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Amy Brown Lyman and Social Service Work
in the Relief Society

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

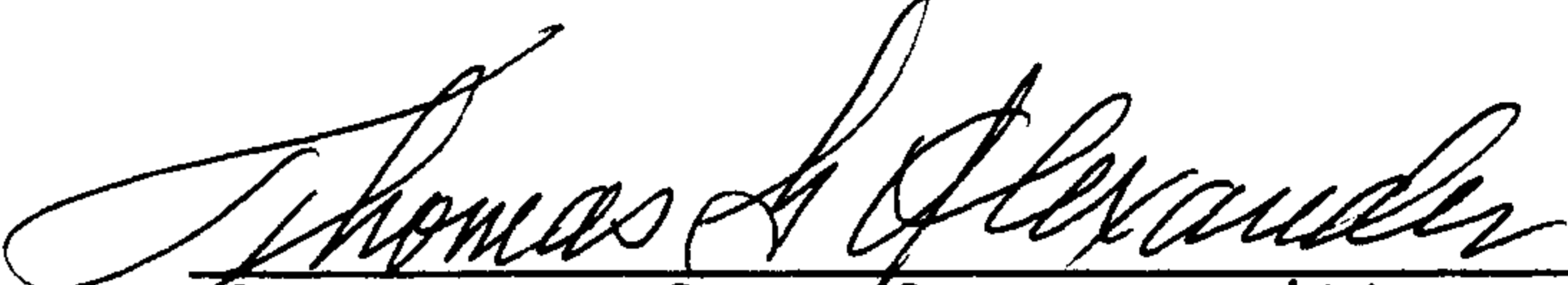
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
David Roy Hall
December 1992

This thesis by David Roy Hall is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.



Marvin S. Hill, Committee Chair



Thomas G. Alexander, Committee Member

11-23-92
Date



Paul Pixton, Department Chair

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It seems usual that an endeavor with such modest results would incur so many debts, but the research required by this project has made me the receiver of countless favors. First I must thank those who aided me in the selection of my topic. Thomas G. Alexander first brought my attention to the period through his volume Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930, which opened a door to a remarkable era in Church history and exposed me to a unique generation of Mormon leaders, among whom Amy Brown Lyman played an prominent role. Throughout my research he has shown continued interest and shared important insights. Marvin S. Hill, my committee chairman, encouraged this choice of topic. He gently prodded me along and ensured that I followed thorough historical practices and did not overly shy away from sensitive topics. This thesis is a much better work as a result.

Several other scholars provided information on the period. Jill Mulvay Derr generously shared insights gained through her extensive research on the Relief Society Social Services Department while Maureen Ursenbach Beecher was kind enough to let me read through an earlier draft of the Relief

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Among the most enjoyable aspects of my research has been the opportunity to interview a score of individuals who were closely associated with the Lymans over the years and who have given priceless insights into the personal side of their lives, without which this thesis would not have been possible. I can do no more than name most of them at this point. They include: Mark K. Allen, Keith Hayes, Richard Schreiner, Emmeline Wirthlin, Emily Pollei, Mary Nielsen, Gertrude Gaarth, Evelyn Woodruff, Melvin A. Lyman, Helen Lyman Henrie, Louise Lyman, and Evelyn Hodges Lewis. Amy's niece Beth Driggs was my first interviewee and her forthright and honest recollections of her aunt and uncle provided a standard against which to judge later interviews. Others that have shared recollections and insights are too numerous to list here.

Finally, special mention must be made of three extremely remarkable women whose interest in this project has made it possible. Each has shared many hours of their

time and precious mementos from their years of association with Amy Brown Lyman. The first of these women is Leona Fetzer Wintch, who remains a loyal friend and supporter of Mrs. Lyman and who continues to share important insights. Perhaps my best informant has been Vera White Pohlman, who began her association with Amy in 1920. Now in her nineties, she possesses a very keen mind and a detailed memory for facts and incidents stretching back more than seventy years. Finally, I must thank Amy Lyman Engar, who, as an orphaned child was raised by her grandparents and has shared valuable insights into their lives and character which were available nowhere else. Each of the three has answered countless questions and indulged me for long hours as I pursued my research. With them I feel a special kinship and feel honored to count them among my friends.

I reserve a special thanks for my parents for their continued generous support during these difficult years which has made this possible. Finally, I want to express my gratitude for the patient love and encouragement given me by my wife Teri.

For the help of all these people I am extremely grateful, but for any errors and shortcomings in the following work, I am alone responsible.

INTRODUCTION

On the ninth through the eleventh of October 1909, the women's organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known as the Relief Society, held its semi-annual conference in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square in Salt Lake City.¹ Largely unnoticed at that time, there occurred an event which, in retrospect, can be seen as a significant turning point for that organization.

At first glance, the report of this conference seems little different from others of the period: speakers treated the usual topics which ranged from home economics to the spiritually uplifting. There was a continued emphasis on preventative medicine as indicated by General Board member Phebe Beatie's report on the Relief Society's long running program for training public health nurses and Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon's presentation: "The Necessity of Hygienic and Sanitary Conditions for the Home and the State."² There seemed to be no indication that something was about to happen that would lead to far reaching changes.

¹ "General Relief Society Conference," Woman's Exponent 38 (September 1909): 20.

² "General Relief Society Conference," Woman's Exponent 38 (October 1909): 28-29.

On Tuesday morning, the ninth of October, Ida Dusenberry, a member of the organization's General Presidency, submitted for the assembled congregation's approval a list of women then serving, or being proposed to serve on the Relief Society's general governing board. Near the bottom was the name of Amy Brown Lyman who, at thirty-seven, became the newest and youngest member of that body.³

Despite her relative youth she possessed a foundation of experience which would suit her well for this new responsibility. Over the next thirty-five years she would play a crucial role in a series of revolutionary changes that would reinvigorate the organizational structure of the Relief Society and bring it to a new level of professionalism as it met the challenges of the twentieth century. Lyman was instrumental in the Church's adoption of modern social work techniques for use in the administration of charity and relief and responsible for the creation of the Relief Society Department of Social Services. Her activities took her to the Utah state legislature where she sponsored progressive legislation, most notably an act which resulted in a dramatic reduction in maternal and infant mortality rates. She mobilized the Relief Society to lobby for the creation of a state school for the mentally handicapped, and during the Great Depression she helped

³ Ibid.

secure much needed federal funds. She presided over the Social Services during a remarkable period of cooperation between Church and government; when the New Deal and the Church Welfare Plan forced a realignment of Relief Society activities, she worked hard to maintain a meaningful role for the rank and file of the organization. Her efforts brought her into contact with leaders of national and international charity and women's organizations and through her tireless activity, the church she served gained recognition and respect.

Amy Brown Lyman would prove to be one of the most important women in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and among its most significant figures in the twentieth century. Unswerving in her devotion to her faith, she was equally untiring in the service of her fellow beings. Though her life was marked by unprecedented distinction, it was also marred by tragedy and disappointment. Through it all she persevered and changed the Relief Society and the community in which she lived.

