

quent rearing of six children shortened her studies at Brigham Young Academy, but her love of books and learning was lifelong. A six-month course in dressmaking at age fifteen helped prepare her for future service on the Relief Society General Board, where she directed the Temple and Burial Clothing Department.

As General President of the Relief Society, one of her practical responses to women's needs during the Depression of the 1930s was to establish MORMON HANDICRAFT in 1937. This shop enabled Relief Society women to sell homemade gift items on consignment. The shop reflected President Robison's appreciation both for the handiwork of women and for their role as mothers in the home. It flourished under the Relief Society until 1986, when management of the store was transferred to the DESERET BOOK COMPANY.

Louise Robison believed that burdens could be lightened with song. A daughter later remembered that she sang, or sometimes whistled, while doing her work at home. "A singing mother makes a happy home," she said when she named the popular Relief Society choral groups Singing Mothers in 1934.

Several modest historic achievements can be credited to President Robison. She was the first Relief Society general president to address a regular session of a General Conference (October 1929). She was the first to visit the Relief Societies in Great Britain, and on that trip she also served as a delegate to the Tenth World Congress of the International Council of Women, held in Paris. In 1933 she instigated the erection of a monument to the Relief Society on the site of its founding in NAUVOO, Illinois. Later relocated in the Monument to Women gardens, it is thought to be the first Church effort to mark its historic sites in Nauvoo.

WELFARE SERVICES was the greatest concern of President Robison's administration. Her long-time friend and coworker Belle SPAFFORD said that Louise Robison "stressed the volunteer compassionate services. 'Go where you're needed, do what you can'; that was her theme" (Spafford). She practiced what she preached, and the principle of personal service she exemplified was a needed counterpoint to the more structured Church welfare system.

After being released from service as Relief Society general president in 1939, Louise Robison

lived in San Francisco with her daughter Gladys Winter. She died March 30, 1946.

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## ROGERS, AURELIA SPENCER

Aurelia Spencer Rogers (1834-1922), the first PRIMARY president of the Church, was born October 4, 1834, in Deep River, Connecticut, to Catherine Curtis and Orson Spencer, a Protestant minister. When Aurelia was six years old, her parents joined the Church and traveled to Nauvoo, Illinois. Years later, Aurelia's suggestions helped establish the Primary Association, the Church organization for children.

"Aurelia came by her concern for children through a long apprenticeship in mothering" (Madsen, p. 1). At the age of twelve, she and her older sister, Ellen, cared for four younger siblings when their mother died and their father was called by Church leaders to head the missionary work in Great Britain. The children lived on their own in WINTER QUARTERS, Nebraska, with limited provisions and then made the arduous trek to the Great Salt Lake basin. Wilford Woodruff, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote their father that "although in childhood, their faith, patience, . . . longsuffering and wisdom . . . [were] such as would have done honor to a Saint of thirty years" (Rogers, pp. 103-104).

At age seventeen Aurelia married Thomas Rogers. Through the next twenty-two years, she gave birth to twelve children, of whom only seven survived infancy. When three infants died in succession, she despaired and nearly lost her faith and belief in God; but a letter from her father came to mind and helped her gradually overcome her malaise. Her travail through the loss of children heightened her sensitivity to the preciousness of life and to the importance of nurturing the young.



Aurelia Spencer Rogers (1834–1922), founder of the Primary Association. Arriving in Salt Lake City from Winter Quarters in September 1849, she raised ten children. She was a delegate to the Woman's Suffrage Convention in Georgia in 1894 and the National Council of Women in Washington, D.C., in 1895.

Thomas and Aurelia Rogers lived all their married life in Farmington, Utah, a community sixteen miles north of Salt Lake City. Observing the rowdiness of children on the street, Aurelia Rogers wondered if an organization could be formed to teach them better deportment and moral and spiritual values. She brought the matter to the attention of Eliza R. SNOW, president of the Relief Society, who shared her concern and subsequently gained the support of Church leaders.

On August 11, 1878, Aurelia Spencer Rogers was set apart as president of the Farmington Ward Primary, the first Primary in the Church. Her counselors, Louisa Haight and Helen M. Miller, helped her organize the children into age groups; and on August 25, 1878, they held the first Primary meeting, with 224 children present, beginning

what is today a fully developed curriculum for children.

Although Eliza R. Snow and her immediate associates organized most of the Primaries throughout Church settlements, important impetus came from the work of Rogers in the development of Primary in and near Farmington, for which she received many honors. In 1897, in recognition of her role in founding the Primary, the children of the Church raised the funds to publish her book, *Life Sketches* (1898).

In the winter of 1894–1895, Aurelia Rogers also served as one of three Utah suffragist delegates to the Woman's Suffrage Convention in Atlanta and attended the Second Triennial Congress of the National Council of Women in Washington, D.C.

Although she suffered ill health for much of her life, Aurelia Rogers often said, "Cheerfulness and pleasant thoughts help to produce longevity" (p. 298). She must have practiced this principle, as she lived to be eighty-seven. She died August 19, 1922.

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## RUTH

The heroine of the biblical book of Ruth has been both a formal and an informal model of ideal womanhood for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: loyal, hard-working, converted, courageous, she makes the best of what is available and, not incidentally, is pleasing and desirable.

Individual Latter-day Saints and Church instructional manuals frequently cite as exemplary Ruth's departure from her Moabite customs, gods, and people in order to accompany her mother-in-law, Naomi, worshiping Jehovah in his land and adopting the ways of his people. While members have not traditionally emphasized cultural details of the story, they have considered important