4-1-2001

The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

Jill Mulvay Derr

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol40/iss2/5
Fig. 1. Eliza R. Snow, ca. 1868–69. Photograph by Charles R. Savage. Church Archives.

Brigham Young, possibly March 11, 1869. Photograph by Charles R. Savage. Courtesy Gary and Carolynn Ellsworth.
The Lion and the Lioness
Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

Jill Mulvay Derr

He was born in 1801, she in 1804. He was a man known for his humor and gruffness, she a woman known for her sobriety and refinement. He preached unforgettable sermons, though he never learned to spell. She wrote reams of poetry and songs. He provided her a home as one of his wives for thirty years, but she never took his name. Both he and she were passionately devoted to the Prophet Joseph Smith and his expansive vision of eternity. President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and presidentess of its Relief Society, Brigham Young and Eliza Roxcy Snow formed a couple whose marriage eludes simple description (fig. 1). Though no children were born to their union and nothing suggests that the two were ever "one flesh," Brigham and Eliza were of "one heart and one mind."!

Patriarch, prophet, and president, colonizer and community planner, Brigham Young was unique among religious leaders in nineteenth-century America. Revered among Latter-day Saints for her spiritual gifts, temple ministry, and long tenure as president of Mormon women’s organizations, Eliza Snow was likewise distinctive among nineteenth-century female religious leaders.

Extraordinary and fiercely strong individuals, Brigham and Eliza also worked unitedly as partners. They functioned as yokefellows in ways similar to a cadre of nineteenth-century Protestant ministers and their wives—women who, like Eliza, helped organize and manage church organizations for women. Yet in significant respects Brigham and Eliza were different from these couples. Brigham and Eliza’s close association and cooperation embodied the pattern of familial and organizational bonds revealed by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, bonds authorized and sanctified by priesthood authority. Brigham and Eliza drew upon the mutual respect and trust they had developed in their marriage to establish a model of men and women working together harmoniously in the Church organization. Their complementary leadership bore abundant institutional fruit as ward and stake organizations expanded to include not only priesthood quorums but also Relief Society and young women’s organizations.
The Context of Their Marriage

The thirty-three-year partnership of Brigham Young and Eliza Snow was marked by reciprocal respect and solicitude, familial love, and the "unity of purpose and action" that Brigham so often preached.\textsuperscript{2} The dimensions of their family and working relationship must be explored primarily through Eliza's eyes—through the poems, diaries, letters, and speeches in which she refers to Brigham, since his references to her are far fewer than hers to him. Yet though the documentary record is somewhat sparse, it is clear that their multifaceted relationship deepened significantly from the time they were married in 1844 until Brigham's death in 1877.

While they shared several common experiences, the nature and extent of personal interactions between Brigham and Eliza before their marriage is not evident from existing records. Almost a year and a half after his April 1832 baptism, Brigham moved from his home in Mendon, New York, to Kirtland, Ohio, to join other Latter-day Saints gathering to be with the Prophet Joseph Smith and build a temple. Eliza would arrive there two and a half years later. She left her home in Mantua, Ohio, and moved the twenty-nine miles to Kirtland in January 1836, about nine months after she was baptized. After two momentous years, both Eliza and Brigham had moved with the body of the Church to Far West, Missouri. If they had not met earlier, certainly they became acquainted in Nauvoo, Illinois, the Mississippi River town that burgeoned as Latter-day Saints gathered there between 1839 and 1846.

Eliza R. Snow and Brigham Young were married by priesthood authority on October 3, 1844, at the Nauvoo, Illinois, home of Stephen and Hannah Markham, where Eliza then resided. It was a private and confidential ceremony. "Brother H. C. Kimball and my Self was at \textsuperscript{2}\textsuperscript{2} Steven Marcoms Sisters Eliza Snow & Betsey Farechill[d]es was there," Brigham noted in his journal, inscribing the mark he used to indicate that a marriage had been performed.\textsuperscript{3} Eliza was Brigham's eighth plural wife. The Prophet Joseph Smith had first introduced the Old Testament principle of plural marriage to a small circle of his close associates in 1840 and 1841. Rumors of such marriages and other innovations in Nauvoo exacerbated both dissension within the Church and tensions between the Saints and their neighbors. The turmoil culminated in the assassination of the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum at Carthage on June 27, 1844. Thirteen weeks later, Brigham, president of the Quorum of the Twelve and Joseph's successor, married Eliza, one of Joseph's plural wives.

Brigham Young, whose first wife, Miriam Works, died in 1832, married Mary Ann Angell two years later. The couple had had four children by the time Joseph Smith taught Brigham Young and select others the principle of plural marriage. With spiritual assurance that the principle came by divine
commandment, Brigham overcame his initial abhorrence and on June 14, 1842, complied with Joseph Smith’s call by entering into plural marriage with twenty-year-old Lucy Ann Decker.⁴ He would marry six other women before his marriage to Eliza; five of these women would bear him children, as would eight more of the wives he married between 1846 and 1865.⁵

Like Eliza, Brigham Young’s wives Emily Partridge, Louisa Beaman, and Zina Huntington had been married to the Prophet Joseph during his lifetime. Brigham and other Apostles followed a practice similar to the Old Testament levirate requirement by offering marriage to Joseph’s widows after his death to care for them and “raise up seed” to him.⁶ Brigham married eight of Joseph’s wives and had children with three of them. Like others of these women, Eliza’s marriage to Brigham was for time only.⁷

Indeed, there was no requirement that such marriages performed by priesthood authority be consummated. Mormon theology made these unions—even marriages for time—something more than the term “marriage” alone might suggest. “It might be argued,” observed anthropologist Rex Eugene Cooper, “that within the context of the patriarchal order, the union between husband and wife is conceptualized in terms of patriarchal priesthood power rather than in terms of lawful sexual intercourse . . . the root symbol of American kinship.”⁸ Thus, Brigham married a number of women with whom he may or may not have had sexual relations and who bore him no children.⁹ Biographer Leonard J. Arrington characterizes these marriages as “caretaker” marriages.¹⁰ Brigham provided these women with a home and listed them in his will. Yet beyond providing these temporal benefits, Brigham made them part of his covenant family. A man and a woman bound together in the “new and everlasting covenant of marriage” could receive the fullness of priesthood blessings, blessings unavailable to individuals alone. Bound to God and to one another by covenant, they became part of a covenant community composed of interconnected covenant families.

These theological understandings—indeed the whole of Mormonism—framed the full context of the marriage partnership that Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow developed over the course of thirty-three years. Within that framework, three distinct expressions of their partnership can be identified: their alliance as prophet and poetess, their relationship in an extensive family as husband and wife, and their cooperation as president and presidentess.

Prophet and Poetess

Both Brigham and Eliza were prominent public figures in Nauvoo and their alliance as prophet and poetess grew out of their public roles. Joseph Smith appointed Eliza Snow, Nauvoo’s “well known and talented poetess,”
to write poems for, about, and on behalf of the Latter-day Saints, and she did so with a keen sense of "mission and calling." During the seven years the Saints occupied Nauvoo, she published eighty poems in Illinois newspapers. She also served as secretary of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo. Meanwhile, Brigham Young left Nauvoo in 1839 to serve a mission in England with other members of the Twelve, presided over the mission there until April 1841, and then returned to Nauvoo to shoulder the new responsibilities Joseph assigned the Twelve. He was in New England promoting Joseph Smith's presidential candidacy when he learned of the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum at Carthage, Illinois.

In their own distinct ways, Brigham and Eliza mourned the loss of their beloved Joseph. Brigham returned to Nauvoo, a city still grieving, on August 6, 1844. Five days later, he described the prevailing mood in a simple, heartfelt letter to his daughter Vilate: "It has been a time of mourning. The day that Joseph and Hyrum were brought in from Carthage to Nauvoo it was judged by meny boath in and out of the church that there was more than five barels of tears shead. I cannot bare to think enny thing about it."

No existing letter or diary records Eliza's sorrow at Joseph's death. Her eighty-four-line funerary poem, "Lines on the Assassination of Generals Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith," was elevated in tone—a dramatic, formal dirge on behalf of the whole community of Latter-day Saints:

Ye heavens, attend! Let all the earth give ear!
Let Gods and seraphs, men and angels hear:
The worlds on high—the Universe, shall know
What awful scenes are acted here below!

Dated just four days after the martyrdom, the poem was published both as a broadside and as an item in the Nauvoo Times and Seasons. The poem's stilted form belies more tender feelings. According to one of her close associates, Eliza "was prostrated with grief" following the martyrdom. In her own public statements, Eliza was less explicit about her grief, but her depth of feeling for her "beloved husband" Joseph is unmistakable. He was, she said, "the choice of my heart and the crown of my life."

Eliza never spoke of Brigham in the same passionate terms. Nonetheless, she wrote poetry and prose sustaining him in his role as prophet, as leader of the Saints, precisely as she had employed her pen to support Joseph in his prophetic calling. While she continued to write poems for and on behalf of the Latter-day Saints in general, some twenty-nine poems written between 1845 and Brigham's death in 1877 directly express her support for Israel's "Chieftain," the "Servant of God," the "Lord's anointed." This was an era when the role of the poet was both to articulate and to shape public sentiment. Eliza's poems were intended to express and to reinforce Saints' loyalty to Brigham Young. The poems reflected her loyalty to him—loyalty that was a critical element in building her relationship with him.
"To President Brigham Young," her first poem honoring Brigham, appeared in the February 15, 1845, issue of the *Times and Seasons*. He had assumed leadership on August 8, 1844, when thousands of Church members gathered in Nauvoo assented to follow the Twelve and its president over rival claimants such as Sidney Rigdon. "The church was of one hart and one mind," Brigham recorded in his diary that day. "They wanted the twelve to lead the church as Br Joseph had dun in his day." As the Twelve assumed the duties of Joseph and his counselors, dissenters continued debating the question of who should legitimately succeed Joseph as head of the Latter-day Saints. Eliza's February 1845 poem declared that the prophetic "mantle of Joseph" rested upon Brigham Young:

> An important station is truly thine,  
> And the weight of thy calling can none define:  
> Being call’d of the Lord o’er the Twelve to preside,  
> And with them over all of the world beside.

> Thou hast gain’d, like Elisha, a rich behest,  
> For the mantle of Joseph seems to rest  
> Upon thee, while the spirit and pow’r divine,  
> That inspir’d his heart, is inspiring thine.

> The great work which he laid the foundation to  
> Is unfinished, and resting on thee to do—[.]"  

These lines do not read as smoothly as most of Eliza's poetry. Like other Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo, she was unaccustomed to bearing witness of a prophet other than Joseph. She may also have felt an awkward unfamiliarity in writing about the man she had married four months earlier; they may not have known one another very well at that time.

However, writing as a poetess for Zion, Eliza found numerous occasions to refine her public support of Zion's prophet. She dedicated five more poems to President Young between February 1846, when she left Nauvoo with the Saints, and September 1848, when Brigham brought most of his family into the Salt Lake Valley. A sixth poem, though not dedicated to Brigham, praised and sustained him. It was titled, as were several of her trail songs, "Song for the Camp of Israel," signaling the journeying Saints' thorough identification with ancient Israel's exodus from Egypt. Recorded in Eliza's diary and dated April 5, 1846, the song was written about ninety miles from Nauvoo, near Shoal Creek in Iowa. The first stanza addresses the camp:

> O, ye toss’d to and fro, and afflicted!  
> Rejoice in the hope of your lot;  
> For you’re truly the children of Israel  
> But the Gentiles know it not;
And it matters not when or whither
You go, neither whom among;
Only so that you closely follow
Your leader, Brigham Young.

The second and third stanzas salute not only Brigham but also his longtime friend Heber C. Kimball, who was second to Brigham in seniority in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and who essentially served as his first counselor even before the First Presidency was reorganized in 1847. "The blessings of heaven will attend you / Both in time and eternity / If you strictly adhere to the counsel / Of Brigham and Heber C."20

Some of the songs Eliza penned for fellow travelers to sing around their evening campfires were written at Brigham’s request. He had a fine bass voice, loved to sing, and undoubtedly joined in the singing whenever he could. She matched the meter of her verses to popular tunes of the era that Church members already knew or could readily learn. For example, on March 18, 1847, as Brigham prepared to leave Winter Quarters to trek to the Great Basin with the vanguard company of pioneers, Eliza wrote at his request "A Journeying Song for the Camp of Israel," to be sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." In April, following the Pioneer Company’s departure, she composed verses for a second song, entitled "The Twelve, To Prest. Brigham Young," to be sung to "Indian Hunter," a tune she employed for at least four of her songs:

They have gone—they have gone new privations to share
Gone as Abraham went when he knew not where
They have gone like the deer when pursued in the chase
To secure to the saints a safe hiding place.21

Eliza’s songs consistently looked not only to a place of refuge but also to a place of beginning “where the kingdom of God / Will be seen in its order extending abroad.”22 The task of building the kingdom was for all of modern Israel, not Brigham Young alone.

