . . Esther Peterson will be going to Nairobi in July to the international women’s meetings, end of the International Women’s Year Decade of the United Nations.
In her talk Peterson called herself “an old radical,” a term I especially liked because I would like to be called that. Five years later, on her eighty-fifth birthday, Peterson was honored with a celebration attended by nearly one thousand people in a large and crowded hotel dining room in Salt Lake City. I was there and it was a delight for me to talk with her about the standing ovation she received at USU. She remembered.19

In the history of women honored at USU commencements, it is important to name May Swenson, the distinguished poet who grew up in Logan on Fifth North, in the shadow of Old Main. Hers was an excellent talk, given in 1987, and the women faculty were there in force to see the awarding of her honorary doctorate. Today she lies buried in the Logan cemetery across from the Spectrum where she received the degree, under the sky and trees she knew when young.20

I will close this description of commencements by telling of Tom Emery, the brilliant biochemist chosen in 1986 to receive the D. Wynne Thorne Research Award. This is our exchange of letters.

May 16, 1986

Dear Alison:

I was really honored to be named the recipient of the Wynne Thorne research award this year. As part of the award, President Cazier invited me to a commencement breakfast and to be on the platform at commencement. Of course, I was intending to accept when, upon reading the newspaper last night, I found that to do so would put me in a very hypocritical position. Several years ago I complained vigorously to President Cazier about Utah State University awarding honorary degrees to church authorities, but this year it has seen fit to award a degree to Gordon B. Hinckley, whose only claim to fame appears from the newspaper article to be as an LDS church official. I told President Cazier before that I would not attend USU commencement exercises so long as that policy was in effect, so my conscience will not allow me to sit on the platform with Mr. Hinckley. I sincerely hope that you can appreciate my position on this matter, whether or not you personally agree with it. I have written President Cazier explaining my position and the reason why I will not be attending commencement exercises this year, or any year until there is a change in university policy on this matter.

Sincerely,

(signed) Tom

Thomas Emery

Professor of Biochemistry
Dear Tom,

Congratulations on being the recipient of the D. Wynne Thorne Research Award. Bartell Jensen always phones me after the decision is made—not for my approval exactly, more as a point of information. But I do always give my approval, and particularly so in your case because I understand that you do excellent research.

I appreciate your objection to USU giving honorary doctorates to LDS Church officials simply because they are Church officials. If Wynne were here he would agree with you . . .

Wynne fought Church domination at Utah State Agricultural College in the early 1950s—that appalling situation of Governor Bracken Lee and the LDS official on the Board of Trustees who between them, with help from certain others, came close to destroying the College.

At a later date, when Juanita Brooks was to receive an honorary doctorate, a Church official was also receiving one. Because she had written *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, she was under a Church ban and could not speak at sacrament meetings or teach. Nor could her husband, Will. Wynne had to be out of town that Commencement, but I would be there as Wynne’s wife, sitting with families of dignitaries. Wynne told me to make sure Juanita was not brought face-to-face with that Church official. I sat with Will and their son through the exercises, and at the luncheon afterwards, steered them to a table a safe distance from the Church people. There was no confrontation.

I am taking the liberty of sending a copy of your letter and of my reply to each of the children. They are all rebels, and will see how important it is to you to stand by your principles, and will recognize that they too have a legacy of this nature.

Sincerely,

(signed) Alison

On May 21st I received a brief handwritten note from Tom: “Thank you very much for your letter. I really appreciate your support!”

That year I did not attend general commencement but went to College of Science ceremonies afterwards. No top LDS authorities were there when Tom Emery received the D. Wynne Thorne Research Award.
The USU Centennial

In some ways my view of the University’s centennial is not that of the top officials because I am neither male nor a traditional Mormon. I was, however, a member of the Centennial Cornerstone Committee, and when the cornerstone of Old Main was opened and its contents displayed, I began to wonder what sort of ceremony graced the original laying of the stone.

Although the Territorial Legislature acted in 1888 to found the Agricultural College of Utah, the cornerstone was not laid until July 27, 1889. It seems to have been a quick affair. “The arrangements were hurriedly made in order to have the stone laid while members of the Board were in the city. There were present at the ceremonies, however, a large number of leading citizens of Logan. The Fireman’s Brass Band furnished suitable music.” Reverend Mr. Green offered prayer and Reverend Mr. Steeves, James A. Leishman, and the territorial governor spoke. It appears to me that Mormons did not dominate the program. Governor Thomas, a federal appointee, was certainly not Mormon. No woman was on the program.