CHAPTER I
FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

In order to understand the character and achievements of Amy Brown Lyman, it is important to know something about her parents and the environment in which she was raised. Born to John and Margaret Zimmerman Brown, February 7, 1872, in the tiny farming town of Pleasant Grove, Utah, Amy Cassandra was John's twenty-third child. Margaret, the last of his three polygamous wives, bore ten of those children, six of whom lived to maturity. Amy was the youngest daughter of the family and the next to last child who survived to adulthood.¹

Her father was born October 23, 1820, in Sumner County, Tennessee, on the hundred acre farm settled by the family fifteen years before. When John was nine his parents found themselves unable to support their fourteen children on such a small tract and moved to a larger farm in Perry County, Illinois. With this change in location came misfortune beginning the next year when one of his sisters died, followed two years later by his father, and another sister

¹ John Zimmerman Brown, ed., Autobiography of Pioneer John Brown, 1820-1896 (Salt Lake City: John Zimmerman Brown, 1941), 148,449.

and three brothers within the next four years. He was left alone to care for his mother when all of his remaining brothers and sisters married and moved away within the next two years.²

Though hindered by the family's struggle for survival, John had long desired to gain a formal education and now, at age seventeen, with his mother's encouragement he returned to Sumner County to begin work at the Rural Academy. Though his formal study seems limited to two summers beginning in 1837, he described the experience as a "great benefit to me." "I was," he observed, "old enough to know the necessity of applying myself closely to my studies and there were none of my fellows that could excel me." At the conclusion of the second summer, he returned to Illinois where he began to teach school in hope of saving enough money to finance further study. He had concluded by this time to obtain a "finished education at all hazards" despite his "humble circumstances."³

Yet his plans soon changed when revivals in the fall of 1838 prompted him to begin an intensive study of the Bible. He was converted at a Presbyterian camp meeting in Tennessee and later joined the Missionary Baptist Church, where he became such a "lively member" that friends encouraged him to train for the ministry. While contemplating the matter, he

² Brown, Autobiography, 30-31.

³ Ibid., 17,31-32.

had his first contact with Mormonism when Elder George Dykes obtained permission to preach in his school house. He strongly opposed Dykes at first but soon became drawn to the missionary. Convinced of the truth of the doctrine Dykes taught, Brown was baptized in the latter part of July, 1841. From that time on he maintained an unwavering devotion to his new faith.⁴

He now gathered with the body of the Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois, and met prominent Mormon leaders including the Church's founder Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. Working for a time with those constructing the Church owned Nauvoo House, he then returned to his family during the spring and summer of 1842. The following winter he served a short mission to southern Illinois, then followed this with a more extensive tour in the southern states where he met and married his first wife, Elizabeth Crosby Brown, in Monroe County, Mississippi.⁵

When John and his wife returned to Nauvoo, they found that the prophet had been murdered by a mob and the Saints were in disarray. Apostle Brigham Young and the Council of the Twelve had assumed leadership of the Church and rallied them to complete the construction of the temple that Joseph Smith had commenced. Brown found work assisting in this construction. When the threat of impending mobs and action

⁴ Ibid., 31-32.

⁵ Ibid., 34,47.

against Church leaders by the federal government forced Young to make plans for an exodus to the far West, Brown took part in the move and left Nauvoo in 1846 to journey to Mississippi to lead a group of Mormon converts to Pueblo, Colorado. While the so-called "Mississippi Saints wintered" there, he traveled to Winter Quarters, Nebraska, on the Missouri River and joined the main body of the Church. The following spring he served as captain in Young's vanguard of pioneers, and with apostle Orson Pratt, was among the first of the Mormon party to see the Salt Lake Valley from the top of Big Mountain on July 19, 1847.⁶

Settling first in Little Cottonwood, he took up residence in Salt Lake City a short time later, then in 1855 moved part of his family to Lehi in Utah County. In 1863 he established his residence at nearby Pleasant Grove when Brigham Young requested him to serve as bishop. Brown family lore links this last move to a dispute which had split the tiny community into opposing camps. Brown, who had a reputation as a peacemaker, was called in to bring the two groups back together and restore harmony, a job which he performed successfully. He remained there as bishop for twenty-eight years, serving at the same time as mayor for

⁶ Ibid., 56, 66-78; Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1945), 4-5.

twenty, and as representative to the territorial legislature for nineteen.⁷

Brown learned soon after his first marriage of the Mormon doctrine of plurality of wives or Celestial Marriage but did not take his second wife, Amy Snyder, until 1854. The winter of 1856-57 brought the Mormon reformation, a revivalistic recommitment to the Church's leaders and beliefs, which prompted a surge in plural marriages. He joined in the spirit of the times and took his third and last wife, Margaret Zimmerman, in March, 1857.⁸

John Brown's polygamous family was fairly typical as far as the number and ages of his wives and the relationships between them. He was twenty-three when he married Elizabeth Crosby who was twenty-two; thirty-three when he married Amy Snyder, who was twenty; and thirty-five when he married Margaret Zimmerman, who was twenty-one. It was normal for a man in a position of leadership to be married to more than one wife, and while most polygamists had only two, it was not unusual to have three.⁹ Likewise,

⁷ Susan Elizabeth (Beth) Swensen Driggs Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of author ; Brown, Autobiography, 18, 140, 245; Andrew Jenson, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901-36), 1: 511; Lyman, In Retrospect, 5.

⁸ Brown, Autobiography, 138-40, 146-48.

⁹ Ibid., 50-51, 138, 146-48; Jessie L. Embry, Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 29-36.

Brown's families were typical in the number of children per family (two of his wives had ten each and the other had five) and in their living arrangements, with each wife having a home of their own, two of them located in Pleasant Grove and one in nearby Lehi. His wives and families seem to have gotten along well and were able to maintain amiable relationships despite occasional disagreements.¹⁰

As a polygamous husband, he was known for his gentleness and fairness. Each wife sought out his counsel and reportedly enjoyed his confidence. He worked hard to maintain harmony between them, but the system was an intrinsically difficult one. At least one wife, Margaret, taught her daughters to avoid polygamy.¹¹

While the difficulties that came with this lifestyle seem to be self-evident, less obvious strains came when Congress began to crack down on the practice of polygamy with the enactment of the Edmunds and Edmunds-Tucker Acts in the 1880s. In response, federal marshals began to stage a series of anti-polygamy raids which forced many of those engaged in the practice into hiding to avoid prosecution and imprisonment. John Brown joined them on the "underground" for eighteen months during the worst of the period. Though often close to home, his flights and secretive existence

¹⁰ Brown, Autobiography, 138-39, 147; Lyman, In Retrospect, 9; Embry, Polygamous Families, 37, 75, 139-40.

¹¹ Brown, Autobiography, 137, 146; Driggs Oral History.

made normal family life impossible. Despite this hardship, he remained devoted to the Church and never wavered in his faith, even when later events forced the eventual public renunciation and abandonment of the practice through the Manifesto issued by the president of the Church in 1890. He accepted the change in course and defended Church leaders against critics.¹²

Brown worked hard to instill within each of his children the simple values of integrity and hard work. A nephew observed "if Uncle John ever had a lazy hair on him, he shed them all before I knew him. He never knew when he was tired or when I was tired either." Daughter Amy shared her father's energetic temperament and propensity for hard work. As an adult, she was quick paced, and like him father, often outworked those younger than she.¹³

Brown taught his children strict self control with an emphasis on honor, integrity, and humility. He opposed corporal punishment and taught instead that "example and precept, with love and firmness would secure the desired

¹² Brown, Autobiography, 347-59; John Brown to A.C. Brown, April 26, 1896, holograph, n.p., original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author.