Six weeks after the Pioneer Company arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, Brigham and others headed east to Winter Quarters to retrieve their families. Already on the westward trail, Eliza and her company crossed paths with Brigham at the Sweetwater. In her song saluting “ye mighty men of Israel, / Who the hiding place have found,” she attested that their work was divinely sanctioned, for they had been blessed by “The Eternal God” and “stood on holy ground."23

Much of Eliza’s poetry reads like a chronicle of critical moments in nineteenth-century Church history. She was on hand to write commemorative verses that interpreted the present and often the future significance of historic beginnings, changes, and decisions. On December 5, 1847, Brigham Young was sustained President of the Church at Kanesville, Iowa. The First Presidency was reorganized with Heber C. Kimball and Willard
Richards as President Young’s counselors. Nine months later, when the new First Presidency returned to the Salt Lake Valley, Eliza composed a song that welcomed them and testified of their authority to preside. “To our chieftain all hail!; to his counsellors too,” she wrote.

You have come, you have come, to the valley once more,
And have landed your train like a ship on the shore;
You great father in Israel, with hosts you have come,
To this beautiful valley we welcome you home.

Anticipating a bright future under Brigham Young’s leadership, Eliza concluded:

When good order’s established and all with accord,
Adhere to the precepts and law of the Lord,
Which are given and, through Brigham, hereafter will come
In this beautiful valley we will all feel at home.24

Over the next three decades, Eliza continued to champion her prophet-husband through her writing. A prose piece she wrote in 1849 on behalf of the “aged fathers in Israel” celebrated the entry of the pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley. “What must be the feelings, this day, of Pres¹ Young, the leader of that noble band of Pioneers; while he contemplates the results of the last two years?” she asked. Then she looked back:

What must have been his feelings when, with a little band . . . he started forth into the wilderness in search of a home for his people, like Abraham of old, not knowing whither he went? But he knew that God had call’d him—he trusted in the arm of Omnipotence, and by the unseen hand of the Almighty Jehovah, their feet were directed across a trackless desert to this place.

And in this place, she continued, Jehovah’s prophet would establish equality, justice, and liberty. “To you, Pres¹ Young, as the successor of Pres¹ Smith; do we now look, as to a second Washington, so far as political freedom is concerned.”25 Like other Latter-day Saints, Eliza anticipated the establishment of the semi-autonomous State of Deseret, whose leaders would govern in righteousness. In 1854 she affirmed that the Saints could rejoice in having “a Washington / And Moses too, in Brigham Young.”26 Her Fourth of July and Twenty-fourth of July prose and poetry helped establish the ritual story of the pioneer trek and the building of Zion in the Rocky Mountains. She placed Brigham Young at the center of the narrative. Indeed, her April 1853 song celebrated the laying of cornerstones for the Salt Lake Temple “in peace, in the City of Brigham.”27

Eliza’s national songs and anthems composed for the sought-after, but unrealized, State of Deseret praised Brigham’s theocratic leadership and fiercely denounced his enemies. In the valleys of the mountains, the Saints were gathering to become a holy people with guidance from God’s prophet—“Brigham Young, the Lord’s anointed, / Lov’d of heav’n, and fear’d of hell”—she wrote in 1851.28
A decade later, Eliza’s 1861 anthem to Brigham Young echoed the same themes:

O God, bless Brigham Young;  
Bless him, and all that bless him:  
Waste them away, O God, we pray;  
Who, rising to oppose him,  
Contend with Thee.

Long, long live Brigham Young,  
To battle with tradition—  
To break in twain each yoke and chain,  
And give the world its freedom  
And truth its throne.

In October 1868, Eliza published, on behalf of Latter-day Saints, a “people’s prayer” for “our prophet Brigham.” Probably the fullest expression of her witness of her husband’s sacred calling as prophet and President of the Church, it begins:

O God of life and glory,  
Hear Thou a people’s prayer:  
bless, bless our prophet Brigham,  
And let him, Thy fullness share.  
He is Thy chosen servant,  
To lead Thine Israel forth;  
Till Zion, crown’d with joy, shall be  
A praise in all the earth.

He draws from Christ, the Fountain  
Of everlasting truth,  
The wise and prudent counsels  
Which he gives to age and youth.  
Thyself in him reflected,  
Through mortal agency—  
He is Thy representative,  
To set Thy people free.

Thus the poet supported the prophet. And the prophet lent his support to the poet. An enthusiastic patron of her art, Brigham enlarged her influence and reputation. Reflecting her call from Joseph Smith to write poems for Zion, Eliza was widely known by the 1850s as Zion’s poet laureate, “Zion’s Poetess.” Not only did Brigham request that she write poems and songs for particular occasions, but he sometimes ordered their printing and distribution. In 1861, for example, he “directed that a piece of poetry composed by E. R. Snow for the 4th of July should be taken to E. Smith and 50 copies struck off.” He obviously liked her poems, songs, and hymns. Her composition “O my Father, thou that dwellest” was reportedly his favorite hymn. He was proud of her 1856 volume of poetry, Poems:
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

Religious, Historical, and Political, which he described as "properly executed and got up in good style." On several occasions, in response to requests for Church literature, he sent her volume along with the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and works of Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, and others. When she published a second volume of her poetry, it began with a poem dedicating the volume to Brigham Young, "Servant of God, most honor'd—most belov'd." 36

Brigham and Eliza were united in their commitment to build the Kingdom of God and to bring forth Zion, and each honored the other's role in that sacred endeavor. The prophet-poet combination served both of them well. It was a public manifestation of their unified vision and mutual esteem.

Husband and Wife

The connection between Brigham Young and Eliza Snow also had a private dimension. Their alliance as prophet and poet developed within the context of their relationship as husband and wife. They married in their early forties, and both lived in the same household into their seventies. Over the span of three decades, they grew from being awkward acquaintances who respected one another to becoming comfortable confidants who counseled with each other and laughed together. Over the years, their reciprocal love, admiration, and trust increased within the new and everlasting covenant that brought them together in the extensive Young family and household. The communication, cooperation, and unity they established in their marriage laid the foundation for their extraordinary partnership in the Church's organization.

Early Years. The two-volume diary Eliza kept between 1846 and 1849 traces their developing relationship (fig. 2) during those early years. Their marriage in October 1844 did not effect any immediate change in Eliza's circumstances. She continued living in the home of Stephen and Hannah Markham in Nauvoo. The first group of Saints left Nauvoo on February 4, 1846. Nine days later, Eliza crossed the Mississippi River with the Markhams, joining the Saints' encampment at Sugar Creek, Iowa.

On the evening of February 15, Brigham arrived at Sugar Creek with fifteen wagons and some fifty members of his family. He had made various other arrangements for family members who, like Eliza, did not accompany him. She was at least on the trail; others remained for a time in Nauvoo or traveled in less comfortable circumstances than she. Dean C. Jessee's thorough study of Brigham Young's family during this period shows the enormous challenge Brigham faced as he tried to keep in touch with all of his wives and children during the westward trek. 37

While letters between Brigham and a number of his wives exist for this period, there is no extant correspondence between Eliza and Brigham,
Fig. 2. Eliza R. Snow poem, 1846. This poem, written in Eliza R. Snow’s own hand, celebrates the Nauvoo Temple sealing of Brigham Young and his wife Mary Ann Angell Young on January 7, 1846, the day four couples were sealed over a new altar. In this poem, an arrow and cut paper key interlace to form a heart—perhaps symbolizing authority, eternity, and love. The terms “President” and “Presidentess” are used to identify this leading couple.

perhaps because their paths crossed fairly frequently during the trek. On March 27, 1846, at the Chariton River in Iowa, the loosely organized Camp of Israel was reorganized into three new companies of one hundred wagons each, which were further divided into groups of fifty and ten. Brigham Young was president of the First Fifty, and Heber C. Kimball was president of the Second Fifty, in which Eliza traveled. She noted in her diary her encounters with Brigham, however brief—a handshake, visit, discussion, carriage ride, or supper. Their “interviews,” as she often termed them—and she recorded at least thirty-four of them—meant a great deal to her. “Had the pleasure of the first interview with Prest [Brigham] Y[oung] since we left the City,” she wrote on March 9, 1846.38 Three weeks later, on March 29, he came to her wagon and “said in the name of the Lord I should get my health.” This blessing was a comfort, no doubt, to Eliza, who suffered ill health and personally prayed “for health that I may be useful.”39
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

The tens, fifties, and hundreds did not travel at the same pace, and separations were frequent. In mid-June 1846, while Eliza and others lingered at Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, Brigham and Heber pressed ninety miles ahead to the Missouri River to establish temporary settlements at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and nearby Kanesville. By then, the Saints had established a provisioning camp in Mt. Pisgah. When Brigham returned briefly to Mt. Pisgah in July—to raise volunteers for the United States’ war with Mexico—Eliza expressed her concern about being left behind. She found, she wrote earlier, “a trial to my feelings in being separated from those with whom I have ever been associated in the church.” So, she noted on July 9, “I told B[righam] I wanted his promise that we shall come—he said we shall if we obey counsel.”

Winter Quarters. Eliza arrived at Winter Quarters in August 1846. There she and Brigham visited on at least eight occasions before his departure for the Great Basin in April 1847. Some of these visits were brief conversations, but others involved time spent with him and his wives, whom Eliza called “the female family.” The sense of disconnectedness apparent in her Iowa crossing diary faded during her ten-month stay at Winter Quarters as she developed a closer association with Brigham’s other wives. They did not all live together, but they visited one another and gathered together often enough that Eliza began to feel connected to the family for the first time.

Caring for one another helped the wives to create a permanent bond. For example, when Eliza fell ill with chills and fever shortly after she arrived at Winter Quarters, “Sister Young”—Mary Ann Angell Young—was among those who nursed her back to health. The kindness of Mary Ann and six other friends was “indelibly inscrib’d” upon her memory. Two other wives, Louisa Beaman and Clarissa Decker, visited her “with kindnesses” in November. “And by far the highlight of the year,” as Dean Jessee has effectively summarized Eliza’s diary entries,

was five days between Christmas and New Year’s that Eliza spent with “the girls.” At President Young’s on 27 December [1846] she had “the pleasure of supping on a bak’d turkey,” and on the thirtieth spent an “agreeable” afternoon with Brigham, Mary Ann Angell, and Louisa Beaman. The climax of the week came on New Year’s Eve: “To describe the scene ... would be beyond my pow’r. Suffice it to say, the spirit of the Lord waspour’d out and we receiv’d a blessing thro’ our belov’d mother Chase and Sis. Clarissa [Ross] by the gift of tongues.” Eliza concluded her five-day visit with “the female family” on New Year’s Day with the remark, “my love [for them] seems to increase with every day’s acquaintance.”

What healing balm these days must have provided to Eliza, who had not lived with her own parents and younger brothers for five years and had received on December 22 news that her mother had died in Illinois.
The shared exercise of the spiritual gifts of tongues, prophecy, and healing among Brigham's wives and other women at Winter Quarters provided spiritual renewal and refreshment for sisters who were exhausted from travel, sickness, privation, and the death of loved ones. With a playful reference to the small cabins in which her sister wives resided, Eliza celebrated the gift of tongues in a poem addressed "To all the Ladies who reside in the 2d mansion of Prest B[righam] Young." The poem began, "Beloved sisters all unite. / In music's sweetest strains." These frequent gatherings of women at Winter Quarters, described by Eliza as "a glorious time," "a rejoicing time," "a refreshing time," bound her to her sister wives. On June 12, 1847, when she left Winter Quarters to begin the journey to the Salt Lake Valley, she wrote, "Bade farewell to many who seem dearer to me than life." In addition to the gatherings of "the female family," Eliza shared experiences with individual wives that further strengthened her family ties. Brigham seems to have arranged for Eliza to be present on January 15, 1847, when he blessed his and Louisa Beaman's six-day-old son, Moroni. Eliza then remained with Louisa and the baby for a week. Forty-three years old, childless, and fatigued by the "family discord" she experienced traveling with the Markhams, Eliza must have welcomed the change.

At the end of March 1847, Stephen Markham told Brigham that he would take Eliza "on to the west" that summer—"a great accommodation to [Brigham] as he was short on it for wagons." But a more attractive possibility presented itself and won the endorsement of Brigham's wife Mary Ann Angell, whom Eliza loved and respected. Eliza would travel west with twenty-four-year-old Margaret Peirce (or Margaret Pierce), another of Brigham's wives, and Margaret's parents, Robert and Mary Harvey Peirce. Eliza left with the Peirces in June 1847 and spent three and a half months on the trail with a woman young enough to be her daughter yet one whom she came to love "with the tenderness / That sister spirits love."  

