desolation (1 Ne. 21:20–21). Those who accept “marriage” with the Lord are to experience joy as abundant as that of a barren woman who becomes a mother of many children, and the Lord consoles his people by saying, “For thy maker, thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; . . . For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee” (3 Ne. 22:1, 5–8; Isa. 54:1, 5–8).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DONNA LEE BOWEN
CAMILLE S. WILLIAMS

WOMEN’S TOPICS

[Women; their roles in the family, in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and in the community; and other issues of concern to them are the subjects of several articles in this encyclopedia. Also included are the biographies of women who have figured prominently in the history of the Church.

For a discussion of both doctrinal perspectives and historical influences on women’s roles, see Feminism; Mother in Heaven; Mother in Israel; Motherhood (cf. Fatherhood); Single Adults; Sisterhood (cf. Brotherhood); and Women, Roles of (cf. Men, Roles of). Related articles include Family; Marriage; and Plural Marriage.

For issues related to sexuality and reproduction, see Abortion; Birth Control; Maternity and Child Health Care; Sex Education; and Sexuality.

Articles discussing women in the scriptures include Eve; Mary, Mother of Jesus; Ruth, Sarah; and Women in the Book of Mormon.

Among Church Auxiliary Organizations, three are headed by women: Primary; Relief Society; and Young Women. See also Retrenchment Association. For biographies of individual women, including many who served as auxiliary presidents, see Fox, Ruth May; Gates, Susa Young; Horne, Mary Isabella; Kinball, Sarah Granger; Lyman, Amy Brown; Parmley, LaVern Watts; Robison, Louise Yates; Rogers, Aurelia Spencer; Smith, Bathsheba Bigler; Smith, Emma Hale; Smith, Lucy Mack; Smith, Mary Fielding; Snow, Eliza R.; Spafford, Belle Smith; Taylor, Elmina Shephard; Wells, Emmeline B.; Williams, Clarissa Smith; and Young, Zina Huntington.

Publications by and for LDS women have included Relief Society Magazine; Woman’s Exponent; and Young Woman’s Journal.

[See also Abuse, Spouse and Child; Divorce; Silk Culture; and Woman Suffrage.]

WOODRUFF, WILFORD

Wilford Woodruff (1807–1898), the fourth President of the Church, is especially remembered for his 1890 MANIFESTO, which led to the discontinuance of PLURAL MARRIAGE among the Latter-day Saints and to the assimilation of Utah into the political and economic mainstream of America. Prior to that event he led a strenuous life, notable for his remarkable success as a missionary and his diligence as one of the Church’s premier diarists.

Wilford was born in Farmington, Hartford County, Connecticut, on March 1, 1807. His father, a miller, worked hard to support a family of eight sons and one daughter. Wilford was fifteen months old when his mother died of spotted fever at age twenty-six. During his early years Wilford worked as a miller, attended school, fished with his brother Thompson, and engaged in the social life of the community. At an early age he became con-
cerned about religion and looked for a denomination whose doctrines and practices agreed with biblical Christianity. He spent much of his leisure time in reading, meditation, and prayer. Not far from a mill where he worked was a tree-covered island in a stream of rapid water. "I spent many a midnight hour alone upon that island in prayer before the Lord," he recalled ("Autobiography of Wilford Woodruff," Ms., p. 13). His quest eventually led him to Richland, Oswego County, New York, where he was baptized by Latter-day Saint missionaries on December 31, 1833. In April of 1834 he arrived at Kirtland, Ohio, where he met the Prophet Joseph Smith for the first time.

A month later, Woodruff participated in the march of ZION'S CAMP, a military company organized to help the Saints who had been driven from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri. Soon afterward, he began missionary work for the Church in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky in 1835–1836 and on the Fox Islands, off the coast of Maine, in 1837. His mission there ended in 1838 when, at age thirty-one, he was called to the Church's QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES. On his return from Maine to the new headquarters of the Church in Nauvoo, Illinois, he led a company of fifty-three converts in ten wagons nearly 2,000 miles. Brigham Young ordained him an apostle on April 26, 1839, at Far West, Missouri.

A short time later, he was among the missionaries sent to England. He traveled there twice, first with other members of the Twelve in 1839 (D&C 118) and then to take charge as president of the mission in 1844. During his first mission in England, some 1,500 people, including 200 ministers, were baptized under his direction.

After embracing the restored gospel, Woodruff found himself in touch with the heavenly powers he had sought as a youth. As a missionary in the southern states in 1835, he went into a small room to meditate one evening and was overwhelmed by the appearance of a heavenly messenger who unfolded a panorama of events that would transpire on the earth before the second coming of Christ. In London one night, as he contemplated teaching the people of that city, he was beset by an evil spirit that nearly choked him to death before he was freed from its power by "three personages dressed in white" ("Autobiography of Wilford Woodruff," 1883–1884, p. 302).