¹³ Brown, Autobiography, 20; Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Leona Fetzer Wintch Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author.

results."¹⁴ He was not a detached patriarch, and it was reported that none of his children escaped his watchful care.¹⁵ Even on the underground, he taught them through his letters which dispensed straightforward counsel tempered with humor. An example is found in a note written to fourteen-year-old Amy in June of 1886 while he was hiding near Hanging Rock in American Fork Canyon:

although I occupy a position on this rock conspicuously hanging over the road, no one can see me except those who strictly keep the Word of Wisdom [Mormonism's health code], say their prayers and go to meeting.¹⁶

Amy inherited her father's unquestioning devotion to the Church and internalized his philosophies. His favorite sayings as remembered by his children could easily describe her as an adult:

The man who cannot control himself will not be able to control others.
Temper outbursts harm the one who indulges in them more than they harm others.
Do not publish other people's faults.
Neither praise nor deprecate yourself.
If you cannot keep your own secret, you cannot expect others to keep it for you.
Do not tell all you know.
Spend less money than you earn.

Perhaps most descriptive of Amy was his maxim: "Do not grieve over the past, but prepare for the future."¹⁷

¹⁴ Brown, Autobiography, 19; Lyman, In Retrospect, 5,6.

¹⁵ Brown, Autobiography, 19.

¹⁶ Ibid., 354.

¹⁷ Ibid., 419.

Brown never lost his love of learning and continued his education through self study, reading extensively and frequently purchasing works of literature and history for the family library. He always regretted his own inability to gain a higher education and encouraged each of his children to continue their studies past the common or elementary level. All attended local Brigham Young Academy, and some continued at universities in the east.¹⁸

His personality was a combination of serious, single-minded devotion mixed with a disarming sense of humor. Photographs of him are revealing in light of what is known of his character: in his youth his eyes were keen with interest, in later years they had acquired a mischievous twinkle which betrayed his wit. In his early years, a prominent facial feature was a wide, serious, mouth, which by middle age had softened into a gentle, wry smile.

As it is important to know something of John's personality in order to understand Amy, it is similarly useful to consider her mother's character. Margaret Zimmerman Brown was born in Franklin County Pennsylvania, on March 25, 1836. Her father was a language teacher who had received a university education in Germany while her mother came from a family of educated civil servants. Each had come to the United States as children with their families and in 1816 they met and married in Pennsylvania. Converted

¹⁸ Ibid., 20.

to the Mormon church in 1841, they moved to Illinois in 1843 where they remained until they joined the Saints in Utah and made their home in Lehi in 1851. It was there that daughter Margaret met John Brown and became his third wife in 1857. Amy recalled her mother as "a strict disciplinarian," who kept tight reign over her household. "Some might have thought that she dominated the lives of her children and required too much of them," Amy observed, "and probably this was the case, but she was so wise and farseeing, and her judgement [sic] was so good, that we had more confidence in her ideas than we had in our own." Amy saw her mother as "forceful, dynamic, and efficient, yet she was tender and sympathetic." Others in the family remembered the same qualities and added that she was not outwardly emotional by nature.¹⁹ A son recalled her in the following terms:

She was a strong character, with high ideals and standards; was brave, fearless and outspoken; a typical example of the honest, straight-forward individual who has no use for pretense, evasion or hypocrisy; at the same time she was tender, sympathetic and forgiving.²⁰

Like her husband, Margaret valued education and transferred this appreciation to her family. She loved literature and sometimes read novels with her children and later her grandchildren, with whom she would share favorite

¹⁹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 7; Brown, Autobiography, 147; Vervene Hayes Pingree Oral History, interview by Loretta L. Hefner, 1979, typescript, 3, The James Moyle Oral History Program Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

²⁰ Brown, Autobiography, 147-48.

passages and discuss impressions. She was deeply interested in current affairs and eagerly awaited the arrival of the weekly paper.²¹

Amy's youth was spent in a tiny farming community located at the foot of Utah Valley's Mount Timpanogos. First known as Battle Creek in commemoration of an early skirmish between Mormons and Indians, it received its later designation of Pleasant Grove from a large stand of cottonwoods near the center of town.²² With only a few hundred residents it was a typical settlement on the Mormon frontier. Adobe had been the building material of choice among the town's early residents, but this was giving way to brick during the years of Amy's childhood. Following the pattern of other Mormon villages, Pleasant Grove's dirt streets were aligned in a comforting sense of order to the points of the compass. Farmers built their homes in town to provide their families with the advantages of community life while they traveled daily to and from their fields which surrounded the settlement.

Located about thirty miles south of Salt Lake City, Pleasant Grove was on the main road that ran north and south through the state. Two years before Amy's birth the telegraph came through, followed three years later by the

²¹ Pingree Oral History, 3.

²² Howard R. Driggs, Timpanogos Town: Story of Old Battle Creek and Pleasant Grove, Utah (Manchester New Hampshire: The Clarke Press, 1948), 43-45.

Utah Central Railroad.²³ While not isolated, the town remained rural in character and, during these early years, indoor plumbing remained a luxury and electricity was relatively unknown.²⁴

Most of its adult residents were veterans of Mormonism's pioneer experience and a strong sense of community existed among them. They renewed these bonds each year when they joined the rest of the state in celebrating the twenty-fourth of July, the date Brigham Young's party arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. They held parades ("non-commercial" as Amy later remembered) and organized programs which featured the town's pioneer residents and included local children in reenactments of the struggles and successes of the first years of the settlement. Amy's youth was filled with these experiences which gave her a lifelong appreciation for her pioneer heritage.²⁵

Residents of Pleasant Grove shared an active social life that went beyond these yearly celebrations. Frequent dances provided entertainment and opportunities to socialize and, in addition to their spiritual role, church meetings served much the same purpose. More so than today, they were

²³ Driggs, Timpanogos Town, 115.

²⁴ Lyman, In Retrospect, 9-10.

²⁵ Lyman, In Retrospect, 3; Amy Brown Lyman, "July 24, 1954, University Ward," typescript, 4, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL).

also places to resolve conflicts within the community. With her father the bishop and her mother the town sage, Amy found herself at the center of the town's activities. Her neighbors turned to her parents for advice and counsel, and she observed from her childhood how problems were solved as her parents struggled with the complexities of human nature.²⁶

Because girls significantly outnumbered boys in the Brown household, Amy often joined her sisters helping out around the farm. Their daily chores included milking the cows, weeding the fields, digging the potatoes, and gathering and drying ground-cherries, apples, and peaches "by the hundreds of pounds" to sell at market.²⁷ Together they also learned how to operate an orderly household and were taught the domestic skills of the day. They made most of their own clothing and many of their household goods themselves. When the styles of the day are considered, with their strict requirements for modesty, this can only be seen as a major undertaking:

We wore much more clothing than girls do today. Ours was all homemade, including our stockings. The underwear, of which we wore aplenty, was usually made of unbleached muslin which was hung out in the clothesline or laid on the grass and sprinkled often until it became soft and white. Our sheets and pillowcases were also made of the same material in a heavier grade. In the winter we wore at least two petticoats at a time--a heavy woolen one underneath

²⁶ Driggs Oral History.