Eliza and Brigham last met on the trail in September 1847, on the Sweetwater River about 250 miles from the Salt Lake Valley. She was traveling west with the Peirces in the first of ten westward moving companies directed by John Taylor and Parley P. Pratt. Brigham and other Apostles who had reached the valley with the vanguard company were headed back to Winter Quarters to shepherd their families and other Saints to the valley. The reunion had personal significance for the husband and wife, who knew that a full year would pass before they would see one another again. Eliza recorded their September 10 conversation in her diary: "Before the Peirces left Brigham came to the carriage blest us—I ask'd who was to be my counsellor for the year to come—he said Eliza R. S[now] I said 'she is not capable'—he said 'I have appointed her president[']"—said he had.
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

conversation with br. P[eirce] about provision—that he will furnish me & all will be right." This brief diary entry discloses Eliza's vulnerability, economically and emotionally. In this era when women rarely lived independently of father, husband, brother, or son, Eliza looked to Brigham as provider and protector. He both arranged for her support and expressed confidence in her ability to act independently. And she proved worthy of his trust. While writing, sewing, ironing, cooking, picking currants, and even submitting her journal to assist "in making up the history of the Camp from W. Quarters," Eliza traveled to the Salt Lake Valley and there took charge of her life, despite her continued ill health.

**Salt Lake Valley.** The bonds established in Winter Quarters held fast in the Salt Lake Valley. After Eliza arrived in the valley in October 1847, she moved into a room in the "Old Fort," a temporary housing complex of some 450 dirt-roofed log cabins spread over three, ten-acre blocks. There she shared a fourteen-by-sixteen-foot cabin with Brigham's wife Clarissa (Clara) Decker, who had been in the valley since July, having traveled west with Brigham and the vanguard pioneer company. "Have my things put into Clarissa's room, who said Prest. Y. wrote her that I would live with her," Eliza noted on October 3. The same day, Clara wrote Brigham, "Sister Eliza Snow is coming in the morning to live with me I was much pleased with the arrangement." Eliza and Clara lived together for nearly a year before Brigham arrived with his other wives and children in September 1848. Sister wife Margarett Peirce moved into that room, and Eliza and Clara moved to other rooms in the fort, Clara joining her sister and sister wife Lucy Decker and Eliza staying with Jonathan and Elvira Holmes, old friends from Nauvoo.

After Brigham's return to the Salt Lake Valley in fall 1848, his visits to Eliza were not frequent but they indicated his desire to keep her connected to the family, a connection that satisfied her own deep needs. This is reflected in brief excerpts from her journal from November 1848 to June 1849, while she was living in the Old Fort:

**Wednesday, November 1, 1848** | Prest. Y[oung] invited me to a carriage ride with him—we din'd at his house after conversing on some particulars.

**Thursday, November 3, 1848** | Spent the eve. very pleasantly at Prest. Y[oung]'s with most of his wives.

**Sunday, December 3, 1848** | B[righam] call'd after meeting.

**Monday, December 25, 1848** | Christmas, I staid at home & read newspapers which Prest. Y[oung] sent me, he having call'd last eve.

**Sunday, January 25, 1849** | Very sick yest. & today—B[righam] administer'd to me—felt reliev'd for which I thank the Lord.

**Monday, January 26, 1849** | B[righam] propos'd a carriage ride to his house in few days.
Thursday, March 1, 1849] Brigham’s folks move out of Fort.[.]
Friday, March 2, 1849] Brigham call’d to see me. . . .
Friday, April 13, 1849] [Last] Wed. Brigham Young come to visit his family, which he commence’d organizing for living together. I spent the night & he took me to Br. Heber C. Kimball’s the next day—told me to go home from there & he should soon come & move me up. He call’d this eve. with Loisa, Margaret & Clara. . . .
Tuesday, June 19, 1849] This eve. I rode to Pres. Young’s in carriage[.]
Thursday, June 21, 1849] return’d home. . . .
Wednesday, June 27, 1849] This day is 5 years since Joseph’s death!
Thursday, June 28, 1849] Mov’d to Pres. Young’s Log. row[.]57

Eliza’s move into Brigham Young’s home represented a full embrace into the Young family. The row of log dwellings Brigham built on his lot adjacent to City Creek—on what is now First Avenue in downtown Salt Lake City—housed his wives and children for six or seven years. Residences for the Young family gradually spread to both sides of what is now State Street and included the White House (1851), where Mary Ann Angell lived with her five children; the Beehive House (1855), which served as Brigham Young’s official residence and housed Lucy Decker and her seven children; and the Lion House (1856), which had over two dozen rooms and housed several wives with their children as well as wives who had no children. After Eliza moved into the newly completed Lion House, she remained there until her death.58

Brigham and Eliza were part of a complex family whose size, structure, and interconnectedness varied over time as wives aged and died, children were born and grew to maturity, and living arrangements changed. Brigham Young did not simply provide for his family, he organized them according to cherished principles of unity and harmony. Susa Young Gates, daughter of Brigham and Lucy Bigelow, explained:

The Lion House, named for the stone lion on its front porch, was an economic and spiritual experiment on my father’s part to house his numerous wives comfortably, with the least expenditure of means—for that was a tremendous problem—where each wife and child should have equal treatment, and where father could see all his dear ones every day at meal time . . . and his wives and his growing children could partake intimately of the spirit of comradeship and fellowship with him and with each other, which is the real spirit of Christ and His Gospel. But he later moved the mothers of large families into homes of their own.

Susa indicated that at the end of his life her father regretted not having earlier deeded “each wife her own home and let her pay her own tithing and have her own belongings around her.” And yet, Susa observed, “the experiment” of family communal living was a beautiful success to Brigham’s
children. It was also a “beautiful success” for Eliza, who found in the extended Young family not only a home but love and fellowship and abundant opportunities to be, as Eliza desired, “useful.”

Without children of her own, Eliza was free to employ her time in ways most of the other wives could not. Clarissa Young Spencer, daughter of Brigham and Lucy Ann Decker, observed that the Young wives who had no children “naturally took a heavier part in the running of the entire establishment, such as supervising the cooking or working in the weaving and spinning rooms. Each one worked, also, according to her talents.” Before Eliza took charge of Relief Society work in the late 1860s, she exercised her nursing and her sewing talents. “She was as faithful at the bedside of sickness as even aunt Zina [Huntington] could be and her cool hand laid upon the fevered brow of a fevered child was like a heavenly benediction,” Susa remembered. Eliza was also a reader: “she spent all of her spare time in study of great and good books, beginning with the Bible and Book of Mormon, with which she was intimately familiar, and ending with the classics of the ages past.”

She used her hands as well as her mind. “To relieve the nervous pressure of too much study, Eliza embroidered temple aprons or made burial clothing,” Susa recalled. “She was an exquisite needle woman and her embroideries were real works of art.” During the westward trek and her early years in the Valley, Eliza had paid for some of her provisions through the labors of her needle and thread. Susa remembered Eliza organizing an embroidery class with several sister wives and friends, who may have also included some of Brigham’s daughters. “The women taught each other new stitches for ‘bell sleeve’ of dainty muslin, or daintier swiss ‘front aprons’ or collars, and talked restrainedly and cheerfully of high prospects and great spiritual possibilities.” Perhaps this group helped Eliza initiate an early dress reform effort that introduced the “Deseret Costume,” described by one of Brigham Young’s daughters as “a hideous affair consisting of bloomers and full skirts, without trimming, hoops, or trains.” Whether the design piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade piqued or supported Brigham’s own commitment to simplified, homemade 63

Beyond the time they spent together in the Lion House at family meals and family prayers, Brigham and Eliza, on occasion, attended the Salt Lake Theater or a ball or social together. In 1865, for example, Brigham escorted two wives, Eliza and Amelia Folsom, to a dinner party at the home of Salt Lake merchant William Jennings. In September 1864, Eliza accompanied Brigham and Amelia, six Young children, and a large party of Brigham’s associates, including Eliza’s brother Lorenzo, on a month-long tour of Southern Utah settlements. Presumably, such events provided Eliza and Brigham opportunities for conversing more extensively, for sharing ideas
and deepening mutual understanding, and for finding greater pleasure in one another’s company.

It is difficult to trace how much time Brigham and Eliza spent together, let alone assess their feelings for one another as husband and wife. The emotional content of their relationship remains partially hidden. Little if anything in the public discourse of either Brigham or Eliza would hint that they were married. Eliza never attached “Young” to her name and, indeed, she was known by her well-established penname of “Miss” Eliza R. Snow. Following the etiquette of the era, she referred to Brigham publicly as President Young, never as “my husband.” Likewise, he spoke of her not as “my wife,” but as Sister Snow or Miss Eliza Snow. And when either of them spoke of marriage publicly, he or she generally discussed marriage doctrine, offered advice, or defended the misunderstood practice of plural marriage. Both Brigham and Eliza made occasional mild remarks about the challenges of marriage, but these do not necessarily point to challenges in their own relationship. “Where is the man who has wives, and all of them think he is doing just right by them?” Brigham asked. “I do not know such a man,” he continued; “I know it is not your humble servant.” And for her part, Eliza asked Relief Society women in Provo, “Who can try a wife like a husband?”

Mormons generally and plural families particularly lived under a cloud of criticism that sometimes became a maelstrom. Ministers’ sermons, travelers’ accounts, popular novels, and newspaper cartoons lampooned “Utah and the Mormons” and particularly Brigham Young and his wives. The first federal antipolygamy legislation, the Morrill Act, was passed in 1862, and Congressional and judiciary efforts to put an end to the practice escalated until the end of the century when Church leaders finally forbade it. The popular assumption was that plural marriage degraded women and that wives and children suffered. Brigham repeatedly affirmed otherwise, as did Eliza, though she implied that her appreciation for plural marriage developed gradually: “As I increased in knowledge concerning the principle and design of Plural Marriage, I grew in love with it, and today esteem it a precious, sacred principle—necessary in the elevation and salvation of the human family in redeeming woman from the curse, and world from corruptions.”

What exists of Eliza and Brigham’s private discourse regarding one another, most of it hers, is more revelatory, though not completely revealing. Both were guarded about expressing emotion. Nevertheless, the surviving documents convey familiarity, gratitude, humor, affection, and concern. Ever present is the sense that family bonds are intertwined with the family’s bond to God and his work. For example, a letter Eliza wrote in 1865 to another of Brigham’s plural wives, Mary Elizabeth Rollins, closed
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

with the following: "I will repeat President Young’s words, as follows. ‘When you write, give my respects to sister Mary, and tell her I am here full of faith, and the kingdom is moving on, and if she and I stick to it, when that goes up, we shall all go up with it.’"\(^{71}\)

Brigham regularly carried out his official and personal correspondence through scribes. Maybe his own lack of facility with writing gave him greater appreciation for Eliza’s literary talents, particularly when they were exercised on his or his family’s behalf. Writing via a scribe to his son Willard at West Point in June 1871, Brigham described the family gathering for his seventieth birthday and his gratitude for Eliza’s service in articulating family sentiment:

A surprise was prepared for me which, though it has been in preparation several days, was kept entirely from me. I stepped into dinner as usual, suspecting nothing, and was greeted by a concourse of children in the lobby, neatly dressed and each bearing a bouquet. I was ushered into the parlour where to my astonishment I was met by not less than 80 persons assembled to congratulate me on the occasion. We all proceeded to the dining room and 87 persons sat down to table. An address prepared by Sister Eliza R. Snow was then read to me, which embodied in a beautiful composition the affectionate sentiments of my family and immediate relatives and friends.\(^{72}\)

For this occasion, Eliza’s address to “Pres. Brigham Young, Beloved Husband, ] Fath[er] & Friend” read in part:

It is a subject of mutual congratulation that your eventful life has been prolonged, to this period; and no testimonial that we can confer is capable of truthfully representing our appreciation of your worth & goodness. If the world knew you as we know you all parts of the inhabited, civilized earth would this day echo one grand, universal expression wishing you long life and happiness; and your broad heart overflowing with love & kindness, would meet a corresponding warm response from the appreciative bosom of humanity.

... May you live till the rulers of every nation on earth shall acknowledge the wisdom of God in your administration—seek unto you for counsel & recognize you as you truly are the friend of God and man.

