

closely together in their mutual concern for nurturing the young.

Since the early days of the Church, women's service in the **TEMPLES** of the Church has contributed a profound religious dimension to their sisterhood. By participating in **TEMPLE ORDINANCES**, in which they minister by divine commission to their "sisters in the gospel," worthy LDS women can help ensure the eternal nature of family ties and create friendships in the process.

The sisters also sustain each other in personal ways. Like **RUTH** and **Naomi**, the women of the early LDS Church who left homes and friends to live in a strange land found comfort in each other's loving support. Women who join the Church today often need the same kind of support as do those who are uprooted in an increasingly mobile society. To an elderly woman living alone, sisterhood may mean the assurance that she is not forgotten but has friends and significant work to do with them, perhaps in a nearby temple. To a young mother it can mean practical help in her home and empathetic sharing of problems in a Relief Society class.

Although LDS sisterhood includes a rich diversity of cultures, and occasional disagreements over local issues, its most important aspect is still the bonding relationship of a common **FAITH**. As one sister said of that faith, "It is a bond that connects women with women and with the Savior across generations" (Peterson, p. 79).

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JANATH RUSSELL CANNON
JILL MULVAY DERR

SMITH, BATHSHEBA BIGLER

Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith (1822–1910) was the fourth general president of the **RELIEF**



Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith (1822–1910), fourth general president of the Relief Society, served from 1901 to 1910. Courtesy Special Collections Department, University of Utah Libraries.

SOCIETY, matron of the **SALT LAKE TEMPLE**, woman suffrage leader, and member of the **Deseret Hospital Board of Directors**.

Bathsheba was the eighth of nine children born to Mark and Susannah Ogden Bigler at Shinnston, Harrison County, Virginia, on May 3, 1822. She was reared in a genteel, upper South culture. The Biglers provided a substantial living for the family on their 300-acre plantation. Bathsheba was trained in management, hospitality, handiwork, and art, and was a cheerful, dignified, and prayerful woman.

At the age of fifteen, Bathsheba and her family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of the missionaries serving in the area, George A. Smith, later to be the youngest member called to the **QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES**, became acquainted with this tall, sophisticated southern belle; before he left Virginia, they pledged that "with the blessings of the Almighty in

preserving us, in three years from this time, we will be married.”

The Bigler family gathered with the Saints in Nauvoo in 1839. Following his return from a mission in England, George and Bathsheba were married on July 25, 1841. While in Nauvoo, they became parents of two children, George A., Jr., and Bathsheba. Their son was killed in 1860 by Indians while serving a mission.

From the time of her marriage, her life was closely intertwined with the Church’s movements and programs. She was one of the twenty founding members of the Female Relief Society. She received the ordinance of anointing from Emma SMITH and, with her husband, received the ENDOWMENT under the direction of the Prophet Joseph SMITH. Her relationship with the Smiths provided Bathsheba with a solid conviction of the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith.

Bathsheba was a diversely talented woman. She studied portraiture with William W. Major, a British convert, and carried her paintings of her husband, her parents, and Joseph and Hyrum SMITH in a covered wagon to Utah. She was a full participant in the heritage of leadership prescribed to LDS women; she gave blessings to the sick, washed and anointed women in confinement prior to childbirth, and served in leadership positions in the Church and community. A loyal and committed friend, she exchanged names with a childhood girlfriend surnamed Wilson, adding that name to her established signature.

During the early 1870s, Bathsheba made frequent trips with her husband, then first counselor to President Brigham YOUNG, through settlements north and south of Salt Lake City on preaching and pioneering tours. After the death of her husband in 1875, Bathsheba pursued with customary vigor her commitments to civic and ecclesiastical affairs. Representative of such verve, at a women’s meeting in 1870 she made the motion “that we demand of the Governor the right of franchise.” This proposal was subsequently signed into law, making the Territory of Utah one of the first places in the nation to give women the right to vote.

In addition to her service as a ward and stake Relief Society leader, and as second counselor and later general president of the Relief Society, Bathsheba also officiated in each of the temples constructed during her lifetime: Nauvoo, Logan, Manti, St. George, and Salt Lake. For seventeen years, she also participated with Eliza R. SNOW in

conducting sacred ceremonies in the ENDOWMENT HOUSE.

As general president of the Relief Society (1901–1910), President Smith maintained the forward pace of women. She sent representatives to national and international women’s meetings, sponsored nurses’ training and free services for the poor, and organized lessons for Relief Society classes. She promoted funding for construction of the Women’s Building, from which the programs for the women of the Church were directed. It was this building that Church leaders later elected to rename the Bishops’ Building, to accommodate the offices of both the PRESIDING BISHOPRIC and the women’s organizations.

Bathsheba Smith died on September 20, 1910, in Salt Lake City. Her funeral was held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

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HARRIET HORNE ARRINGTON

SMITH, EMMA HALE

Emma Hale Smith (1804–1879), wife of the Prophet Joseph SMITH, was born July 10, 1804, in the Susquehanna Valley in HARMONY township (now Oakland), Pennsylvania, to Isaac and Elizabeth Lewis Hale, the first permanent settlers in the valley. As the seventh of nine children, Emma spent a happy childhood learning to ride horses and to canoe on the Susquehanna with her brothers, while honing her quick wit among her other siblings. She attended school whenever opportunity permitted, including a year beyond the common grammar school education of her brothers and sisters. Tall and gangly as a youth, she grew to be a stately, handsome, dark-haired woman.

Emma met Joseph Smith when he and his father arrived in Harmony to work for an acquaintance of the Hales, Josiah Stowell (sometimes spelled Stoal). During the two years he worked in the area, Joseph twice asked Isaac Hale for permis-