Among curious items in the small oblong tin box of the 1889 cornerstone is a voting registration slip indicating that bigamous and polygamous men could not vote. There is a pamphlet letter from Aaron DeWitt of Logan to his sister in England explaining the reasons why he left the LDS church with its “beastly, black hearted, bloody priesthood.” Apparently as counterbalance, there is a Deseret Sunday School Union leaflet on “Jesus as a Boy.” There are business and trade items, coins, script, etc. Somebody put in horehound candy which stained some items brown.

A year later when the south wing of Old Main was ready to be occupied, and one week after its doors opened, a proper dedicatory ceremony was held in the auditorium on September 4, 1890. Territorial Governor Arthur Thomas planned it and among the speakers he invited Mrs. Sarah Walker Eddy, a Methodist of Salt Lake City, to speak on women and higher education. Governor Thomas was Methodist. Eddy spoke of the importance of women in the home, and went on to say that “every girl ought thoroughly to fit herself for some definite calling aside from the home.” Her oratory brought much applause and the Logan Journal called it the most noted effort of the day. The governor commended her for her talk and offered her a job at the new college. She became professor of history. The non-Mormon governor
apparently had considerable power in designing the ceremony and appointing faculty.

Fifty years later, in 1938, the semi-centennial of Utah State Agricultural College was celebrated during President E. G. Peterson’s administration. (Wynne and I moved to Logan a year later.) It began the morning of March 8 with a general assembly in Old Main auditorium. Prayers and all the talks were by men, predominantly Mormon. No woman spoke, but Miss Thelma Fogelberg played a piano solo, having been invited to do so because her mother, Vendla Bernston, was the first student to enroll at the A.C. Governor Henry H. Blood and former presidents of the college were among those who spoke. Chief exception to almost complete Mormon control of the program was Frederick P. Champ, president of the Board of Trustees, an Episcopalian, and a powerful figure in the business community. Following the general assembly, the cornerstone with its tin box was opened at noon.

In June 1938 at commencement time there was a four day celebration of the semi-centennial with considerable attention to the topics of home and of family relations. Elder Stephen L. Richards of the LDS church spoke. Non-Mormon speakers from off campus included Dr. Paul Popenoe, then of considerable fame in the field of family relations. No woman speaker was on the main program even though home and family relations were major topics. One evening there was a musical program. The final day, June 7, was commencement with an address by Robert G. Sproul, president of the University of California. The cornerstone was closed and resealed at noon.

At the bottom of the printed program for the four days, almost as an afterthought and in small type, is this sentence: “Anne Carroll Moore of the New York Public Library Will Conduct a Clinic on Literature for Children on Monday and Tuesday in the Children’s Room, Library.”

Even less visible than Anne Carroll Moore was Abby L. Marlatt, first professor of domestic economy at the A.C., who came from Kansas Agricultural College in 1890 with a master’s degree in chemistry, and who left the A.C. in 1894. She received an honorary doctoral degree from Utah State Agricultural College in 1938. I learned this not from histories written on our campus, but from her biography in Notable American Women. By 1938 Marlatt had been director of home economics at the University of Wisconsin for thirty years. No one seems to know whether Marlatt actually made the trip to Logan to receive the honors. When the cornerstone was closed and resealed at noon on June 7, 1938, it contained a new copper box measuring roughly twelve inches each way, to hold
the original tin box with its contents, plus the many items added in 1938, including the yearbook of Faculty Women’s League and the program of a concert that league sponsored. However, these two items are missing in the 1938 typed list of contents (invisible women again), even though these two items were, and still are, in the copper box.

Whereas the semi-centennial lasted three months, the hundred year celebration began a year early and lasted through 1988. The cornerstone was opened March 9, 1987, with a program immediately following in Old Main auditorium. Meanwhile contents of the box were put on display in Champ Hall by Jeff Simmonds, USU archivist and an Episcopalian. Because Mormons dominated the centennial, just as they dominated the semi-centennial, I am impelled to give Simmonds’ religious affiliation.

As people gathered for the program in the auditorium it was a warm reunion of the LDS priesthood—joyful greetings male to male, the warm clasping of hands and touching of shoulders. I felt like an outsider and wondered why the university seemed owned lock, stock and barrel by Mormon men. But maybe I was just in the wrong corner of the auditorium. George Ellsworth, historian and chairman of the Cornerstone Committee, gave an excellent talk, the music was fine, and the historical slides interesting. People in the audience who had attended the 1938 celebration were asked to stand, and there were quite a few. I found this to be heart warming.