May you live till your soul is satisfied.\(^{73}\)

Brigham Young was not the only one stirred by Eliza’s sentiments. “While it was being read,” Brigham wrote, “many were moved to tears, and altogether it was a really pleasant time which will not easily be forgotten by those who were present.”\(^{74}\) The kindesses shown at birthday parties worked both ways. A few months later, in January 1872, Brigham attended a surprise birthday party for Eliza and spoke for thirty minutes, though no record of his remarks has survived.\(^{75}\)

Despite the high-blown rhetoric in Eliza’s birthday tribute and some of her other poems, there is a sense of family connectedness in this tribute.
that is magnified in letters Eliza wrote to Brigham. So far, I have located none he wrote to her. The letters she wrote to him suggest that to say she was wife "in name only" or that he married her to be her "caretaker" does no justice to the warmth that marked their interchanges, which can be seen clearly in her 1872 correspondence written while traveling through Europe and the Middle East with her brother Lorenzo, George A. Smith, and others. During the American and European legs of this journey, Eliza wrote Brigham regularly. Her November 4 letter from New York was filled with news of a visit to Niagara Falls, a meeting with the German consul, and confidential questions about funding another member of the party ("all would depend on your decision in the matter"). She closed, "If the family would like to know how I stand the trip so far, I can say that my health was never better. With love to all, I conclude this hasty, already too lengthy letter."76 Conscious of keeping letters to her busy husband short, she perpetually apologized for their length. "I well know you have no time for long letters," she wrote.77

A letter written on board the steamer Minnesota on November 17, 1872, reported her reunion with Willard at West Point. He "was very very glad to see us. When we left he accompanied us to the 'limits' and with mutual kisses, we departed." She described the steamer and the seasickness of her fellow voyagers and noted the Episcopal worship services on board ("we are all devout attendants"). "Br. [George A.] Smith wishes to be kindly remembered to you," she wrote; "—says his health is now good But I think it is difficult to judge of his health by his face, for he has not shaven since leaving N.Y. and, of course, by this time there is but little of his face to be seen." She closed "with love to yourself & family."78

Eliza wrote to Brigham from London and Paris and sent to him from Venice a delightfully descriptive letter filled with gratitude for news from home and enthusiasm for the Italian landscape ("it seemed sociable to see the hills rising over above another, resembling our own mountain home"). She was pleased that Brigham would be making his annual winter trip to Utah's southern settlements, this time with his old friends, sympathetic non-Mormons Thomas and Elizabeth Kane.79 Eliza concluded, "My constant prayer is that you may enjoy a season of rest this winter—undisturbed by that kind of annoyance, which so signally characterized the last."80 She was referring to the legal actions against Brigham Young by James B. McKeans, chief justice of Utah's supreme court.81

Public issues fascinated Eliza, and her letters to Brigham from Europe included observations on government officials and systems of transportation and education. From her youth, Eliza had eagerly followed news of political events at home and abroad. Brigham respected her interest, having once made her a Christmas present of newspapers. He did not discourage
her emotionally charged political poetry and, judging from the content of her letters, may well have discussed politics more frequently and intensely with her than with his other wives. Private and public concerns came together in Eliza’s letters as they came together in her marriage. She developed strong and loving ties to the Young family and household, but both she and Brigham looked outward to a larger covenant family, the community of Saints. As husband and wife, they conversed about the progress of that community in establishing the kingdom of God. She upheld him in moving that kingdom forward and succored him both privately, in ways that are typically never fully understood, and publicly, in such ways as writing poetry and acting politically on his behalf. After 1867, he would support her in enlisting women to move the kingdom still further forward.

The public issues they worked on together included legal wrangling. In 1875, Brigham Young again faced a hostile Justice James B. McKean when Ann Eliza Webb, among the last women Brigham married (1868), initiated divorce proceedings. McKean held Brigham in contempt of court for refusing to pay Ann Eliza’s legal fees and alimony and sentenced him to a day in prison. Rallying to her husband’s defense, Eliza gathered the signatures of 829 women, who petitioned territorial governor Samuel B. Axtell “for and in behalf of President Brigham Young,” protesting that “the indignity imposed upon him was prompted by feelings of malevolence” and pleading for his immediate release “in consideration of the advanced age and feeble health of this venerable philanthropist.”82 President Young went to prison for twenty-four hours, a cold and stormy day in March, and—after McKean was removed as chief justice by President Ulysses S. Grant—eventually agreed to a judicial compromise in which he paid a small fraction of the alimony.83

President and Presidentess

Eliza raised her voice publicly “for and in behalf of President Young” on many occasions from 1867 to 1877, the last decade of his life. Her activism moved her beyond her poems, beyond the Young family and household, to the “social duties” she believed to be “incumbent upon us as daughters and mothers in Zion.”84 For the last two decades of her life, from 1867 to 1887, she directed several Latter-day Saint organizations, overseeing the work of the Relief Society, the Young Ladies’ association, and the Primary for children. “She walked out into the world of active things,” recalled Susa Young Gates, “and did more for the Womanhood of the Church than any woman, before or since her time”85 (fig. 3). Susa’s high praise may seem exaggerated, but it points to the critical role Eliza played in integrating women into the Church’s organizational structure, where they could
assume the responsibilities Latter-day Saint women still carry in ministering to women, young women, and children.

Eliza did not provoke the change single-handedly. It was the crowning achievement of her partnership with Brigham. President of the Church and presidentess of Relief Society, the two of them worked together to usher in a new era for Latter-day Saint women. They put into effect the pattern of familial and organizational partnership Joseph Smith had introduced in Nauvoo, an ideal that was not fully realized until Brigham and Eliza united to achieve it. The trust, respect, and rapport the two of them had developed as prophet and poetess and as husband and wife enabled them to overcome the misunderstandings that clouded women’s work in the 1840s and 1850s and to establish the Relief Society as a permanent and integral part of the organization of the Church.

Even though Eliza was not officially designated or set apart as the second general president of the Relief Society until 1880, more than a decade before that she began presiding over the work of the women’s organizations by the calling and authorization of Brigham Young. In this capacity, she was both known and remembered as “presidentess.” The term was the title nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint women used for their local and
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

general Relief Society presidents. Presidentess was the title Eliza had ascribed to Brigham's first wife, Mary Ann Angell, in 1846 (see fig. 2), anticipating, perhaps, that Mary Ann would be as Joseph's first wife, Emma, had been: the leader of Latter-day Saint women ecclesiastically (through the Relief Society) and liturgically (in temple ordinances). But, despite the precedents, "there was no assumption of power" in the behavior of Mary Ann Angell. Intelligent, highly cultivated, dignified, and spiritually sensitive, "Mother Young" guarded her privacy. She chose to live apart from the extended family in the busy Beehive House and Lion House, preferring to reside in the nearby White House (see fig. 3, p. 29). She was a loving, supportive companion to her husband but was not a woman to move into public life as a writer of petitions, organizer, and speaker. Eliza was just one year younger than Mary Ann Angell, and both of them were older than most of the other wives by one or two decades. This seniority and her experience and inclination fitted her for a public role, the role of presidentess that Brigham eventually accorded her.

When in 1867 Brigham called Eliza to firmly reestablish lapsed and waning Relief Societies, he had absolute confidence in her loyalty. As poet and as his wife of twenty years, she had proven herself an unfailing supporter. Brigham and Eliza exemplified the harmony they expected from the men and women they were teaching to work together institutionally—harmony that would enable the Relief Society to expand its responsibilities and accomplish good for its female members and the community as a whole. The Relief Society aided the bishops in relieving the poor—a particular concern during wintertime as immigrants continued to pour into Utah. It served as a parallel organization to the School of the Prophets in promoting the Saints' economic self-sufficiency. It furnished Latter-day Saint women new opportunities for self-expression and, as Eliza explained, for "cultivation . . . physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually." And it provided mutual support for women living the principle of plural marriage.

In her life sketch, Eliza recounted the circumstances surrounding her initial calling:

As I had been intimately associated with, and had officiated as Secretary for the first [Relief Society] organization, Pres. Young commissioned me to assist the Bishops in organizing Branches of the Society in their respective Wards; for, at that time, the Bishops had not acquainted themselves with the movement, and did not know how to proceed. To me it was quite a mission, and I took much pleasure in its performance. I felt quite honored and much at home in my associations with the Bishops, and they appreciated my assistance.
President Young announced from the Tabernacle pulpit in December 1867 his intention to firmly reestablish Relief Societies in local wards. In doing so, he was encouraging bishops to establish a partnership with their own spouses similar to the one he was creating with Eliza. Mixing humor with earnest counsel, he entreated:

Now Bishops, you have smart women for wives, many of you; let them organize Female Relief Societies in the various wards. We have many talented women among us, and we wish their help in this matter. Some may think this is a trifling thing, but it is not; and you will find that the sisters will be the mainspring of the movement.92

Brigham understood the power of women to forward the movement just as thoroughly as he understood the potential for conflict as they exercised that power. He had not forgotten the episodic and sometimes turbulent history of the Relief Society and of Mormon women’s gatherings over the previous twenty-five years. Nor had Eliza forgotten. The fact that Brigham chose Eliza to synthesize a new movement among Latter-day Saint women at this time suggests his deep confidence in her abilities and her loyalty. Although this is not the place for a full treatment of the early history of the Relief Society, some understanding of its operations in the 1840s and 1850s is essential to comprehending the significance of the mission Brigham later entrusted to Eliza. These were years of important learning for both of them.

**The Nauvoo Relief Society.** The Prophet Joseph Smith established the precedent for including women in the organizational structure of the Church. Eliza’s close friend and fellow Relief Society worker, Sarah M. Kimball, recalled that in the spring of 1842 Joseph persuaded her and her group of Latter-day Saint women in Nauvoo to abandon the “Ladies’ Society” they had independently organized following the model of the female benevolent, sewing, and missionary societies typical in other churches. Eliza had written a constitution for the group. But at Joseph’s invitation, the women gathered instead under his direction to be organized “in the order of the priesthood after the pattern of the Church.”93 Consequently, on March 17, 1842, Eliza was one of twenty women who assembled in the upper room of Joseph’s red-brick store to be organized as Latter-day Saint priesthood quorums were structured: with a president and two counselors. Emma Smith, wife of the Prophet, became the first president of the “Female Relief Society of Nauvoo,” as the group voted to call themselves. She selected two counselors, and this presidency “like the first Presidency of the church,” Joseph instructed, would “continue in office during good behavior, or so long as they shall continue to fill the office with dignity.”94 Eliza was elected secretary.

Though ministers’ wives normally led the benevolent societies established in their congregations, this presidency was distinctively Mormon in
form and tenure. Its officers were voted in and then set apart by the laying on of hands by priesthood leaders. "This society is not only to relieve the poor but to save souls," Joseph Smith taught Relief Society sisters on one of the several occasions he addressed them. The new organization's purposes were spiritual as well as temporal. Joseph introduced to the women sacred doctrines related to temple worship and told them their society "should move according to the ancient Priesthood." He declared on April 28, 1842, "I now turn the key to you in the name of God," granting women, as Elder Joseph Fielding Smith later affirmed, "some measure of divine authority particularly in the direction of government and instruction in behalf of the women of the church."95 Eliza recorded Joseph's remarkable teachings in her minutes. She also registered the society's two years of successful operation and significant labor on behalf of the poor. However, she did not record nor did she later discuss the conflict that arose in 1844 that would set the limits of women's new authority.

Relief Society president Emma Smith, "severely tried in her mind about the doctrine of Plural Marriage," recalled John Taylor, "made use of the position she held to try to pervert the minds of the sisters in relation to that doctrine."96 Meetings were officially suspended at some point after the last recorded meeting on March 16, 1844, at which Emma made a forceful declaration of her authority. Whether the move was made by the women themselves or at the order of Joseph Smith or, later, of Brigham Young is not clear. Certainly, however, following Joseph's martyrdom, Emma became increasingly resistant to the leadership of Brigham Young and the Twelve, due largely to their continuing commitment to plural marriage.

Emma may have attempted to call a meeting of Relief Society sisters in late February or early March 1845—about the time Eliza published her first poem in support of Brigham. Whether it was Emma's action or not, something stirred Brigham Young about that time. Indignant, he addressed a meeting of priesthood officials on March 9, 1845, delivering strong words "relative to things in which many of our Sister[s] have been engaged." He declared:

They have no right to meddle in the affairs of the kingdom of God[.] outside the pale of this they have a right to meddle because many of them are more sagacious & shrewd & more competent to attend to things of the financial affairs. they never can hold the keys of the Priesthood apart from their husbands. When I want Sisters or the Wives of the members of the church to get up Relief Society I will summon them to my aid but until that time let them stay at home & if you see Females huddling together veto the concern.97

Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve found it imperative to assert their priesthood authority in a divided Nauvoo community, where a number of claimants still disputed the Quorum's leadership. Regarding the
sisters, Brigham may also have been influenced by the prevailing cultural ambivalence regarding the religious role of American women. One historian has observed that women's benevolent societies "did not always go according to plan—the plan of male benefactors, that is." Women's groups could function as "a church within a church" and exert "a divisive force within the congregation." and it seems that this threatened to be the case in Nauvoo. Affirming that "one ounce of preventive is better than one pound of cure," Brigham voiced his determination to "stay these proceedings." The Relief Society remained inoperative until 1854.

