

ple ordinances. His journals constitute important sources of Church history.

Heber C. Kimball died June 22, 1868, from the effects of a carriage accident, ending thirty-six years of unexcelled, dependable service to the Church.

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EDWARD L. KIMBALL

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### KIMBALL, SARAH GRANGER

Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball (1818–1898) was founder of the Ladies' Society of Nauvoo, a suffragist, an advocate of women's rights, ward RELIEF SOCIETY president for forty years, and a strong presence in the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for much of the nineteenth century. Described by one of her associates as possessing "the courage to say what she thought," Sarah Kimball labored for the advancement of women, arguing that "education and agitation are our best weapons of warfare" (*Woman's Exponent* 20 [1 May 1892]:159 and 18 [15 Feb. 1890]:139, respectively). Such militancy was tempered, however, by her strong commitment to the Church and her loyalty to its leaders. Indeed, she saw little discrepancy between her devotion to the Church and her dedication to women's rights, since Joseph SMITH's "turning of the key" of power to women in 1842 had, in her view, led to the beginnings of the national women's rights movement.

Born December 29, 1818, in Phelps, New York, to Oliver and Lydia Dibble Granger, Sarah joined the Church and moved with her family to KIRTLAND, OHIO, in 1833 at age fifteen. While she did not detail her own conversion, a dramatic vision of the Book of Mormon prophet MORONI<sub>2</sub> experienced by her father made a lasting impression on her. She, however, was never content to live vicariously, either intellectually or spiritually. She was one of the twenty-three women known to have attended Joseph Smith's SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS in Kirtland, and she later urged the in-

clusion of substantive courses of study in her ward Relief Society, delivered strong addresses expounding doctrine, and spoke in tongues.

Perhaps most significant in her early adulthood was her formation of the Ladies' Society of Nauvoo, the antecedent of the Relief Society. Married at age twenty-one to Hiram Kimball, a wealthy Nauvoo merchant who later converted to the Church, she sought to help build the kingdom of God, which the Saints then saw as embodied in Nauvoo, especially in the temple. She and her seamstress, a Miss (Margaret?) Cook, determined to sew shirts for the temple workmen and subsequently invited other women to join forces with them in a ladies' society. When they approached Joseph Smith for his approval of the society's constitution, written by Eliza R. SNOW, he stated that although the constitution was excellent, the Lord wanted the women organized "under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood." According to Sarah Kimball's recollection, Joseph continued, "The Church was never perfectly organized



Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball (1818–1898), founder of a Nauvoo women's group, the precursor of the Relief Society, and president of the Utah Woman Suffrage Association. Photograph c. 1890, C. M. Bell.

until the women were thus organized" (Kimball, p. 51).

In light of her important early involvement with the Relief Society, it is not surprising that Sarah spent much of her life actively engaged in its work. After her 1851 move to Salt Lake City, where she taught school to support her family while her husband recovered from some serious financial losses, she was called in 1857 as president of the Fifteenth Ward Relief Society. She continued in that position until her death in 1898, also serving during twelve of those years as general secretary of the Relief Society under President Eliza R. Snow and later as a vice-president of the organization after its incorporation in 1892.

Sarah Kimball's tenure as ward Relief Society president was noted for its innovation and attention to the complete development of women. Her compassion and charity were legendary, and she organized the women of her ward to provide for the poor and needy. She directed their efforts to fund the first Relief Society hall, which functioned both as a store in which the women sold their items of home manufacture and as a meeting house devoted to secular and sacred education.

During her years of greatest involvement in the Relief Society, Sarah Kimball also became a major force in the suffrage fight as president of the Utah Woman Suffrage Association. Compared by one of her contemporaries to Susan B. Anthony, Sarah Kimball displayed the same courage and forthrightness in contending for women's rights. She argued not only for suffrage but for equal esteem of women with men. Further, many of her sermons spoke of the ultimate and divine equality of "the Father and Mother God" (*Woman's Exponent* 8 [1 July 1879]: 22; see also MOTHER IN HEAVEN).

Sarah Kimball died in Salt Lake City on December 1, 1898. A widow for thirty-five years following her husband's death in a steamship explosion while en route to a mission in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), she was survived by three sons and one adopted daughter.

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MARY STOVALL RICHARDS

#### KIMBALL, SPENCER W.

Spencer Woolley Kimball (1895–1985), twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1973–1985), came to the Presidency at the age of seventy-eight. Little new had been expected of his administration because of his age and long history of serious health problems, but his personal energy, broad vision, and openness to change produced a dynamic period consistent with the Church's growing awareness of itself as an increasingly international institution. Under his leadership, access to the TEMPLE and the PRIESTHOOD was extended, regardless of race; the number of missionaries greatly increased; administrative innovations significantly changed Church governance; and a burst of temple building occurred. His tenure proved to be one of the



Spencer W. Kimball (c. 1935) was a businessman and stake president in Safford, Arizona, when he was called as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1943. Courtesy Edward L. Kimball.