In April there was a centennial recognition dinner and a centerpiece opening conference, but women had scant share of the limelight. There were only three women out of thirty centennial recognition recipients, and only two women out of the twelve who read citations. On the first day of the centerpiece meetings the only mention of a woman was when an engineer spoke of Charlotte Kyle teaching English to engineering students.

Fortunately on the second day, Leonard Arrington in his plenary address gave considerable attention to Almeda Perry Brown and the field of nutrition, and to Mignon Barker (Richmond), the first Black woman to graduate from Utah State.

As for the workshops, there were twenty-two moderators, none of whom was a woman. Four women in the twenty-two sessions were recorders. I could not attend on the last day but phoned Maxine Stutler, who went. The workshops were on matters of extension and on international programs. Maxine and Marilyn Noyes sat through these. When John Neuhold later summarized the entire conference, he said
the grass roots are women, who have no say in anything. I turned to Maxine and asked if she had said that, and she said yes.

Dean Peterson had certainly done his homework in more ways than one. He gave an excellent paper, the final presentation of the conference, and among the many subjects he touched on was the family. He said he had learned from Dean Bonita Wyse about single-headed families, substance abuse, the elderly, poverty, pay inequity, consumer problems, and management of resources. But this was only two paragraphs.²⁸

That was the opening conference. One year later at the closing conference more women were involved than earlier although none played a major part. A fine observation, in my view, was Marilynne Glatfelter’s commendation of the presence of older women students at the university.²⁹

I really shouldn’t complain about the treatment of women at the centennial because from the beginning I was a member of the Cornerstone Committee. I had seen the contents of the early tin box and the contents of the copper box of 1938. At 5 p.m. on March 7, three members of the Cornerstone Committee including me, George Ellsworth, and Richard Lamb, plus a handful of university officials, gathered to place centennial items in the capacious copper box of 1938.

Just before we began, I noticed that an issue of the USU alumni publication, Outlook, was slated to go in, and inside was a page interview of Karen Morse with her picture and remarks about the necessity of training more women scientists and engineers, so I wrote across the bottom “On Feb. 26, 1988, Karen Morse became the new dean of science.”³⁰

I also made sure that the Faculty Women’s League yearbook was put into the box along with two programs of the Women’s Center and material about women’s athletics. Lots of other stuff went in of course, and then the small oblong tin box of 1889 with its hundred year old contents, and on top of everything the two USU flags that orbited the earth with Mary Cleave and Don Lind, astronauts who are USU alumni. Leona Duke, assistant to William Lye, vice president for public relations, packed the box, and I wrote down each item just before it went in. Then I rushed home to type what turned out to be a two and one-half page list which George Ellsworth showed the governor next day and which went into the box.

On the great day of March 8, a huge cake was cut and served with free ice cream in the Student Center. Students had filled two thousand blue and white balloons with 100th birthday on them, and these were tied all over the campus. The official ceremony was in The Fine Arts
Center’s Kent Concert Hall, with an overture played by the USU Symphony, written by Dean Madsen of our faculty, and the governor spoke, as well as President Cazier. Then I walked across campus with friends to the cornerstone closing at Old Main. It was a day of surprising beauty with sunshine, blue sky, and snow on the mountains.

The Faculty Women’s League yearbook that went into the box listed 296 members. Frances Richardson, league president, and her officers had sent out notice that those who paid their dues would have their names in the yearbook and therefore in the cornerstone. The yearbook also contained a brief history of league, written by Gwen Haws, faculty wife and USU Editor. At the end of the yearbook was a list of former league presidents, listed by their husbands’ names. Looking it over I realized I had known all but one of them because the early ones were still living when I arrived in Logan.