²⁷ Brown, Autobiography, 424.

with a thinner one on top. We wore warm, well-lined wool dresses. On our heads we wore knitted hoods...; on our hands, home knitted woolen mittens. Sweaters were unknown in those days. In the summer we wore calico, swiss, and lawn dresses with several stiffly starched white petticoats.²⁸

Amy became an accomplished seamstress under her mother's guidance and mastered the arts of quilting and tatting.²⁹

Medical care in Pleasant Grove during the years of Amy's childhood seems to have been fairly typical of that in rural areas of the nation at the time. Because well trained physicians were few and far between, patients were often left to the care of folk remedies, medical books, patent medicines, and mid-wives. A revolution in health care had begun in the United States in the wake of the Civil War, but concepts such as antisepsis remained poorly understood; while vaccination for smallpox was not unusual, it would be decades until other childhood killers were similarly preventable.³⁰ Consequently, sickness and death were regular visitors to the community and formed a darker side of a of Amy's childhood. "Diphtheria," she recalled, "was

²⁸ Ibid., 10.

²⁹ Amy Lyman Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman; Transcribed from a talk given at the University of Utah Institute 'Women of the Restoration,' February 26, 1987," original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, 10.

³⁰ Lela B. Costin, Two Sisters for Social Justice: A Biography of Grace and Edith Abbott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 131-33. Costin provides a good summary of medical conditions in the United States during the decades immediately before and after 1900, especially as they affected women.

the terror of my childhood." When cases appeared in town, her mother, after consultation with Doctor Gunn's medical book, attempted to ward away the illness by providing each child with an asafetida bag (a fetid gum resin which gave them a garlic smell) to wear around their necks.³¹ After one attack of this dread disease took five children from a neighboring family, Amy recalled seeing their bodies passed through a bedroom window in black homemade coffins, then loaded on a wagon for a hurried trip to the cemetery. Another family, terrified after five of their eight children were stricken, set fire to their home and all of its contents in a desperate attempt to stop the spread of the illness. Other diseases periodically scourged the community, among the worst of which was scarlet fever which left many dead and some who survived with kidney trouble or deafness. Smallpox was another, but was avoided in the Brown household when Margaret followed Dr. Gunn's instructions and vaccinated each of her children with a piece of a scab secured from a successfully vaccinated relative.³²

Along with children, women fared especially poorly during this period. When Amy was ten, her sister Laura and

³¹ Any medicinal effect of the bag would seem to be rooted in the offensive odor, which by itself could influence potentially infectious playmates to avoid the Brown children.

³² Lyman, In Retrospect, 13-14.

five other women lost their lives to infection following childbirth. It was eventually learned that an unknowing midwife had carried the germs to each of them. Amy's own mother was a semi-invalid for much of her life as result of improper gynecological care during the birth of her children.³³ Margaret was not bound by tradition or folk beliefs, and as medical knowledge advanced, she did her best to adopt the latest practices. Determined to improve the lot of her daughters, after they reached maturity she arranged for a class in obstetrics to be taught for the benefit of Pleasant Grove's young women and insisted that each of her girls attend.³⁴

These early experiences strongly influenced Amy. The loss of childhood friends and neighbors undoubtedly contributed to her later concern and compassion for the sufferings of others, while her mother's emphasis on preventative medicine and her willingness to adopt recent innovations set a valuable example. In addition to this added sensitivity, Margaret Brown's poor health also brought Amy her first contact with the general leadership of the Relief Society. Coming to her home on several occasions to bless and comfort her mother were "dignified, reserved" Eliza R. Snow and "gentle, kind, honey-hearted" Zina D.H.

³³ Ibid., 13; Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author.

³⁴ Costin, Two Sisters, 131-33; Lyman, In Retrospect, 13.

Young. Their visits provided spiritual nurture to the young girl:

On one occasion we children were permitted in the room and were allowed to kneel in prayer with these sisters, and later to hear their fervent appeals for mother's recovery. They placed their hands upon her head and promised that through our united faith she would be spared to her family.³⁵

"This was an impressive spiritual experience for us," she recalled, "and the fulfillment of this promise was a testimony."

Like other Church activities, those of the Relief Society were a part of daily life in Pleasant Grove. Amy's "second mother," John Brown's first wife, Elizabeth Crosby Brown, served as ward Relief Society president in Amy's youth and led community efforts to comfort the sick and care for the poor. In 1876, at the call of Brigham Young, the Relief Society began to encourage the storage of grain in anticipation of times of need. Pleasant Grove's women joined others throughout the Church in fulfilling this assignment.³⁶ Gathering and drying ground-cherries, they sold them at market and purchased wheat and metal storage bins with their proceeds. These bins proved a curiosity to

³⁵ Lyman, In Retrospect, 38.

³⁶ For a good discussion of the grain storage plan, see Jessie L. Embry, "Relief Society Grain Storage Program, 1876-1940," (Master's Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974); for a shorter discussion, also by Embry, see: "Grain Storage: The Balance of Power Between Priesthood Authority and Relief Society Autonomy," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 15 (Fall, 1982): 59-66.

local children who climbed atop to peer in at the bounty they contained.³⁷

The Church seemed at the heart of nearly all of Amy's childhood activities and provided the setting for many early insights into her character. As a child, she was said to be extremely precocious, beginning to walk and talk by ten months. Her brother later described her as "healthy, alert, dynamic, and able to adjust readily to all childhood activities." At three she showed signs of her future direct and concise manner when she wandered next door to the town meeting house one Sunday where a man standing on the step greeted her with the question "Well, little girl, who are you?" "Amy Cassandra, three years old," was her reply.³⁸

She gained early teaching experience when, like her siblings, she customarily repeated at home the stories heard from her teachers at Church. Once she creatively related the story of Jonah to her younger brother. Recounting how Jonah had been thrown into the sea and swallowed by the whale, she continued:

He carried Jonah around for three days, but Jonah had brass buttons on his shirt, jumper and overalls and these made the whale sick, awful sick, so sick that he swam to the shore and threw Jonah out on the ground.

³⁷ Lyman, In Retrospect, 38; Amy Brown Lyman, "Grain Elevator Dedication, August, 1940," typescript, 7, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

³⁸ Brown, Autobiography, 424.

Now after this Jonah became a good man and did what the Lord wanted him to do.³⁹

Amy's own work in the Church began at age eleven when she served as secretary of the local Primary Association, which provided a weekly course of religious education for the town's children. She was still Primary secretary when, as a nervous young girl of fourteen, she made her first public address. At a meeting honoring the visiting president of the stake Primary, Annie K. Smoot, Amy was to deliver a brief speech entitled "The Value of Primary Work," and then read a short poem written by another of the local leaders. Following this she was to present the poem to the president.

After performing her part in the program, she returned to her seat only to discover that instead of handing Mrs. Smoot the poem, she had given her a red button which she had nervously twisted from her dress. "In my confusion," she recalled, "I rectified the mistake but discovered later a hole in my lovely new dress where the button had reposed."⁴⁰

Even as Amy's personality reflected the influence of each of her parents, in appearance, she was a clear mixture of both. Photographs taken of her as a child show the dark

³⁹ Ibid., 424.