**Women's Organizations in Early Utah.** The tension that surfaced in Nauvoo was still evident in subtle ways after the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. Eliza heard in December 1847 "many reports calculated to discourage the sisters in their efforts for improvement." She was referring to the informal meetings where women were gathering, as they had at Winter Quarters, to pray and receive spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues. "But," she noted with characteristic faith and resilience, "all things will tend to the instructions of those that will be profited & hold fast to the principles of righteousness." The sisters' meetings continued into February, often with "brethren present," and in most instances Eliza listed a sister as the one who presided.

In the early 1850s, some women in the Salt Lake Valley assembled in new service groups without provoking opposition. The Female Council of Health, established in 1851 with a cluster of midwives at its core, was formally organized with a president and counselors, apparently with the endorsement of Church leaders. Open to all women interested in health matters, it resembled the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo in its organizational form and some of its purposes. According to Richard L. Jensen, members "heard lectures by local physicians, discussed the use of faith and herbs in healing, attempted to design more healthful female fashions, spoke and sang in tongues, and enjoyed a social and spiritual interchange." To meet the health needs of the poor in the city, the council appointed representatives to most of the city's nineteen wards. Their assignment differed only slightly from the work of the Nauvoo Relief Society's visiting committees.

Looking beyond the poor in Salt Lake City, Matilda Dudley, Mary Hawkins, Amanda Smith, and Mary Bird initiated and formally organized in 1854 a society for the purpose of making clothing for destitute Indian women and children. Membership of this fledgling society, which operated outside official Church channels, continued to grow. Manifesting an increased openness to women meeting together, President Young did not "veto the concern." Rather, he introduced two safeguards to forestall the development of autonomous and potentially divisive women's societies.
First, in June 1854, he encouraged widespread organization of Relief Societies to provide clothing for Indians and relief for the poor, directing that these groups be organized within ward units and under the direction of bishops. Before the year had ended, some twenty-two ward societies were organized, primarily in Salt Lake City. Members of Matilda Dudley’s group dispersed to their various ward societies. Apparently, by the fall of 1855, the work of the Female Council of Health also merged with that of ward Relief Societies, and its meetings ceased.103

Second, Brigham Young published an authoritative statement regarding Relief Society’s relationship to priesthood leaders. In spring 1855, Church historians were compiling the official history of the Church for serial publication in the Salt Lake City Deseret News. In March, as the compilers examined documents for 1842, Brigham asked Eliza to submit to the Historian’s Office the minutes she had kept as secretary of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo and personally brought with her to Utah. Included in these precious minutes—a record that Joseph Smith had called Relief Society’s “Constitution and law”104—was the Prophet’s expansive address of April 28, 1842, wherein he conveyed to Relief Society women new authority and responsibility. Under Brigham’s direction, Heber C. Kimball, George A. Smith, and others substantially revised Eliza’s transcription of Joseph’s April 28 sermon. They clarified the presiding authority of husbands and priesthood leaders and minimized the possibility of women claiming independent authority in connection with their organization, thereby averting any replay of the conflict with Emma in Nauvoo.105 In September 1855, the officially revised version of Joseph’s sermon was published in the Deseret News,106 removing any doubt that ultimate authority in matters concerning the Relief Society rested not with its female officers, but with their priesthood leaders.

The Question of Woman’s Place. How Eliza reacted to the editing of her minutes one can only surmise.107 She did not take an active role in establishing local Relief Societies in 1854 and 1855. Indeed, evidence suggests that Eliza did not even participate in these early Relief Society meetings, though some of Brigham’s other wives, including Mary Ann Angell, attended.108 However, her 1854–57 poems reveal a persistent concern with woman’s status and destiny. An important cluster of these poems, written in the first person for a small audience of friends, provide a window on questions Eliza explored in the decade before Brigham called her to direct the work of Relief Societies.109 “And what is woman’s calling? where is her place? / Is she destined to honor or disgrace?” Eliza asked in her January 1855 poem “Woman.”110

Latter-day Saints were aware of the national debates regarding woman’s role and sphere that permeated American culture during the last half
of the nineteenth century, raising questions about women's political rights and economic opportunities and women's religious authority. The revivals of the Second Great Awakening that had sparked young Joseph Smith's prayerful inquiry landed thousands of women in Evangelical Protestant congregations, where they continued to pray and testify and to organize the sewing circles and benevolent societies that gave them limited access to the "public sphere." The notion of separate spheres for men and women flowered in nineteenth-century America, where, as a result of increasing industrialization and urbanization, men had gradually moved away from home and farm to workplace and market place (the "public sphere"), while women—at least middle-class women—remained in the home ("the private sphere"). New ideas about women's spiritual superiority and moral authority came into conflict with older traditions that required women to be submissive to their husbands or to "keep silent in the churches," though church membership was predominantly female.111

The religion of the Latter-day Saints did not officially assume that women were spiritually or morally superior to men. Women and men were admonished to obey the same commandments, receive the same gifts of the Spirit, and participate in the same holy ordinances. Men and women alike honored the power and authority of the holy priesthood, though women were not ordained to priesthood offices as were their fathers and brothers, husbands and sons.

Inveterate reader of newspapers that she was, Eliza could not have escaped noticing the national debates regarding women's rights. She would have felt, too, the sting of the epithets, such as "degraded" and "subjugated," hurled at Mormon women in the popular press with increasing frequency after the Church's 1852 public announcement that some of its members practiced plural marriage.112 Inclined to intellectual and theological exploration, Eliza spent the 1850s pondering and writing about the questions that swirled around her. Words she employed repeatedly in her poems—"calling," "station," "state," "position," "lot"—point to her preoccupation with maintaining a sense of dignity and finding her place within the Church's structure and theology.

In "Woman," Eliza defended her people while asking probing questions. Addressing woman's rights and woman's sphere, Eliza was quick to affirm that Latter-day Saint women needed no further rights, no broader sphere. She believed that well-meaning worldly reformers lacked the essential ingredient of true, revolutionary reform: the holy priesthood. Her poems explicitly express her respect for priesthood leaders, but she indicated an underlying tension when she gently hinted that women are "at times, neglected now— / Misjudged and unappreciated too."113 Eliza's poetry provided her a means of exploring her questions, but it did not fully
resolve them, nor could it in and of itself prepare her for the increased responsibilities she would assume in 1867 in connection with Relief Society.

**The Endowment House.** Resolution of her earlier questions and preparation for her future responsibilities seem to have come during the twelve years from 1855 to 1867 as Eliza fulfilled a different assignment. President Young, who held the keys to all priesthood ordinances, called her to serve in the Endowment House and to officiate in holy temple ordinances to be administered there until a temple could be completed. She referred to the Endowment House in Salt Lake City as the “House of the Lord” and was present at its dedication May 5, 1855—“a privilege that cannot be too highly estimated,” she noted. “From that time, when I have been in the city, I have been a constant officiate in that House,” she wrote in 1885.\(^{114}\) Brigham, who also officiated in temple ordinances himself, perhaps understood how much the calling would come to mean to Eliza.

Her labors there, as often as four days a week, helped her focus more intently on the theology that crowned the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, teachings Joseph had shared in part with the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo. It was a theology of eternal covenants and ties communicated most fully through priesthood ordinances administered in the temple. These holy ordinances bound disciple to God, husband to wife, parent to child, generation to generation.

Through temple ordinances, Eliza comprehended priesthood as the power to bring together, to forge continuities and connections, to create, to order, and to heal. Through the leadership role Eliza assumed in women’s ordinance work, she experienced—in a way she never could have otherwise—women’s power to minister and bless. The assignment expanded her opportunities for praying together with faithful Saints and for blessing her sisters, mostly, though not entirely, within the context of formal ritual. “Thousands of the daughters of Zion, have received blessings under her hands, and therefore with the utmost propriety she may be called a Mother in Israel,” one of her associates later wrote.\(^{115}\) In modern temples, the term used for a similar position is “matron,” traditionally the wife of the temple president. Eliza’s sacred work “as a Priestess in the House of the Lord” was different from her experience a few years earlier in informal gatherings where women met to pray and exercise spiritual gifts.\(^{116}\) She prized both experiences and encouraged women to be receptive to the Spirit in both settings. Most importantly, her ministry in the Endowment House enlarged her vision of woman’s eternal stature and destiny. A patriarchal blessing given her in 1857 promised her

the greater gift of enjoyment & of appreciating the blessings of the everlasting Priesthood[.] for the principles & knowledge of the everlasting Priesthood shall be increas’d upon thy mind for thou shalt enjoy & obtain an understanding
how all intelligences attain to their exaltations & have wisdom & knowledge to communicate to thy sex how they are to attain to an exalted station & upon what principle they are to dwell & associate with the sanctified.117

These promises were realized, both in experiencing the endowment and through Eliza's teaching women in the Endowment House and later in Relief Society meetings. Ritual is by its nature experiential, not merely philosophical or theological. As Eliza ministered to women in the Endowment House, she experienced the authority and order of the priesthood and learned the importance of order and obedience for all who hoped to receive the fullness of priesthood blessings.

Priesthood Authority and the Reorganization of Relief Society. From the 1855 dedication of the Endowment House until 1877, when a temple was dedicated in St. George, the Endowment House was the only place Saints could go to perform temple ordinances. Eliza's leadership role there brought her into contact with thousands of women. Meanwhile, women's leadership in the ward Relief Societies established in 1854 had virtually disappeared since the societies for the most part had lasted only three or four years. The 1858 Move South in the wake of the Utah War had disrupted ward structure and activities. The Relief Societies, dependent on bishops for direction, had faltered.118 But in the years following the Civil War, as Brigham Young and other Church leaders commenced significant organizational refinements, Brigham felt the need to "summon [the women] to my aid." He knew Eliza could help him. Secretary of the Relief Society in Nauvoo, she had preserved its minutes and was familiar with its organization and operations. Women throughout the Church knew and respected her. And Brigham knew he could trust her.

Whatever the conversation or conversations between Brigham and Eliza in 1867 when he commissioned her to help bishops reorganize ward Relief Societies, the two of them shared an understanding of the nature of priesthood power and of the importance of united effort. And they both knew the magnitude of the latter-day work and its ramifications for men and women in Zion and abroad, in the present and the future, in time and in eternity. They must have agreed, as Eliza later articulated, that "in the church and Kingdom of God the interests of men and women are the same; man has no interests separate from that of women, however it may be in the outside world, our interests are all united."119 The different restraints within which both men and women would have to operate were crystal clear, but the possibilities for their mutual achievement, growth, and contribution must have been equally evident.

The importance of women working under the direction of priesthood leaders and sustaining rather than resisting their counsel would become standard elements of Eliza's addresses to Relief Society. "No Society can
overstep the counsel of its Bishop—his word is law, to which, all its doings are amenable.” Her unqualified support of priesthood leaders might be viewed as mere acquiescence to male domination, reducing the Relief Society to what one writer in the 1970s has called the “sisterhood of the brotherhood.”\textsuperscript{120} However, for Eliza, as for Brigham, the priesthood was far greater than any bishop or even the prophet himself, all of whom labored within its order. It was power from God—power to govern, order, and minister in pure righteousness, power to sanctify relationships and generate unity. The Relief Society, Eliza wrote in April 1868, “is an organization that cannot exist without the Priesthood, from the fact that it derives all its authority and influence from that source. When the Priesthood was taken from the earth, this institution [that is, Relief Society] as well as every other appendage to the true order of the church of Jesus Christ on the earth, became extinct” until restored by Joseph Smith.\textsuperscript{121}

In the nineteenth century, supporting priesthood leaders and their counsel meant supporting plural marriage. Active opposition to polygamy had adjourned the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo in 1844. Such a thing was not to happen on Eliza’s watch. She continually affirmed that the reinvigorated Relief Society would rally support for rather than opposition to plural marriage. “Let the sisters be careful not to speak against polygamy,” she counseled women in Ephraim.\textsuperscript{122} “I was mortified last conference to hear president Young say, he was afraid to call A vote to see if the Sisters would sustain polygamy,” a scribe recorded her telling women in Lehi. Taking Brigham’s rhetorical device quite seriously, Eliza “told him he had not faith in the Sisters and if he had Called the vote he would have found that the Sisters would have sustained that principle.”\textsuperscript{123} Whether the principle was plural marriage or the program was grain storage, Eliza affirmed that Relief Society sisters would do as their priesthood leaders directed. “We will not quarrel with the Priesthood, altho’ it is in ‘earthen vessels,’” she would tell one Relief Society president.\textsuperscript{124}

Seemingly, Brigham and Eliza had reached a mutual understanding about restraints by learning from past difficulties, but more importantly, they had come to share a vision of the future, an expansive vision of the potential of Relief Society and the possibilities for Latter-day Saint women. Ten days following President Young’s December 8, 1867, announcement that bishops should now organize Relief Societies, a Deseret News editorial expressed optimism that “in the sphere which the President proposes [the sisters] should occupy, there is room for extended usefulness.”\textsuperscript{125} Eliza herself wrote enthusiastically for the News that the positions offered women through Relief Society were “replete with new and multiplied possibilities.” She promised, “If any of the daughters and mothers in Israel are feeling in the least circumscribed in their present spheres, they will now
find ample scope for every power and capability for doing good with which they are most liberally endowed.  