He was also beset with an unusual number of accidents during his life. He suffered broken bones in his arms and legs, split his foot with an ax, was bitten by a rabid dog, and was crushed and pinned by falling trees. He nearly lost his life from blood poisoning when he accidentally cut his arm while skinning an ox that had died of poison. He survived the wreck of a speeding train, nearly drowned, was frozen and scalded, and suffered several severe illnesses. Woodruff believed that the promptings of the Holy Spirit saved his life on several occasions. He explained his preservation as a divine approval of his record keeping. He had prayed to know why the force of evil harassed him all his life. "The only answer I could ever get . . . was: 'The devil knew you would write, if you lived'—and I guess he did" ("Address to YMMIA Officers," Apr. 8, 1883, HDC).

One of Woodruff's most enduring legacies is his diary, a meticulous multivolume work covering nearly the entire history of the Church in the nineteenth century: "I have been inspired and moved upon to keep a journal and write the affairs of this Church as far as I can. . . . You may say that this is a great deal of trouble. Very well it has been. . . . It has occupied nearly every leisure moment of my time. . . . But what of it? I have never spent any of my time more profitably for the benefit of mankind than in my journal writing" ("Wilford Woodruff Diary," Mar. 17, 1857, HDC). His diary contains the only record of many events and speeches of Church leaders. Although he was not a polished writer, his dedication, candid observations, and accurate reporting of speeches established his reputation as a devoted chronicler and brought his colleagues to his door to seek his services. In 1852 Woodruff was appointed clerk and historian of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and in 1856 he commenced thirty-three years of service as a CHURCH HISTORIAN. In addition to his diary, he left an extensive autobiographical record and some 12,000 items of correspondence.

Following his appointment to the Quorum of the Twelve in 1839, Woodruff was engaged in a variety of ecclesiastical and secular labors. He assisted in publishing the Times and Seasons and Nauvoo Neighbor in Illinois and the Millennial Star and Doctrine and Covenants in England. He was a member of the Nauvoo City Council, chaplain of the Nauvoo Legion, and a member of the Council of Fifty. He was a member of the pioneer company of Latter-day Saints to arrive in the Great Basin on July 24, 1847. He served in the Utah territorial legislature for twenty-two years and the territorial council for twenty-one; served on the
Wilford Woodruff was ordained an apostle at age 32. He served missions in the southern United States (1834–1836), eastern United States and to the Fox Islands (1837–1838), England (1839–1841), the eastern states (1843–1844), was Church Historian and presided over several Church areas and territorial boards. He became fourth President of the Church in 1889. Photo, c. 1888, by Charles R. Savage.

board of directors of Zion’s Co-operative Mercantile Institution (ZCMI); and was foreman of a Salt Lake City grand jury, president of the Cooperative Stock Company Association, president of the Universal Scientific Society, and chairman of the territorial Medical Board of Examiners.

Despite responsibilities that often took him away from home, Woodruff cared for a large family. Living during the years when PLURAL MARRIAGE was an authorized practice among the Latter-day Saints, he married five women: Flhoebe Whitemore Carter, Mary Ann Jackson, Emma Smoot Smith, Sarah Brown, and Sarah Delight Stocking. They bore him thirty-three children. He was not immune from the heartaches and frailties of domestic life. His marriage to Mary Ann Jackson ended in divorce, and another wife and thirteen children preceded him in death. His philosophy of family living is reflected in words he wrote to a daughter: “We are all expecting to live together forever after death. I think we all as parents and children ought to take all the pains we can to make each other happy as long as we live that we may have nothing to regret” (letter to Blanche Woodruff, Sept. 16, 1894).

In addition to his public and domestic labors, Woodruff was a devoted farmer. His Salt Lake City farm, consisting of a garden, an orchard, and herds of cattle and sheep, did more than sustain his family; he worked at farming as a calling and profession. For fourteen years he presided over the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society, which sponsored the annual territorial fair, and in 1855 was appointed president of the Utah Territorial Horticultural Society. He exchanged information and samples with horticulturists in the United States and Europe, seeking to improve a species of tree or crop, or to develop plants suited to the arid conditions of the Great Basin. Products from his land repeatedly won awards at the territorial fair. Not a large man (Woodruff weighed 135 pounds in his prime), he nevertheless had a reputation as a hard worker. He continued tilling the soil, when not away on Church assignments, until he was nearly ninety.

Among his few leisure pursuits, Woodruff was an avid outdoorsman. He enjoyed fishing and hunting from his Connecticut days until his later years in the Great Basin. In August 1892 he wrote to Forest and Stream magazine about a fishing and hunting trip on the Weber River in the Uinta Mountains, where in four hours he caught twenty trout, four of which weighed over four pounds, and noted that he lost a ten-pounder because the bank was too steep to land it.