⁴⁰ Amy Brown Lyman, "For the Deseret News, January, 1930," typescript, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI.

hair and eyes of her mother and the serious, intelligent look of her father. Like him, she seemed somewhat awkward in her youth, as if she had not yet grown into her features. But also like him, she had a look of determination in her eyes which reflected a strength of disposition that even at this early age had earned her the nickname "Ready, Aim, Fire."⁴¹

By the time Amy's youth in Pleasant Grove had drawn to a close, she had already acquired many of the attributes that would characterize her as an adult. She possessed a love for learning and an ability to work hard. She had learned self-control and had gained a wry sense of humor. In temperament she was energetic and forthright, sometimes to the point of bluntness. Perhaps most importantly, by the end of her years in Pleasant Grove, she had come to see service as a way of life, and unquestioning devotion to her beloved Church as a matter of course.

She was now ready to take the next step in her development. From an early age she had wanted to be a teacher and now, having completed the available schooling in Pleasant Grove, it was time to move outside its bounds.

⁴¹ Driggs Oral History.

CHAPTER II

BRIGHAM YOUNG ACADEMY AND BEYOND

In the fall of 1888, John Brown, accompanied by sixteen-year-old Amy and her eighteen-year-old sister Susie, drove his old farm wagon loaded with furniture and supplies to nearby Provo where the girls would begin their year's study at Brigham Young Academy. For Susie, this was already a familiar routine, but for Amy, it was a new adventure, one that she had long awaited and had eagerly anticipated.¹

The Academy was founded as the Timpanogos Branch of the University of Deseret in the mid-1860s by Warren and Wilson Dusenberry, who secured from Brigham Young the use of his Lewis Building in Provo to house the school. Financial troubles forced the brothers to sell out to the Mormon leader in 1875 and he, in turn, used this opportunity to further his efforts to resist the secularization of education in Utah. By 1877 he had secured a stipulation in the school's deed to the effect that it would admit only Latter-day Saints in good standing and that its teaching of academics would be supplemented with Mormon doctrine.

¹ Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1945), 17.

Financial woes continued to plague the institution and by 1887 Church subsidies were required to keep it in operation. Its courses were divided into primary, intermediate, and grammar departments for children; for older and more advanced students, an academic department offered course work in the humanities and sciences. In the late 1870s a teacher training or "normal" department was added, and it was there that Amy pursued her studies. At the time of her arrival, the Academy was still serving mostly younger children. A few years later, Academy records show that of the 700 students, only about thirty were college age.²

The school was forced by a fire from the Lewis Building, and in the fall of 1884 was relocated in more spacious, though still less than satisfactory, quarters on the second floor of a newly completed warehouse in Provo.³ Despite this humble setting Amy found the school "a surprise, a marvel and a delight," and observed:

It did not matter that the building was a plain, ordinary warehouse, nor that the desks were long, crude, table affairs, with chairs of the kitchen variety. It was the spirit and atmosphere of the institution which were so fascinating and satisfying. I had heard a great deal from my brothers and sisters and other former students about how fine the school was, how the spirit of the gospel permeated every quarter, and how the students regarded religion as the most important subject in the whole curriculum. I had

² Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, Brigham Young University: A House of Faith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 1-3, 5-8. Bergera and Priddis quote enrollment figures from 1892.

³ Ibid., 7.

anticipated much, but the reality exceeded my expectations, and I found the wonders of the school had not half been told.⁴

By this time Amy was a vivacious young woman who made friends easily, and at B.Y.A. she established many relationships that would last a lifetime. One friend from these years, perhaps Amy's closest, was Alice Louise Reynolds, who became one of Brigham Young Academy's (Brigham Young University after 1903) most noted and beloved educators. In addition to their personal contact over the years the two women shared service on the General Board of the Relief Society. Many years after their student days Alice remembered her early impressions of Amy:

What most of her associates remember I feel sure was a beautiful girl full of the spirit of youth and good nature with as lovely a pair of brown eyes and as beautiful brown hair as any brunette ever possessed. Gentlemen may prefer blondes but at Brigham Young Academy in those days they nearly all preferred her.⁵

Photographs of Amy from this period seem to bear out these memories, showing her eyes alive with energy and interest and revealing a beauty that matched her enthusiasm. Gone were the awkward days of her girlhood; now with her long brown hair worn in a pompadour, her features were fine and well defined. In contrast to later years when she did

⁴ Lyman, In Retrospect, 17-18.

⁵ Alice Louise Reynolds, "By Alice Louise Reynolds for the Ensign Club," typescript, no date, 1, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL).

not worry about the latest style, she was unafraid to accentuate her appearance with the newest fashions which often stood out in group pictures. Seeming to be involved in most of the school activities, she was the acknowledged belle of the campus.⁶

Her most enduring relationship stemming from these days was with a handsome, outgoing fellow student from Tooele, Richard Roswell Lyman. It was perhaps inevitable that Richard and Amy were drawn to each other. Both were extremely bright and shared a love of books and education. Amy was the most popular young woman on campus and Richard, handsome and charming, gathered hosts of friends around him and was at the center of nearly all the school's activities. It did not take long for their attraction to grow into love.

The son of Mormon apostle Francis M. Lyman, Richard was in many ways just coming into his own during these years at the Academy. Unusually solemn as a child, he rarely smiled (though he sometimes would jump for joy); according to one source "he was a strapping boy before he was induced to laugh."⁷ It is not known what difficulties or strict constraints had weighed upon his young mind, but whatever limited his youthful happiness had passed by the time he met

⁶ These photographs are found in the collections of the Manuscripts Division, HBLI.

⁷ Andrew Jenson, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901-36), 3:757.

Amy. Extremely open with his feelings to the point of being indiscrete, his boisterous manner balanced Amy's more reserved nature.⁸

Aside from the emotional fulfillment the relationship brought, Amy's association with Richard had other unforeseen but beneficial consequences. Through Richard and his family, Amy was brought into a larger sphere of experience and gained insights and contacts which later enhanced her ability to effectively pursue her goals in social work. She also drew the attention of Church leaders which facilitated her later call to the general Relief Society leadership.⁹

Amy's time at Brigham Young Academy was the first of a series of steps which increasingly took her outside the limits of life in rural Utah. Like her father and many of her forbears, Amy wanted to become a teacher and sought training in the Academy's normal school. Thriving on the environment there, she performed well academically and quickly became a favorite of the institution's director, Dr. Karl G. Maeser. At the conclusion of her studies, he asked her to stay on to train others in the Primary Department of the institution. Her salary was \$40 per month, paid one-

⁸ Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of author.

⁹ For a discussion on the role on kinship in the selection of the Mormon hierarchy, see D. Michael Quinn, "From Sacred Groves to Sacral Power Structure," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 17 (Summer 1984): 9.

third in cash and two-thirds in tithing scrip.¹⁰ The next four years as a member of the faculty proved both a stimulating and a difficult time for her. Well liked by both her students and the staff, Amy found that she was not suited temperamentally for the staid demeanor required from a person in her position during the Victorian era where she was expected to be circumspect in all her actions.¹¹ "I used to feel at times," she wrote, "that teaching in a Church school had its handicaps, especially for young women who loved fun, parties, and dancing as I did."¹² As a bishop's daughter she had been expected to set an example of proper conduct, and her childhood activities had been strictly regulated by her father. As a youth she not only was required to be accompanied by appropriate chaperons but her recreations had to meet her father's criteria for acceptability. As a student she had reveled in the relative freedom she had enjoyed, but now as a member of the faculty, she again felt constrained. Sometimes the burden became almost too great for her enthusiastic heart to bear, and once it even drove her to an uncharacteristic display of rebelliousness when she argued with Dr. Maeser about attendance at a masquerade ball.