Just as Eliza learned the importance of working according to the order of the priesthood, Brigham Young learned the importance of giving women considerable independence in their Relief Society work. Indeed, he concluded that female dependence could actually stifle initiative and confidence. Expressing his faith in the abilities of the sisters of the Church, he counseled them in August 1869, "The females are capable of doing immense good if they will, but if you sit down and say 'husband, or father, do it for me' or 'brother, do it for me, for I am not going to do it,' when life is through you will weep and wail, for you will be judged according to your works, and having done nothing you will receive nothing." When he addressed Salt Lake City's Fifteenth Ward Relief Society a few months earlier, he encouraged the women to develop an entrepreneurial spirit, to consider entering into "book keeping, telegraphing, music, knitting, clothing, millinery, basket and foot-mat making" and to call on him "at any time" for counsel. It was "gratifying" to him "to see such marked signs of a lively action," he said.

A Partnership of Leaders. Energy abounded as this new partnership between Brigham and Eliza emerged, and their unity of mind and harmony of purpose was publicly pronounced. Following the end of the Civil War in 1865, Church leaders pondered their plans for the future and implemented significant changes. The impending completion of the transcontinental railroad intensified efforts at economic cooperation and self-sufficiency. Because the Civil War had shaken but not destroyed the United States government, the anticipated imminence of the millennium receded, and long-term strategies for building the kingdom of God moved to the forefront. Completing a temple, strengthening the Saints, and raising up a new generation in righteousness received increased emphasis. Culminating with Brigham Young's priesthood reorganization of 1877, structural refinement actually began a decade earlier with the establishment of the Parent Sunday School Union, the School of the Prophets, and the reorganization of Relief Society. The decade from 1866 to 1876 witnessed the expansion of the Relief Society and Sunday School and the organization of Mutual Improvement Associations for young men and young women, organizations of the Church that have continued to the present. Eliza was involved in forwarding all of these organizations as well as the Primary Association for children, which she helped establish in 1878, the year following Brigham's death. These institutions would help shape the second and third and successive generations of Latter-day Saints, who did not experience the gathering and persecution that had shaped Mormonism's first generation but upon whom still rested the injunction to be "an holy nation" (1 Pet. 2:9).
The possibility of building generation upon generation of righteous Saints was the vision Brigham and Eliza shared and worked to carry forth with their brothers and sisters in priesthood quorums and the newly reorganized Relief Societies. The partnership they welded as president and presidentess was a public partnership similar in some respects to the relationship between many Protestant ministers and their wives in nineteenth-century America. Historian Leonard I. Sweet explains that "the nineteenth century saw the minister’s wife emerge from the crowd to become the institutional leader of church women and to occupy one of the most coveted careers available to American women."129 Indeed, Eliza Snow emerged among Mormon women as such an institutional leader. At sixty-three years old, she assumed leadership of her sisters with amazing energy. She visited Latter-day Saint settlements throughout the Intermountain West, helping bishops organize the women in their wards. And the sisters arose by the dozens and then by the hundreds to take up their new responsibilities. She shared and articulated her husband’s vision, which she felt reached far beyond that of other American Christians.

The first responsibility of local branches of Relief Society, as indicated by their name, was to provide relief to the poor. President Young encouraged them in this endeavor, particularly in finding for those in need "something to do that will enable them to sustain themselves."130 In 1876, Eliza R. Snow reported that 110 branches of the Relief Society had collected and disbursed $82,397 over a period of seven to eight years, 73 percent of which was to relieve and support the poor, 16 percent for building purposes, 7 percent to help the poor immigrate, and the remainder to support other charities and missionary work.131

Economic self-sufficiency was Brigham’s objective, not only for the poor, but for the entire Mormon community. He challenged the women to sustain the self-sufficiency of the Mormon community through retrenchment. Wanting to maintain Mormon identity by asserting independence from outside market forces, Brigham Young challenged women to make and wear homemade hats and clothes rather than goods imported from the eastern states. They were to set their own fashions, to be thrifty in their households, and to find ways to do their own carding, spinning, weaving, and knitting. "What is there in these respects that the members of the Female Relief Society cannot accomplish?" he asked.132

Everywhere she went, Eliza quoted Joseph Smith’s counsel to the original Female Relief Society of Nauvoo as well as Brigham Young’s current counsel. “President young Said to me I want the Relief Society to step forward and help to sustain ourselves,” she told the women in Lehi. “We have been Called out of Babylon that we might not pertake [sic] of her sins but I think Some of us have brought Babylon with us and hug it to our hearts.”
Eliza rallied the women around the prophet’s program. “Sisters,” she said in Lehi, “the time has Come for us to stop this waste and sustain ourselves. the Lord is Calling on us through President young to Establish home industries, it is time the Sisters of the Relief Society awake up and Show that they are Energetic Handmadins of the Lord that will be Saviours on mount Zion.”

She wholeheartedly endorsed President Young’s campaign to reject materialistic excess, writing a full article for the Woman’s Exponent in praise of the virtue of simplicity and lives that exemplified it:

For instance, is there a greater [one] than Brigham Young? Is there, one on whom rests a broader fold of imperial dignity, as recognized by the upper nobility? (By the way[,] we do not consult the opinion of the lower courts.) And is there a more striking example of plainness and simplicity? Does not this very simplicity in him, beget love and admiration in the hearts of this people?

With vigor, Eliza pushed the home industries that Brigham Young deemed so important for preserving the Saints’ distinctiveness. She urged the raising of silk and the home manufacturing of cloth and clothing, carpets, hats, brooms, soap, and other goods Saints might be tempted to buy from “Babylon” and thereby diminish the financial means of the Saints. “Pres. Young recommends silk culture as one very profitable branch for the sisters, and offers, free of charge, all the cuttings they wish, from the Mulberry orchard on his farm,” she editorialized in the Mormon Woman’s Exponent in 1875.

Education was part of the campaign for self-sufficiency. “President Young wishes the Sisters to get a number of girls to learn Type setting and A number of the Sisters to learn medicine,” she said in Payson. Romania Bunnell Pratt, the first Mormon woman to get professional training in medicine, returned to Utah with her finances depleted following her freshman year at the Woman’s Medical College in Philadelphia. She paid a visit to President Young, who, turning to Eliza R. Snow, who was present in the interview, said, “See to it that the Relief Societies furnish Sister Pratt with the necessary money to complete her studies.” “We need her here,” said President Young, “and her talents will be of great use to this people.” Eliza fulfilled the task; her Relief Society sisters donated the necessary funds. Graduating from Woman’s Medical College in 1877, Dr. Pratt returned to Utah to practice medicine and teach courses for women in anatomy, physiology, and obstetrics. She later served as resident physician at the Relief Society’s Deseret Hospital in Salt Lake City.

Eliza saw Joseph’s and Brigham’s views of women as intertwined. “President Young has turned the key to a wide and extensive sphere of action and usefulness,” she declared, using words reminiscent of Joseph
Smith's pronouncement to the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo.\textsuperscript{138} Giving full honor to Joseph Smith for his role in organizing Relief Society according to divine revelation, she continued to honor President Young as his successor, the man chosen of God to continue the latter-day work for women and men. To sisters in Provo, she testified, "Joseph Smith considered [Relief Society] of importance, as not only relieving the poor, but he said it was to [do] our souls good, and attached much consequence to its moral influence. President Young manifests the same interest in behalf of the cooperation of the sisters and prays for them daily.”\textsuperscript{139}

She credited Brigham with extending Joseph's program for women to the young. "About five years ago president young requested me with others to organize the young ladies,"\textsuperscript{140} she explained with reference to the Retrenchment Association she had helped organize among the Young daughters in 1869. It was quickly renamed the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association, and she helped forward its organization in wards throughout the territory. In 1878, Eliza affirmed:

The organization of these Associations is as much a revelation as that of the Relief Societies; the one came through Joseph Smith, the other through Brigham Young, and if I was to choose between the two organizations, I should choose the one for the young, so many of whom, for the want of such spiritual culture, have gone to destruction.\textsuperscript{141}

Eliza Snow functioned as a confidante and advisor to President Young with regard to women's organizations and issues. Communication between them regarding women's work seems to have been close, frequent, and significant. With that work came a particular place of honor in the Lion House. "She held a most honored place in our household," recalled Clarissa Young Spencer. "She always sat on Father's right at the dinner table and also in the prayer room. He valued her opinion greatly and gave her many important commissions."\textsuperscript{142} REMarking on this arrangement, Susa Young Gates observed, "No wife was ever jealous of the seat of honour accorded to Aunt Eliza. Her superior gifts and tender spiritual sympathy endeared her to the wives and children as well as making her a womanly counsellor for father."\textsuperscript{143}

Expressing his full confidence in Eliza, Brigham extended to her a calling similar to that Emma had received in Nauvoo: "to teach the female part of the community."\textsuperscript{144} It was a call to preach, and it became one of the ways in which Eliza fulfilled the promise given her in a patriarchal blessing that she would "communicate to thy sex how they are to attain an exalted station."\textsuperscript{145} She later recorded the circumstances of the calling with conspicuous pleasure and pride:
"Not long after the re-organization of the Relief Society, Pres. Young told me
he was going to give me an other mission," she recalled.
Without the least intimation of what the mission consisted, I replied, "I shall
endeavor to fulfil it." He said, "I want you to instruct the sisters." Altho' my
heart went "pit a pat" for the time being, I did not, and could not then form
an adequate estimate of the magnitude of the work before me. To carry into
effect the President's requisition, I saw, at once, involved public meetings and
public speaking—also travel abroad.\textsuperscript{146}

She became well known for her sermons. In addition to admonishing
the sisters to succor the poor, to support the movement for self-sufficiency,
and to sustain their bishops and priesthood leaders, she also took great care
to teach her sisters regarding their access to the Holy Spirit and their divine
destiny as daughters of God. Her understanding of woman's place in the
eternal scheme was creative and expansive. "Do we keep in view that God
sent us here to hold high and responsible positions? We? Yes, we! The
daughters of the Most High God. Do we realize our responsibilities? And
that we have as much to do with the salvation of our souls as the
brethren?\textsuperscript{147} Eliza had considerable freedom as she taught women in local
settings. For example, to women in Payson in 1871, she expressed an idea
that she enunciated often:

Before the Fall it seemed Man and Woman were one. The same as the Father
and Son are one. After the Fall A curse came upon Woman She became sub-
servient to Man. Since that time Woman has differed in feeling some times
even in interest which should not be. . . . The Gospel is calculated to bring
back the Union which was the day before the Fall. . . . Wee anticipate
through the Gospel that Woman will hold the same Position as Eve did
before the Fall.\textsuperscript{148}

\textbf{Disagreement and Resolution.} Women responded to Eliza's sermons
with enthusiasm. Brigham seems to have strongly supported her instruc-
tion, although in one instance he publicly rejected her interpretation of
doctrine. The disagreement tested the strength of their personal relation-
ship and the durability of the new institutional partnership of men and
women under priesthood authority. Both proved to be solid.

On December 1, 1873, Eliza published an article discussing the Resur-
rection in the \textit{Woman's Exponent}. Her "Mortal and Immortal Elements of
the Human Body: A Philosophical Objection to the Resurrection
Removed" was so often requested by readers that it was reprinted in the
\textit{Exponent} of September 1, 1875. Though the article raised no public objection
from Brigham Young when it first appeared in 1873, in 1875 it drew from him
the following response:

In your issue of Sept. first, I notice an article written by Miss E. R. Snow,
etitled "Mortal and Immortal Elements of the Human Body," republished
from No. 13, Vol. 2, of your Journal. The cause assigned for its reproduction
in your paper is, that Saints and strangers were so interested "in its statements, and it had been so often called for that republication was decided upon."

