

level. In the wards and branches, members continued to find the opportunities for service, learning, sisterhood, and spiritual growth.

As President Elaine L. Jack (1990–) moved Relief Society toward a sesquicentennial consideration of its Nauvoo legacy, membership reached 2,784,000. Though the Relief Society's programs have changed substantially over its 150-year history in an effort to meet the changing needs of women and the Church, its basic organizational structure and essential mission have not varied significantly. Emphasis on simplification, diversity, and worldwide sisterhood in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in a basic standard format for Relief Society that affirms common goals and programs for women around the world. Through its changes and growth, Relief Society has exemplified its motto. Sister Jack stated, "It is no minor thing that the motto of the Relief Society is 'Charity Never Faileth'" (p. 74), for "charity is the pure love of Christ, which endureth forever" (Moro. 7:47).

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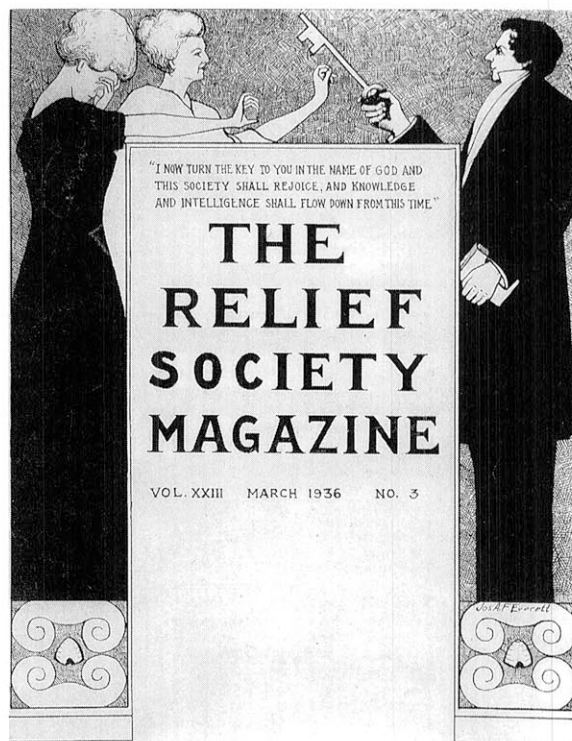
JANATH RUSSELL CANNON
JILL MULVAY DERR

RELIEF SOCIETY MAGAZINE

The *Relief Society Magazine* was the official monthly publication of the women's Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from 1915 to 1970. It preserves the history of the Relief Society for those years, with reports of each

annual general Relief Society conference held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, and with the talks of General Authorities and the Relief Society presidencies given at those conferences. It also contains articles of particular interest to the women of the Church, such as gospel topics, prose and poetry, housekeeping aids, recipes, pictures, and descriptions of Relief Society activities from near and far. Some space each month was devoted to the progress of women worldwide. It also published the Relief Society lessons, which were written by authorities in various fields such as the scriptures, art, architecture, social sciences, economics, the Constitution of the United States, world governments, and literature.

In its first issue, President Joseph F. SMITH expressed his hope that the magazine would be "entrenched about by the bulwarks of worthy and



The Relief Society Magazine, the official monthly magazine of the Relief Society from 1915 to 1970, published lessons, reports of annual Relief Society Conferences, and articles of particular interest to women. This cover portrays the organization of the society in 1842 and carries Joseph Smith's statement: "I now turn the key to you in the name of God and this society shall rejoice, and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time."

capable endeavor and enduring truth.” The magazine was owned and operated by the General Board of the Relief Society for all of its fifty-six years. Originally a forty-four-page, black and white publication, it evolved into an eighty-page journal with liberal use of color. Its readers liked its small size, which let it fit neatly into a woman’s purse. In 1966 the *Magazine* added a Spanish edition for its 6,000 Spanish-speaking subscribers.

Editors of the *Relief Society Magazine* looked upon their assignments as mission calls to further the work of Relief Society and strengthen the testimonies of its members. Its first editor, Susa Young Gates (1914–1922), was followed by Alice Louise Reynolds (1923–1930), Mary Connelly Kimball (1930–1937), Belle S. Spafford (1937–1945), and Marianne Clark Sharp (1945–1970). Vesta P. Crawford was associate editor (1947–1970).

From 1872 to 1914 Relief Society matters were disseminated in the *Woman’s Exponent*, a privately owned and edited women’s journal, which ceased publication in 1914 with the announcement of the official Church magazine for women.

The *Relief Society Magazine* had 301,000 subscribers in 1970, when it was incorporated into the *Ensign*, the Church magazine for adults. Relief Society lessons are now published in a manual each year.

[See also *Ensign*; Relief Society; *Woman’s Exponent*.]

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MARIANNE CLARK SHARP

RELIEF SOCIETY IN NAUVOO

Organized in 1842, the Female Relief Society of NAUVOO differed from other contemporary women’s church groups in that it was organized under the PRIESTHOOD direction of the Prophet Joseph SMITH.

The society began as a response to the need for provisions, clothing, and supplies for builders of the NAUVOO TEMPLE. On her own initiative, Sarah M. Granger KIMBALL invited a group of women to her home on March 4, 1842, to discuss



This plate depicts the organization meeting of the Relief Society on March 17, 1842. The Prophet Joseph Smith, who formally organized the twenty women present into a society, stated: “The Church was never perfectly organized until the women were thus organized.” Emma Smith was the first president, with Sarah M. Cleveland and Elizabeth Ann Whitney as counselors, and Eliza R. Snow as secretary. Church Museum of History and Art.

the possibility of organizing a sewing society to aid the workers. Eliza R. SNOW drafted possible by-laws and a constitution for the group and submitted them to Joseph Smith. He told her that there was something better for them than a written constitution and that he would organize the women of the Church as the priesthood was organized. He added that the Church would never be perfectly organized until the women were organized.

Minutes of the charter meeting name twenty women and three men who were present in the upper story of Smith’s red-brick store on March 17, 1842. Emma SMITH, elected president, chose Sarah M. Cleveland and Elizabeth Ann Whitney as counselors, Eliza R. Snow as secretary, and Elvira A. Cowles as treasurer.

At the first meeting, the Prophet redefined and expanded the object of the society. The women were to look to the needs of the poor, to search after those in need and administer to their wants, and to assist in correcting the morals and