¹⁰ Lyman, In Retrospect, 19-20.

¹¹ George F. Shelley Oral History, May 28, 1965, typescript, 1, Manuscripts Division, HBLL; Reynolds, "For the Ensign Club," 1-3.

¹² Lyman, In Retrospect, 21.

It was the social event of the season, hosted by Provo's elite, and all of her friends were attending in costume. In light of her position, Maeser felt that it would be inappropriate for her to follow their lead, though she contended strongly to change his mind, ultimately she acquiesced both to his counsel and her own sense of duty and joined others of the faculty who sat on the sidelines and watched from the "bald-headed row."¹³

Despite rare strains such as these, Amy remembered her relationship with Maeser in positive terms. She boarded during these years at the Maeser home, and shared a bedroom with their daughter Eva, and was treated like one of the family. In Dr. Maeser, with his combination of deep faith in Mormonism and old-world love for learning, she saw a role-model and a constant inspiration to improve her abilities.¹⁴

After four years in the primary department, Amy felt the time had come for a change so in the fall of 1894 she moved to Salt Lake City and began two years' teaching in the school district there. Richard by this time had gone East to finish his education at the University of Michigan and, though not publicly engaged, he and Amy were promised to one another. It was a very difficult time for them, one prone,

¹³ Ibid., 21.

¹⁴ Ibid., 18-19; Amy Brown Lyman, "Dearest Eva Maeser Crandall," holograph, 2, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI.

like most long distance courtships, to insecurity and misunderstanding. An example is provided in a letter Richard wrote from Ann Arbor in the wake of a previous disagreement where he, clearly insecure in the relationship, pled for reassurance of Amy's continued affections.¹⁵

Richard's father, Francis M. counseled him not to procrastinate their marriage, but Amy's father did not approve; Richard first had to complete his studies before John Brown was willing to give his daughter in marriage.¹⁶

Amy revealed her own reluctance to marry in a letter written to her sister Margaret's widower, Will Hayes, in the winter of 1895. Richard was then completing his studies in Ann Arbor and Amy planned to attend his graduation ceremonies. Having never been out of Utah, and fearing that she would "never get East again," she hoped to arrange with Hayes, then nearing the end of his term of service as a missionary in the Eastern States Mission, to take an extended tour together of the eastern United States.

¹⁵ Richard R. Lyman to Amy Brown, February 7, 1894, holograph, n.p., original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in the possession of the author.

¹⁶ Francis M. Lyman to Richard R. Lyman, March 3, 1891, typescript, n.p., original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author; Engar Oral History. Richard had made his intentions known to Amy's father as early as the summer of 1889. Though well acquainted with Richard's father, John Brown was willing to take his time to make a careful assessment of this would-be son-in-law. See John Brown to Richard R. Lyman, September 16, 1889, holograph, n.p., original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author.

Particularly interested in historical sites around New York and Boston, she proposed that they could travel cheaply and see "about as much as any other two 'hayseeds.'" Wisely, she planned to delay telling her mother until all the arrangements had been made.¹⁷

The letter is important for more than its information about Amy's desire to see the world, for it reveals a great deal about a young woman who was chaffing against the rigid constraints of the Victorian era. Women were considered delicate creatures who needed to safeguard their fragile health, and they were to avoid careers outside the home after marriage for fear that they would only strain their minds and weaken their constitutions. Amy felt limited by these perceptions. While reassuring Hayes that she did not want to "ruin" herself, she felt that her health was as good as any of her girlfriends who had already married. In response to an earlier question from Hayes as to whether she was ready for "the event" (marriage), she showed some of the ambition that would later lead her to great achievements. "I want," she replied "to see & hear a few more things before I sink into oblivion." By this point in her life, Amy clearly felt uncomfortable with the quiet and uneventful domestic role Victorian society had prepared for her.¹⁸

¹⁷ Amy Brown to Will Hayes, February 24, 1895, holograph, 1a, original in possession of Barbara Carlson, copy in possession of the author.

¹⁸ Ibid.

As it turned out, Hayes became ill and the trip as planned did not take place. Instead, in company with Francis M. Lyman, she traveled to Ann Arbor and attended Richard's commencement activities. His outgoing personality had proved as popular at Michigan as it had at Brigham Young, and he was elected president by his class in his sophomore year, an honor which he enjoyed again as a senior. Proud of his accomplishments there, Amy was less thrilled with the attention he received from the Michigan women students. "This set me to thinking," she observed.¹⁹

While the loss of her traveling companion altered Amy's plans to see the East, it did not cancel them. While Richard returned to Utah, she made new arrangements to continue to New York City with a group of buyers and their families from Utah's Z.C.M.I. department store. "It would be difficult to explain how thrilling New York was to the women members of the party," she wrote. "Born and reared as I had been in a small village, this was especially the case with me." In years to come she would see the city from the perspective of a social worker, but on this first trip she enjoyed the sights as a tourist: "The elevated railroad and the subway were equally mysterious and the theaters and business district marvelous."²⁰ From New York she returned by way of Illinois where she visited her father's old home

¹⁹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 24-25.

²⁰ Ibid., 25; Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 3:758.

in Perry County. John Brown was seen as sort of a lost sheep by his siblings when he joined the Mormon church, but Church business took him through his old home many times, where he became a favorite uncle to the family and was greeted warmly on each arrival. As the first of his children to visit, Amy was given a hearty welcome and introduced to a host of her father's nieces, nephews, and cousins.²¹

With his undergraduate studies now at an end, Richard was left with a large debt of nearly \$2,500 owed to his father at the rate of 10 percent interest which further delayed his plans to marry Amy. While she taught for another year in the Salt Lake schools, Richard accepted a position at Brigham Young Academy as principal of the high school and head of the Department of Mathematics and Physics. He also began a long association with the Church's Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association (Y.M.M.I.A.) when he was chosen as counselor in the presidency of the Utah Stake branch of the organization.²²

Finally, on September 9, 1896, they were married in the Salt Lake Temple by Apostle Joseph F. Smith, a cousin of the Lymans and known to them as "Uncle Joseph." A reception followed at the home of Richard's sister Annie and her husband William H. King, who had already started on the long

²¹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 25-26.

²² Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 3:758-760.

career in Utah politics that would eventually take him to the United States Senate.²³

Richard began as an instructor at the University of Utah that fall while the couple arranged to rent a house directly across the street from the campus, then located on Second North and Second West in Salt Lake City. Their new home had been previously supplied with a wagon-load of furniture and goods brought from Pleasant Grove. In addition to household items their possessions included livestock. "Being country bred," Amy recorded, "we could not conceive of a real home without at least a cow and some chickens...."²⁴

Amy took full advantage of her proximity to the University to continue her education, enrolling in English literature and history courses. Her enthusiasm for learning was bolstered during this period when she was invited to join the Author's Club, a group of prominent women who met regularly to study and socialize.²⁵ This association created important contacts which later helped open doors for her.

²³ Lyman, In Retrospect, 27; Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 1:787.

²⁴ Lyman, In Retrospect, 27.

²⁵ Amy Lyman Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman: Transcribed from a talk given at the University of Utah Institute 'Women of the Restoration,' February 26, 1987," 5, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author.