I sincerely regret that this demand would have arisen, I had hoped that after its first publication it should have slept and never been awakened; but the fact of its having been so repeatedly called for, placed me under obligation to correct the minds of the Latter-day Saints in relation to the doctrine contained therein.

On some future occasion when I have time I may possibly take up the article in detail, but at present shall simply say, as the prophet Joseph Smith once told an Elder who asked his opinion of a, so called revelation he had written,—["It has just one fault and that one fault is, it is not true."149

Eliza's article attempted to answer objections to the idea of resurrection raised by "the worldly wise philosopher" who, observing the decomposition of the body and the recycling of its elements into other plants and animals, maintained the impossibility of restoring to all bodies the original elements of which they had once been composed. Her solution divided matter into "two distinct classes or grades," one of which would be subject to change and decay, and the other "capable of resisting every law of infraction or dissolubility." The mortal body "borrowed" from the first, but the resurrected body would be composed of the second, a "pure, invisible, intangible" substance that could not be seen except by "organs of sight formed of the same pure matter." For Eliza, the tangible elements of a mortal body were borrowed from an inferior form of matter. These elements would not be resurrected.150

Brigham saw it differently. He believed in one class of matter, not two. In his view, every element of the mortal body would be resurrected: "These very identical particles that now compose our bodies will be resurrected and come together by the power of the trump of God." Giving less credence to the worldly philosophies than Eliza, Brigham cast a skeptical eye at the goal of harmonizing. "There are many things which science, with all its tests, cannot find out," he said, "it is beyond the power of man, without revelation from God, with all his science to know whether these particles that compose our bodies go into other creatures to form the component parts of their bodies." Unlike Eliza, he affirmed that resurrected bodies were tangible. He contended that particles taken into the body gave energy but would not rise with the body in the Resurrection.151

Perhaps the respect with which the community regarded Eliza R. Snow triggered the concerted effort to correct any misunderstanding her article might have spawned. Brigham Young's letter rejecting her theory appeared in the September 15, 1875, issue of the Woman's Exponent. Two days later, the Deseret News published an article wherein John Taylor, at President Young's request, explained the President's position. Wanting to treat Eliza with the utmost respect, he declared her "beautiful theory, pleasing and
poetic," to be "in conflict with all the revelations and teachings we have had on this subject."\textsuperscript{152}

Brigham Young, as promised, responded at length but did not address his public remarks directly to his wife. At the October general conference, George Q. Cannon read Brigham Young's discourse entitled "The Resurrection." It included several pages of clarifying references from the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the \textit{History of Joseph Smith}, and was published both in the \textit{Deseret News} and as a separate pamphlet for distribution.\textsuperscript{153}

As one might expect of a loyal supporter like Eliza Snow, in the wake of President Young's pronouncement she retracted the ideas she had earlier expressed. "To whom it may concern," she wrote in an open letter published in the \textit{Woman's Exponent} and reprinted in the \textit{Deseret News}:

\begin{quote}
It will be recollected that an article written by me, entitled "Mortal and Immortal Elements of the Human Body—A Philosophical Objection to the Resurrection Removed," was published in the WOMAN'S EXPONENT in September, 1875, and that subsequently an article written and signed by Pres. Young appeared in the WOMAN'S EXPONENT in which the former was pronounced untrue.

Permit me to say that I fully concur in the views expressed by Pres. Young, and withdraw everything contained in my article at variance therewith, and trust that no Latter-day Saint may be led into erroneous doctrine through anything written by me.\textsuperscript{154}
\end{quote}

The only surprising thing about her disclaimer was its timing. This letter was dated March 19, 1876, six months after Brigham Young had declared her theories false. Resolution of this theological question in the public arena provides no suggestion of what occurred privately during those intriguing months. On that issue, the historical record is silent. Whatever fracture, if any, the episode provoked in the relationship between the two does not seem to have been long-lived.\textsuperscript{155} Brigham had exercised the authority of his office in safeguarding doctrine. Recognizing this, Eliza acceded to his correction. There seems to have been no lingering suspicion on Brigham's part, no foreclosure of Eliza's administrative and teaching responsibilities. The pattern of mutual trust and cooperation had been firmly established.

\textbf{Denouement.} In 1876, with Brigham's encouragement and full support, Eliza moved forward with a new venture. In October, when Relief Society women had just completed a summer-long display of their homemade goods in commemoration of the nation's centennial, President Young formally addressed them:

\begin{quote}
It would be very gratifying to us if you could form an association to start business in the capacity of disposing of Home-made Articles such as are manufactured among ourselves. . . . If you can not be satisfied with the selection of Sisters from among yourselves to take charge, we will render you
assistance by furnishing a competent man for the transaction of the financial matters of this Establishment.\textsuperscript{156}

The Relief Society Mercantile Association opened the Woman's Commission House within a month and operated it by themselves, not with the assistance of "a competent man," but under the personal supervision of Eliza. Brigham helped support the enterprise with goods from the Provo Woolen Mills. Eliza's last letter to her husband, then wintering in St. George, addressed questions related to the Woman's Commission House. Eliza worked to clear up the question of what commission should be granted on goods from Brigham's enterprises. The letter is most striking for the window it provides on the merging of the husband-wife relationship with that of the president-presidentess. In the letter, as in the relationship between the correspondents themselves, public and private concerns merged. Spunk and forthrightness were mixed with love and concern:

Dear President Young

The Commission Store has, so far, received better patronage and, as a general thing, a better spirit has been manifested towards it than we anticipated at its opening,...

Papers abroad make gratifying comments on the Store, and the self-sustaining movement in connexion with it, by the Mormon women of Utah....

Realizing that your time, strength and brains are all overtaxed, I should not have troubled you by introducing these matters, but it seems that somebody has written you and in doing so, made a mistake, which I think should be corrected....

One evening, in the parlor, (but, sick as you were then, and with so much crowding your mind, it is not at all strange that you do not recollect it) without my mentioning the subject, you proposed allowing 20 percent com. on your Goods, and again, when you were reclining in your chair in your room, I went in to see you on some business concerning the Store, you sent for br. John Haslem, and while giving him instructions about sending the Goods down, you repeated the same to him. Another consideration—we never should allow him or any other clerk to dictate terms of commission on your Goods. Although we are novices in the mercantile business, we are not green enough for that kind of management....

With love,

Eliza R. Snow

P.S. It makes us all happy to learn that your health continues to improve.\textsuperscript{157}

Although Eliza resigned after supervising the Woman's Commission House for one year, the enterprise continued until 1879, was revived in the 1890s, and was reborn again in the 1930s as Mormon Handicraft. Eliza would serve the Relief Society as its general president until her death in 1887. By then, she was widely considered the head of all the women of the Church and their organizations, the Relief Society, the Young Ladies...
Mutual Improvement Association, and the Primary. Under Brigham’s direction, she had begun a work whose ramifications are still felt in the Church around the world.

During the year Eliza supervised the women’s store, there hung among the homemade rag carpets, straw bonnets, and quilts a large blue banner with a motto embroidered in white: “In Union Is Strength.”\(^\text{158}\) It captured the essence of the movement for economic self-sufficiency and cooperation, the spirit of the women’s organizations, the substance of Zion itself where Saints would be of “one heart and one mind” (Moses 7:18). And it characterized Eliza’s partnership with Brigham. By trusting her, Brigham expanded his own ministry far beyond what he could have done himself. By following his counsel, she acquired responsibilities of a magnitude she had never imagined. The success of their cooperation indeed signaled for their contemporaries and for future generations the principle that “our interests are all united.”\(^\text{159}\) As a couple they had no posterity. But Latter-day Saint women and men working together are the spiritual descendants of this enduring partnership and have inherited from this father and mother in Israel a legacy of mutual esteem, solicitude, and collaboration.

Brigham Young died August 28, 1877. Eliza worked on tirelessly for another decade. Brigham’s death came two weeks after she had submitted to the press her second volume of poems, a volume she had dedicated to him. She wrote a long poem describing Brigham’s funeral and sent it on to the press so the book could begin and end with tributes in honor of President Young. There is little else to suggest the intensity of her mourning. Nearly a year after his death, as she met with sisters in Moroni, Utah, she recalled that “when last she met with the Saints of this place, our dearly and much beloved Prest. Brigham was present. But the Lord in his wisdom, has called him from our midst.”\(^\text{160}\) Eliza died December 5, 1887. The name on her grave marker is Eliza R. Snow Smith. But her interment in the private cemetery of Brigham Young would insure that her loyalties to both Joseph and Brigham would never be forgotten.

Conclusion

Brigham Young was the Lion of the Lord, and his wife Eliza R. Snow was the Lioness. With dignity, skill, and ferocious dedication and determination, they did all in their power to defend and protect the kingdom of God, to bring it forth in its fulness on the earth preparatory to the coming of Jesus Christ. They were forceful personalities whose talents and styles differed greatly. Yet, because of their shared faith in and love for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, there was remarkable strength in their union. Over the years, as Eliza wrote dozens of poems and songs sustaining Brigham in his prophetic role, he developed an abiding appreciation for
her loyalty and skill. Welcomed into Brigham’s extended family with charity, compassion, and friendship, Eliza learned that Brigham was a caring husband with confidence in her abilities. The warm affection, trust, and respect they developed in their marriage became the basis for a unique and fruitful institutional partnership. Joseph Smith had integrated women into the Church organization by founding the Relief Society. With mutual love for the Prophet and his expansive vision and with a belief in God and one another, Brigham and Eliza’s “unity of purpose and action” brought the Relief Society to life, as well as an organization for young women.\textsuperscript{161} They thereby built an enduring organizational partnership between Latter-day Saint men and women that has continued to bless Church members down to the latest generation.

Jill Mulvay Derr (jill\_derr@byu.edu) is a Research Historian at the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History at Brigham Young University. She received a B.A. degree in English from the University of Utah and an M.A.T. degree from Harvard University. The author wishes to thank Richard L. Jensen and Jed Woodworth for their editorial guidance and Rebekah Rogers Smith and Katie Farnsworth Bitner for their research assistance. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Smith Institute Symposium on Brigham Young, March 20, 1998.

1. Moses 7:18. Brigham Young’s daughter Clarissa Young indicated that Eliza was her father’s wife “in name only.” Clarissa Young Spencer and Mabel Harmer, Brigham Young at Home (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1940), 76. William Hepworth Dixon, a traveler and adventurer, wrote regarding Eliza: “I am led to believe that she is not a wife to Young in the sense of our canon; she is always called Miss Eliza; in fact, the Mormon rite of sealing a woman to a man implies other relations than our Gentile rite of marriage.” William Hepworth Dixon, New America, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1867), 1:241.

2. For example, Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 18:356, April 6, 1877.

3. Brigham Young, Journal, October 3, 1844, Brigham Young Office Files, Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives). Brigham Young’s journal uses the initials “M. E.” (marriage for eternity) and “M. T.” (marriage for time) to mark the performances of his marriage ceremonies. Elizabeth Fairchild (1828–1910) was married for eternity to Brigham Young on the same day he married Eliza for time, and the only symbol used on that day is “M. E.” See Jeffery Ogden Johnson, “Determining and Defining a ‘Wife’: The Brigham Young Households,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 20 (fall 1987): 60, 66.


5. Aside from Lucy Ann Decker, the six other plural wives married to Brigham Young before Eliza were Augusta Adams, Harriet E. Cook, Clarissa Decker, Emily Dow Partridge, Clarissa Ross, and Louisa Beaman. All of these but Augusta bore him children. The eight Brigham married between 1846 and 1865 who bore him children were
Margaret Maria Alley, Emmeline Free, Margaret Peirce (Margaret Pierce), Zina D. Huntington, Lucy Bigelow, Eliza Burgess, Harriet Barney, and Mary Van Cott. Arrington, *American Moses*, 420–21; Johnson, “Brigham Young Households,” 66–70. Following Jeff Johnson’s listing, I have included Louisa Beaman as a pre-1846 wife. I have followed Leonard Arrington’s practice of listing wives by their maiden names, even though some of them were married and bore their husbands’ names before marrying Brigham Young.


7. The four widows of Joseph Smith mentioned in this paragraph lived in Brigham Young’s Utah households. In addition to these women married to Brigham for time only, he took eternity-only vows with three other of Joseph Smith’s widows: Olive Frost, Rhoda Richards, and Mary Elizabeth Rollins. Brigham also married for eternity Olive Andrews, who had been sealed by proxy to Joseph Smith after Joseph’s death. Historians Jeff Johnson and Todd Compton both conclude that Mary Elizabeth Rollins married Brigham Young after Joseph Smith’s death. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 4–9.