Fifty years from now when the cornerstone is opened and posterity sees those 296 names, it may appear that Faculty Women’s League was wonderfully successful. Well it wasn’t, because only a handful of women were attending its meetings and it soon went out of existence. Other interests, including paid employment, claim women’s time today, and it’s a rare woman who wants to be known solely through her husband’s position at the university.31

Besides the league yearbook, into the copper box went two items from Janet Osborne, director of the Women’s Center. One was the program of the meeting, which honored community women of achievement who are over sixty-five. The other was the Women’s Center program for National Women’s History Month, March 1–31, 1988. The month began with a keynote talk by Karen Shepherd, founding editor of Network, “a monthly publication for progressive Utah women” published in Salt Lake City. Just reading my notes on her talk makes me want to redouble my efforts to make women visible. Karen Shepherd said, “The absence of women in history is as great a mystery as where the Mayans went . . . We must not let the curtain of forgetting fall again. One generation can lose it.” Karen Shepherd, a Democrat, later was elected state senator, and in 1992 was elected to the United States House of Representatives, a great victory for Democrats of Utah and for women. However, she served only one term.32

The Women’s Center sponsored various other programs during March, with Sara Weddington speaking at Convocation on the final day. Weddington was chief advisor to President Jimmy Carter on women and minority concerns and was the attorney who won the
landmark United States Supreme Court case, *Roe versus Wade*, which legalized abortion.

I, too, gave a centennial lecture. It was on March 4 and I gave it to an overflow audience in a classroom in Old Main, after first touching for good luck the ancient podium that my father debated from in 1910, which survived the Old Main fire of 1983 and now stands in the Sociology Department.

The invitation to give this lecture came from my departments, HECE and Sociology, and from the Women and Gender Research Institute (WGRI). At Utah State University, WGRI is the single most important women’s invention of the 1980s. It encourages women to do research and promotes research on gender-related issues. Such encouragement is needed because of “the still small number of women in academic positions at universities nation-wide, women’s academic isolation, and the need to ensure that both men and women are integrated into and can maximally contribute to academe.”

I titled my lecture, “Family and Community Studies from a Feminist Perspective.” I based it on early Utah Agricultural Experiment Station bulletins and some university extension records, and particularly highlighted the research and activism of Almeda Perry Brown, home economist and nutrition scientist, and of Carmen Fredrickson, sociologist. As for the “feminist perspective,” I asked whether women were mentioned and whether they and what they did was considered important. The front cover of my published lecture carries the picture that Almeda Perry Brown placed on the front of her 1936 Agricultural Experiment Station bulletin—two girls standing back to back in cotton dresses, cotton stockings, and tennis shoes.

Brown’s fourth bulletin concerned the weight-height-age relationships of rural and urban school children. She found that urban children weighed more and were taller than rural children. The rural girls were lowest in weight for their height. Brown suggested the causes were environmental and not genetic . . . She found that essential vitamins were absent from rural children’s winter diets, a matter of much concern.

Brown’s bulletins were published in the 1930s and reflected the poverty of the Depression. She also knew the rural poverty of the 1920s when she worked for the Extension Service in Cache and Box Elder counties. I judged Brown to be a feminist because she placed a picture of two girls on the cover of her bulletin, when she might have shown
boys or a mixed group. As Extension agent she was seeking to support
her own children, and she was active in the Business and Professional
Women’s Club (BPW), which favored the Equal Rights Amendment.
When invited to be listed in *American Men of Science* she declined
because it had not been renamed *American Men and Women of Science*.

Sociologist Carmen Fredrickson, coming later than Brown, was
another advocate of social justice and women’s equality at USU. These
concerns are evident in the Experiment Station bulletins that she
authored and co-authored. Like me, she belonged to the local Women’s
Legislative Council and encouraged its initiation of the “war on
poverty” in the 1960s, and she and I worked together on the Governor’s
Committee on the Status of Women. Fredrickson began a course on
women twenty years before the women’s movement came to campus.

In summary, there were several women’s issues at Utah State
University in the 1980s and into the 1990s. The Women and
International Development program (WID) originated in the Home
Economics and Consumer Science Department of the College of Family
Life, and in 1985 was transferred to Pam Riley and the Department of
Sociology.

WGRI (The Women and Gender Research Institute), a campuswide
activity, was created to encourage and provide funding for women
doing research and for men and women researching gender issues.

Increasing interest in the place of women in the history of land
grant institutions, particularly our own, resulted in a flurry of papers.
Preceding the USU Centennial of 1987–88, I gave a Faculty Honor
Lecture on “Visible and Invisible Women in Land-Grant Colleges,
1890–1940.” I also wrote the history of Faculty Women’s League for
league’s seventy-fifth birthday, and gave a centennial lecture on
“Family and Community Studies from a Feminist Perspective,” based
on Utah Agricultural Experiment Station bulletins.

A quick survey of the founding ceremony of our institution, and the
fifty-year celebration of 1938, and finally, the centennial, reveals that
women played a very small part. Commencements occasionally
included women who received honorary doctorates and were com-
mencement speakers.