One year and three months after their marriage, a child, Wendell Brown Lyman, was born on December 18, 1897. As their household grew and demands on their pocketbook increased, Amy honed her economizing skills as she and Richard struggled to pay off his school debt. Their financial resources were so limited for several years that it was with evident satisfaction Richard wrote in 1902 to Amy:

You and I My Darling saw daylight yesterday for the first time for from 11 o'clock to 12 was the first hour in our lives or life together that we have seen in which we did not pay any interest....I have my note from the bank...and it is branded PAID.²⁶

The practice of thrift became habitual for both Amy and Richard, who throughout their lives remained careful with money.

Amy was active teaching in her local ward during these years, first in the Primary and then in the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association (Y.L.M.I.A.). Her first published public address also came during this period when she spoke in October of 1899 at the Mothers' Conference in Salt Lake City on the topic of training children without the use of corporal punishment. As the mother of a young son, she mirrored the views of her father in espousing the virtues of strength of will and consistency in preference to physical coercion, dismissing the latter as the last resort

²⁶ Richard R. Lyman to Amy Brown Lyman, typescript, n.p., no date, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author; Lyman, In Retrospect, 29.

of the lazy. Had another spoken these words, she might have been seen as a youthful idealist, but in Amy it was merely the public declaration of a lifelong principle.²⁷

For his part, Richard busied himself with Church work and his duties at the University. Continuing his association with the Y.M.M.I.A. he was now superintendent of that organization in the Salt Lake Stake and sometimes traveled with his father on Church business where he spoke in outlying wards. Meanwhile, the University was preparing to move its campus to its present site on Salt Lake City's east bench, and Richard had the duty of surveying the new location.²⁸

Coincident with the payment of Richard's debts in 1902 came his first sabbatical year. At Amy's urging, it was decided to use this opportunity to continue his education at Cornell University, which had offered him a scholarship.²⁹ With the approach of summer the Lymans arranged to make the

²⁷ Woman's Exponent, 27 (October 1899): 1; Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Engar Oral History.

²⁸ Richard R. Lyman Diary, August 19 to September 17, 1899, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author; Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman," 5; Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 3:760.

²⁹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 29; Richard R. Lyman to Amy Brown Lyman and Wendell Lyman, May 5, 1902, typescript, n.p., original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author; Mary Kimble, "Amy Brown Lyman for R.S. Magazine, Jan., 1929," typescript, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author, 5.

most of their time, stopping off to attend a summer session at the University of Chicago.³⁰

Amy and Richard arrived there squarely in the middle of what would later be termed the Progressive Era. This was a period of massive reform spawned in the wake of political corruption and the unprecedented growth of large corporations during which many groups united to seek a positive role for government in the regulation of business excesses and in the promotion of the public good. Using the same "scientific" approach that had revolutionized industry, many examined society seeking to develop a more efficient and just community and nation. This led to the creation of public utilities, improved boards of health, and to several political reforms including the direct election of Senators and the adoption of initiative, referendum, and recall legislation. In the private sector it sparked an increased interest in "social engineering" and sent many looking for improved methods of charity work. These included the formation of local boards to coordinate distribution of relief (Charity Organization Societies), the creation of settlement houses and other community resources, and most importantly the adoption of the case work method. This involved a social worker assisting a family or individual in

³⁰ Lyman, In Retrospect, 29; Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman," 6.

a logical and consistent manner based on an informed assessment of their circumstances and needs.³¹

Back in Utah many of the same types of changes occurred which would spawn the Progressive movement elsewhere. The railroad had spurred the growth of the mining industry, stimulated the state's mercantile interests, and provided a market for its agricultural products. It also encouraged a growing number of "Gentile" businessmen to come into the Territory, bringing with them badly needed capital.³² During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, conditions had changed dramatically and in the wake of the anti-polygamy persecution of the 1880s, Church leaders felt pressured to make concessions to enter the American mainstream. This led to a relaxation of tensions between Mormon and non-Mormon elements in Utah society and brought cooperation between them in business and politics. As time passed, Utah's economy lost much of its distinctive isolated character which brought the unintended result that the people of the state now began to share the same social ills as the rest of the nation.

³¹ For a discussion of the developments in social work during this era, see James Leiby, A History of Social Welfare Work in the United States, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). For a discussion from one of the period's leaders of reform see Mary E. Richmond, Social Diagnosis (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917).

³² Considering themselves modern-day Israel, Mormons routinely terms those not of their faith as Gentiles during this period.

This trend was revealed when Utah's industries were hit by the national depression in the 1890s.³³ Local conditions were worsened by the continued immigration of Mormon converts from Europe who had already begun to place strains on the limited resources of the region and the Mormon Church.³⁴ In addition to the Mormons, a growing number of non-Mormon immigrants, largely from Eastern Europe and China, had been drawn to the area, first by construction of the railroad and then by work in the mines. Their presence contributed to the continued growth of the state's cities until by 1910 its rate of urbanization had surpassed that of the rest of the nation. As the area acquired an increasingly urban character, it also experienced a growth of social problems.³⁵

Drawing on the legacy of thought remaining from their pioneer experience, many Utahns would embrace the ideologies of the Progressive Era to address these ills.³⁶ While the

³³ Leonard Arrington. "Utah and the Depression of the 1890s," Utah Historical Quarterly 31 (January 1966): 3-18.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See Thomas G. Alexander, "Political Patterns of Early Statehood, 1896-1919," and "Integration into the National Economy, 1896-1920," and Helen Z. Papanikolis, "The New Immigrants," all in Richard D. Poll, ed., Utah's History (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978). For immigration see also Helen Z. Papanikolis, ed., The Peoples of Utah (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1976).

³⁶ Thomas G. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 180.

past allowed them to more readily accept a positive role for government, their more recent interaction with non-Mormon businessmen and politicians encouraged a willingness to join with the larger community in a cooperative effort to deal with these issues. Salt Lake City led the way beginning first with efforts to eradicate vice. Progressive leaders soon worked for civic improvements such as street paving, storm sewers, street lights, more city parks, improved public health regulation (including smoke abatement and mosquito eradication), and the adoption of the commission form of government.³⁷ Many of these reforms would not come for several years, however, and Progressivism was in its infancy in Utah when the Lymans went east to continue Richard's education.

The University of Chicago was at the center of national efforts of reform, and the types of activities taking place there provided a rich cross section of the approaches many were taking to combat urban ills and achieve a more just society. During her summer in the city, Amy was deeply impressed by these efforts and gained insights that would prove valuable in years to come.

Accompanying Amy, Richard, and four-year-old Wendell to Chicago were Alice Louise Reynolds, then professor of

³⁷ For an account of Salt Lake's reforms during the Progressive Era, see Thomas G. Alexander and James B. Allen, Mormons and Gentiles: A History of Salt Lake City (Boulder Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co., 1984), especially, chapter six, "Progressive City, 1912-1930.

English at Brigham Young Academy, and Matilda Peterson from the Utah State School Office.³⁸ Also in their party were Ida and Amy Lyman, two of Richard's sisters, whose presence allowed "Amy B.," as she was known to the Lyman family, to attend courses in the summer session while they watched young Wendell. Amy enrolled in several classes including Biblical literature and Shakespeare, and one taught by Dr. George E. Vincent in the comparatively new science of sociology. Vincent, who would later serve as president of the Rockefeller Foundation, was an extremely popular lecturer. Amy enrolled in his course largely out of curiosity, but the experience would prove to be one of the most significant of her life. Vincent required each student to fulfill a field assignment. Amy's took her to Hull House which brought her into contact with noted reformer Jane Addams.³⁹

Founded by Addams and her friend Ellen Gates Starr in 1889, Hull House began as an effort by these two college educated women to settle in a neighborhood of poor emigrants in order to "do good." From this well intended but vaguely-conceived beginning, Hull House quickly evolved into the social center of the community. By the time Amy arrived in 1902, it had already grown out of its original home in the old Charles Hull mansion and begun to expand into a

³⁸ Lyman, In Retrospect, 29.