9. Besides Eliza R. Snow, the women Brigham Young married who bore him no children include Augusta Adams, Susannah Snively, Martha Bowker, Ellen A. Rockwood, Naamah K. J. Carter (Twiss), Mary Jane Bigelow (divorced, 1851), Harriet Amelia Folsom, and Ann Eliza Webb (divorced, 1876). These women Brigham married for time only. The list of childless marriages also includes those of the thirty-one women—who were not generally part of Brigham Young’s household—whom he married for eternity only. Arrington, *American Moses*, 420–21; Jeffery Ogden Johnson, “Wives of Brigham Young,” copy of unpublished manuscript in my possession.

10. As quoted in Arrington, *American Moses*, 120.


12. Eighteen of these poems, according to my calculations, were published in the *Quincy Whig*, a non-Mormon newspaper.


15. Eliza’s poem “The Assassination of Generals Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith, First Presidents of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Who Were Massacred by a Mob, in Carthage, Hancock County, Ill., on the 27th of June, 1844,” was published as a broadside dated July 1, 1844. A copy is located in the Church Archives. The
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow

text was reprinted in “Poetry,” Times and Seasons 5 (July 1, 1844): 575; and in Eliza R. Snow, Poems: Religious, Historical, and Political, 2 vols. (Liverpool and Salt Lake City: Franklin D. Richards and Latter-day Saints Printing and Publishing Establishment, 1856 and 1877), 1:142–45, from which the line count is taken. Varying slightly in title from previous versions, the text in Poems includes the second line of a couplet that had obviously been mistakenly dropped in the earlier publications.


17. Eliza R. Snow, “Past and Present,” Woman’s Exponent 16 (August 1, 1886): 37. Eliza R. Snow and Joseph Smith were sealed as husband and wife June 29, 1842. Compton, In Sacred Loneliness, 313. The marriage is also described in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxey Snow (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 49–51. In her “Sketch of My Life,” Snow wrote with regard to seeing the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum following the martyrdom: “What it was for loving wives and children, the loyal heart may feel, but let language keep silence!” Beecher, Personal Writings, 17.


20. Snow, Poems, 1:165; Beecher, Personal Writings, 125.


22. Beecher, Personal Writings, 122; originally published as “Song for the Camp of Israel.—Let Us Go,” Millennial Star 10 (June 1, 1848): 176.


32. Brigham Young Office, Journal, July 2, 1861, Brigham Young Office Files, Church Archives. Several copies of the March 1847 “Journeying Song” are preserved in the Church Archives. One appears to be in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock, the other in the hand of William Clayton, both of whom were Brigham Young’s clerks, suggesting that this trail song was distributed among members of the pioneer camps. See Eliza R. Snow, “A Journeying Song for the Camp of Israel”; and Eliza R. Snow, “A Journeying Song,” William Clayton Collection, 1814–79, Church Archives.


34. Brigham Young to Sarah E. Carmichael, April 17, 1866, Brigham Young Letter Books, 8:299, Brigham Young Office Files.


38. Eliza R. Snow, Diary, March 9, 1846, as quoted in Beecher, Personal Writings, 119. All entries from Snow’s diary subsequently cited can be found under the given date in Beecher, Personal Writings.

39. Snow, Diary, March 29 and June 24, 1846.

40. Snow, Diary, June 1 and July 9, 1846.

41. Snow, Diary, January 1, 1847.

42. Snow, Diary, undated entry following August 29, 1846.


44. Snow, Diary, June 29, 1842, December 22, 1846.


46. Snow, Diary, January 26, 1847.

47. Snow, Diary, May 26, June 6, 12, and 18, 1847.

48. Snow, Diary, January 1 and 15, 1847.

49. Snow, Diary, undated entry following August 29, 1846.

50. Snow, Diary, March 18, 1847.

51. Snow, Diary, June 6 and 12; October 2 and 17, 1847. Margaret’s first husband, Morris Whitesides, died in July 1844, just seven months after they were married.

52. Snow, Diary, September 8 and 10, 1847.

53. Snow, Diary, January 4, 1848.


55. Snow, Diary, October 2, 1847; Clara Young to Brigham Young, October 9 [4?], 1847, in Beecher, Personal Writings, 291–92.

56. Snow, Diary, October 3, 1847; September 20, October 23, 1848.

57. Snow, Diary, November 1, 1848–June 28, 1849.

58. Brigham Young’s dwellings are described in detail in Arrington, American Moses, 168–71; and Susa Young Gates, “Early Homes of Brigham Young,” Susa Young Gates Papers, 1852–1932, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. Eighteen children were born to Brigham Young and his wives between 1849 and 1854, crowding the Log Row and requiring adjustments in living arrangements. In May 1854, Brigham arranged for a room to be built for Eliza in the Salt Lake City home of her brother Lorenzo. “Memorandum of Sundries” Book, 1853–54, Brigham Young Office Files. She may have lived there until the Lion House was finished.
60. Snow, Diary, June 24, 1846.
61. Spencer and Harmer, Brigham Young at Home, 65.
65. Spencer and Harmer, Brigham Young at Home, 85-86.
67. For etiquette of the era, see Emily Thornwell, The Lady’s Guide to Perfect Gentility (1856; San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1979).
68. Brigham Young, in Journal of Discourses, 17:159–60, August 9, 1874. See also Young, in Journal of Discourses, 2:90, October 6, 1854.
69. Provo Second Ward, Utah Stake, Relief Society Minute Book, 1869–82, September 1869, microfilm of holograph, Church Archives.
70. Snow, “Sketch of My Life,” 17. This sketch is dated April 13, 1885.
71. Eliza R. Snow to Mary Elizabeth Rollins, April 3, 1865, Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.
72. Brigham Young to Willard Young, June 17, 1871, in Dean C. Jessen, ed., Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 167.
73. [Eliza R. Snow], “Pres. Brigham Young,” June 1, 1871, Snow Papers.
74. Brigham Young to Willard Young, June 17, 1871, 167.
76. [Eliza] R. Snow to President Brigham Young, November 4, 1872, Brigham Young Office Files.
77. Eliza R. Snow to President Brigham Young, November 17, 1872, Brigham Young Office Files.
78. Snow to Young, November 17, 1872.
79. Brigham Young’s trip was chronicled in Elizabeth Kane, A Gentile Account of Life in Utah’s Dixie, 1872–73: Elizabeth Kane’s St. George Journal (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund, University of Utah Library, 1995).
80. [Eliza] R. Snow to President Brigham Young, January 3, 1873, Brigham Young Office Files.
81. Brigham was accused of “lascivious cohabitation”—overtly living with and having children by multiple wives—and of allegedly instigating an 1857 murder at the mouth of Echo Canyon. In order to appear in court, as was unexpectedly required, President Young had been forced to cut short his annual winter visit to southern Utah and hurry back to Salt Lake City through harsh midwinter weather. Then, having been refused bail, he remained under arrest in his own home from early January to late April 1871, when he was finally granted bail. Just days later, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that McKean’s grand juries had been illegally drawn, and the two indictments against Brigham Young were invalidated, along with 128 others that were also pending. Thomas G. Alexander, “Federal Authority versus Polygamic Theocracy: James B. McKean and the Mormons, 1870–1875,” Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 1 (autumn 1966): 87, 89, 93; Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1893), 2:592–604, 629–61, 681–89.
82. Ladies of Utah to His Excellency S. B. Axtell, March 11, 1875, petition signed by Eliza R. Snow and 828 other women, Snow Papers, Church Archives.
83. See Arrington, American Moses, 372–73.
86. President John Taylor set apart Eliza R. Snow as general president of the Relief Society on June 18, 1880, the jubilee year of the Church’s organization. At that time, Latter-day Saint women apparently understood that the general president of the Relief Society was to serve for life. The first general president, Emma Smith, who had not actively served in that capacity since 1844, died April 30, 1879. See Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 42, 121–22, 222–23.
88. “An Address to the Female Relief Society, Delivered by President Brigham Young, in the Fifteenth Ward Meeting House, Feb. 4, 1869,” Deseret News Weekly, February 24, 1869, 32.
93. The story of the original “ladies society” was later recounted by Sarah M. Kimball, who initiated it in connection with her seamstress, Margaret Cook. See Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 25–31.
95. Joseph Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith, as quoted in Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 37, 43, 47, 50.
96. John Taylor, as quoted in Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 63.
98. Sweet, Minister’s Wife, 154, 157.
99. General Record of the Seventies, March 9, 1845.
100. Snow, Diary, December 12, 1847.
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow


103. Patty Sessions was named "Presidentes[s]" of her Bountiful Ward Relief Society on June 10, 1854, and "presidentess" of the Female Council of Health on March 14, 1855. "Much good done in both societies over which I presided," she noted. However, her diary entry for September 1, 1855, contains her last mention of attending a meeting of the health council. Patty Bartlett Sessions, Mormon Midwife: The 1846–1888 Diaries of Patty Bartlett Sessions, ed. Donna Toland Smart (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997), 205 (June 10, 1854), 213–14 (March 14, 1855), 243 (September 1, 1855).


105. See Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, Women of Covenant, 74–75.


108. See Jensen, "Forgotten Relief Societies," 113, 123.

109. The small audience of friends was the Polysophical Society, a study group sponsored by Eliza and her brother Lorenzo at the "hall" in his Salt Lake City home. See Maureen Ursenbach [Beecher], "Three Women and the Life of the Mind," Utah Historical Quarterly 43 (winter 1975): 26–40.

110. Snow, Poems, 2175.


112. See, for example, the depictions countered in "Great Indignation Meeting," Deseret Evening News, January 14, 1870.

113. Snow, Poems, 2176.


115. [Wells], "Pen Sketch of an Illustrious Woman," 131.


119. Melinda Cook, “Minutes of the Organization Meeting of the Young Ladies Retrenchment Association of Cedar Fort Held in Meetings House April 21st, 1875,” Woman’s Exponent 4 (June 1, 1875): 2. For further discussion on Eliza’s work among the Relief Societies, see Derr, “Form and Feeling,” 22–29, 32–35.


122. Agnes S. Armstrong to Editor, July 26, 1875, in Woman’s Exponent 4 (August 15, 1875): 42.

123. Lehi Ward, Utah Stake, Relief Society Minute Book, 1868–79, October 1869, microfilm of holograph, Church Archives.


128. “An Address to the Female Relief Society,” February 24, 1869, 31–32.

129. Sweet, Minister’s Wife, 3.

130. Young, in Journal of Discourses, 14:107, August 8, 1869.

131. Eliza R. Snow, “The Relief Society,” 1876, Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.


133. Lehi Ward, Utah Stake, Relief Society Minute Book, April 23, 1875.


139. Provo Second Ward, Utah Stake, Relief Society Minute Book, September 1869.

140. Lehi Ward, Utah Stake, Relief Society Minute Book, April 23, 1875.

141. Eliza R. Snow, as quoted in L. D. Alder to Editor, January 17, 1878, in Woman’s Exponent 6 (February 15, 1878): 138.

142. Spencer and Harmer, Brigham Young at Home, 82–83.


145. Patriarchal Blessing of Eliza R. Snow.


147. E. Howard, “Salt Lake Stake,” Woman’s Exponent 16 (October 1, 1887): 70;

Armstrong to Editor Exponent, 42–43.


149. Brigham Young to Editor, September 8, 1875, in Woman’s Exponent 4 (September 15, 1875): 60.
The Lion and the Lioness: Brigham Young and Eliza R. Snow


151. Brigham Young, The Resurrection: A Discourse by Brigham Young, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Delivered in the New Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at the General Conference, October 8th, 1875 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1884), 3–4. In fall 1875, Brigham had reason to reflect personally on the Resurrection. Over a period of six weeks, he lost three loved ones: his wife Emmeline Free Young on July 15; his oldest and beloved son Joseph A. on August 5; and George A. Smith, his good friend and First Counselor in the First Presidency on September 1.


153. President Young’s sermon was published as The Resurrection: A Discourse by Brigham Young (see n. 151).

154. Eliza R. Snow, To Whom It May Concern, March 19, 1876, in Woman’s Exponent 4 (April 1, 1876): 164; and Deseret News Weekly, April 5, 1876, 152.

155. Eliza’s retraction may have been timed to coincide with April conference, but her six-month delay raises other possible questions such as the following: Did a humble and contrite Eliza make immediate personal apologies? Did a wounded and humiliated Eliza temporarily withdraw from the cordiality that had marked her relationship with Brigham? Did a stubborn Eliza demand the chance to argue the point? Did Eliza and Brigham continue to privately discuss the intricacies of Joseph’s teachings until she was persuaded Brigham was right?

156. Brigham Young to the President and Members of the Relief Societies in Meeting Assembled at the Council House This Afternoon, October 4, 1876, Brigham Young Letter Books, 14533–34.

157. Eliza R. Snow to President Brigham Young, February 10, 1877, Brigham Young Office Files.