At the death of Church President John Taylor in 1887, Wilford Woodruff first led the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and was then sustained as President of the Church at the General Conference in April 1889, at the age of eighty-two. He had not expected to outlive his predecessor, who was younger, and saw his appointment as a case of the Almighty choosing “the weak things of the world” to perform his work (“Wilford Woodruff Diary,” July 25, 1887). One observer noted that “he was not so learned, nor so eloquent a man as President John Taylor, but there was an earnest, honest zeal about him that convinced his hearers” (Cowley).
Woodruff's ordination as President came at a crucial time in the Church's history. Like other leaders, he had gone into seclusion to avoid imprisonment under provisions of federal antipolygamy legislation before word came of President Taylor's death. By the summer of 1890, legislation had been enacted that dissolved the Church as a legal entity, confiscated much of its property, and drove many of its leaders into hiding or prison. Federal legislation against polygamy had almost totally destroyed the effectiveness of the Church. For weeks President Woodruff "wrestled mightily with the Lord," and then, on September 24, 1890, after seeing in vision the consequences of inaction, he issued his now-famous Manifesto of 1890, which announced the end of the official practice of plural marriage (D&C, Official Declaration–1). On September 25 he wrote in his diary, "I have arrived at a point in the history of my life as the president of the Church . . . where I am under the necessity of acting for the temporal salvation of the Church . . . and after praying to the Lord and feeling inspired by his spirit I have issued the following Proclamation." He then declared his intention to submit to the laws of the land "and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise" ("Wilford Woodruff Diary," Sept. 25, 1890).

While this action opened the door to a resolution of the issues that divided the Church from the nation, it did not relieve the pressures on the aging Church president. The financial burden incurred by the antipolygamy crusade, the completion of the Salt Lake Temple, demands of Church education, increased welfare expenditures due to the 1893 depression, and costs of funding local industries created apparently insurmountable financial difficulties. In 1893 he wrote to a friend, "I never saw a day in my life when I was so overwhelmed in business care and responsibility as I am today" (letter to W. H. Atkins and family, Aug. 10, 1893). He did not live to see the financial relief he had hoped for. He died on September 2, 1898, at the age of ninety-one, in San Francisco, California, where he had occasionally gone to seek relief from the ailments of old age.

Although Woodruff's leadership was somewhat eclipsed by colleagues who were more articulate and astute in matters of finance and politics, his pen produced the instrument that led to Utah statehood in 1896 and opened the door for the twentieth-century progress and growth of the Church. During his administration, other milestones were reached. In 1890 he inaugurated weekday religious education classes, a precursor to the later seminary and institute programs of the Church. He supervised the completion of the Salt Lake Temple and presided at its dedication in 1893. He placed temple recommendations, which certify a Latter-day Saint's worthiness to enter the Church's temples, formerly issued only by the President of the Church, under the responsibility of bishops and stake presidents. Fast Day, formerly held on the first Thursday of each month, was changed to the first Sunday. In 1896 he signed a "political manifesto" that required all general Church officials, before they accepted any political position, to discuss the prospective appointment with presiding Church authorities.

A statement written while he was presiding over the Saints in England is a fitting epitaph to his life: "I am overwhelmed as it were in Mormonism for it is my life, meat, and drink and I do not expect to be anything else but a Mormon either in life or death . . . . It certainly looks like a marvelous work and a wonder that an obscure unlearned miler should stand . . . at the head of ten thousand saints" (letter to Aphek Woodruff, Apr. 18, 1845).
Those who follow this counsel and keep the other commandments of God are promised that they will have “health in their navel and marrow to their bones,” “shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint,” “shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures,” and “the destroying angel shall pass by them . . . and not slay them” (D&C 89:18–21; cf. Dan. 1:3–20; 2:19–30).

The promises associated with the Word of Wisdom are considered both temporal and spiritual. The temporal promise has been interpreted as better health, and the spiritual promise as a closer relationship to God. These promises reflect the concern of the Church with both the temporal and spiritual welfare of its members. They also reflect God’s concern with the condition of the physical body of every person, paralleling aspects of other religious health codes defining types of foods forbidden for health and spiritual reasons.

The introduction to the 1835 printing of the revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants indicated that it was given as counsel or advice rather than as a binding commandment, though the revelation states that it was “adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints” (D&C 89:3). Compliance with its teachings was sporadic from the late 1830s until the early years of the twentieth century. The Church encouraged leaders to be an example to the people in abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, tea, and coffee; but no binding Church policy was articulated during this time.

The prohibition movement, spearheaded by the Protestant Evangelical churches in America, focused on alcohol consumption as a political rather than a moral issue. The movement intensified the Church’s interest in the Word of Wisdom. There is evidence that Church Presidents John Taylor, Joseph F. Smith, and Heber J. Grant wanted to promote adherence to the Word of Wisdom as a precondition for entering LDS temples or holding office in any Church organization; and indeed, by 1930 abstinence from the use of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, and tea had become an official requirement for those seeking temple recommend. While abstinence from these substances is now required for temple attendance and for holding priesthood offices or other Church callings, no other ecclesiastical sanctions are imposed on those who do not comply with the Word of Wisdom.

Other dietary aspects of the Word of Wisdom have not received the stress that the abstinence