³⁹ Ibid., 30; Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman," 6.

sprawling series of buildings that would eventually cover several city blocks. Within this complex a multitude of services were provided including a playground, a gymnasium, a nursery and kindergarten for working mothers, and a site for socializing and education, whether that be in the informal setting of its coffee house or in more organized reading groups or through locally produced plays. Hull House quickly became a center of experiment and innovation while Jane Addams became a talented "publicist and persuader" for social reform in the nation. The influence of Addams and the settlement was widely felt, aided by a steady stream of talented and dedicated residents who stayed for periods ranging from a few days to several years. Learning from Addams and others, they made their own contributions to the Hull House philosophy before they moved on to other roles in the larger society. Philosopher John Dewey was a frequent visitor whose ideas were strongly influenced by his Hull House experience, while others drawn to the institution included Richard Ely, Harold Ickes, and Theodore Roosevelt. Among its more prominent long-term residents, those who stayed for several years, were Julia Lathrop, Florence Kelley, Sophonisba Breckenridge, and Grace and Edith Abbott.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Daniel Levine, Jane Addams and the Liberal Tradition (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1971), xi, 43-72. Levine feels that Addams' influence was manifest at the heart of every reform of the period. In his words "she developed a social philosophy which had a profound influence

Like countless others before and after her, Amy's encounter with Addams had a profound effect on her life. She heard the reformer lecture on the work and objectives of Hull House and spent several days there interviewing her while gathering material for a term paper. Addams, noted for her graciousness, took a liking to Amy who, in turn, felt drawn to what was being accomplished at the settlement. She saw those at Hull House taking concrete steps to resolve a host of problems that she was just beginning to recognize and understand. Amy was so impressed by her experience there that she arranged through a friend to work on her own as a volunteer in the Chicago charities.⁴¹

This summer in Chicago worked a revolution in Amy's thinking and proved to be a turning point in her life. She often referred to the experiences of these brief months and recalled feeling as if a curtain had been drawn from her mind. Her upbringing in rural Utah had provided a limited basis from which to build an understanding of the scope and depth of contemporary social problems, but in Chicago she began to perceive the full range of ills then afflicting the

on the way America would deal with its social problems in the twentieth century." (p. 34). For an example of Addams' lifelong influence on Grace and Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckenridge, see Lela B. Costin, Two Sisters for Social Justice: A Biography of Grace and Edith Abbott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

⁴¹ Amy Brown Lyman, "Interview at KSL," no date, typescript, 3, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI; Lyman, In Retrospect, 30, 114; Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman," 6.

nation. Glimpses of some of the same problems could already be seen in Salt Lake, but if Amy had noticed them before her trip to Chicago, it seems unlikely that she fully understood them. As important as her improved perception was her exposure to the "scientific" methods then being developed to analyze them. She was taught that only through fully understanding the causes and nature of social ills could one hope to effectively resolve them. Amy, a born organizer with a straight forward outlook, was raised in a home where it was common to help others with their problems, so it was a natural step for her to be drawn to social work. She saw it as an opportunity to utilize her skills and abilities in the service of the community.⁴²

Like others of her era she was inspired by the efforts to reform society from the bottom up and felt moved to follow Addams' lead. By the end of the summer she had decided "that no work could be more important and satisfying than that of helping to raise human life to its highest level."⁴³

As their time in Chicago drew to a close, Amy and Richard said their good-byes to Alice Reynolds and Matilda Petersen and continued to Ithaca with the rest of their party. Richard found the next two and half years to be an extremely productive period in which he earned both his

⁴² Engar Oral History.

⁴³ Lyman, "Interview at KSL," 2.

Master's and Ph.D. in civil engineering. In addition, the high quality of his work brought him election to the national honor society, Sigma Xi, and a warm reception for his first professional publications. He began to gain the attention of his peers, and in the years ahead he would become a prominent expert in the field of civil engineering.⁴⁴

While Richard completed his studies, Amy took advantage of the educational opportunities at Cornell. She attended courses, lectures, debates, and open forums by "eminent educators, artists, writers, scientists, and statesmen" and visited museums and art galleries. A different kind of education came to her when Ithaca experienced a severe outbreak of typhoid fever during the Lyman's' stay. More than 1,000 cases were reported in the first weeks, and the accompanying death rate was extremely high. Infected workers inadvertently contaminated the town's watershed, which spread it to a large area. This prompted city leaders to authorize the construction of two filtration plants as part of the community's waterworks. The episode made a strong impression on Amy and later she would take an active part in Relief Society efforts to ensure a supply of pure drinking water for the communities of Utah. Still later, when she was a member of the state legislature, she

⁴⁴ Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 3:759.

introduced a bill which extended protection of Salt Lake City's watershed.⁴⁵

Before this trip East, Amy had experienced the effects of virulent anti-Mormon prejudice, first as a girl during the polygamy raids of the 1880s, and again, as a teacher in the Salt Lake School District, where the school board had just emerged from a period of anti-Mormon control. Now, while the Lymans were in Ithaca the Senate was holding hearings on the seating of Utah Senator and Church apostle Reed Smoot. The resulting revelations on post-Manifesto polygamy and the business and political dealings of the Church had created another wave of anti-Mormon sentiment in the nation. Amy recalled attending a lecture hosted by a local group of churches in which an unnamed woman reformer spoke about the "ignorant, illiterate, and immoral" Mormons. Friends who attended with Amy responded with a defense of the high morals of the Latter-day Saints, while Amy, unafraid to publicly defend her people, countered the charges of ignorance and illiteracy by citing the high quality of education in the Salt Lake schools. She did not record whether her comments changed any minds, but the incident proved an opportunity for her to stand up for the

⁴⁵ Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman," 6; Lyman, In Retrospect, 33.

reputation of the Church that she so dearly loved. This would not be Amy's last opportunity to defend her faith.⁴⁶

The Lymans also experienced joys and difficulties of a more personal nature in Ithaca. A year after their arrival a daughter, Margaret, was born on the fifteenth of September, 1903. Amy, afflicted with uterine problems, would be unable to have any more children. Also during this period, seven year old Wendell fell down a cistern and severely injured his back. Upon the family's return to Salt Lake City, doctors placed him in a cast extending from his neck to his legs which he would be forced to wear for two years. He had to sleep in traction and, because he was growing, the cast had to be changed frequently. A hook was hung on the wall where he would be suspended to facilitate this procedure. His inability to attend school greatly concerned Amy. Concluding to continue his education as best she could, she visited the children's section of the public library and brought back large stacks of books for him to read. As his condition improved, his friends pushed him around the neighborhood in a little wagon, and later wheeled him to and from school until the cast was completely removed.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Lyman, In Retrospect, 33-34.

⁴⁷ Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman," 6-7; Margaret Schreiner, Margaret Schreiner Reminisces (Privately Published, 1987), 40-41.

After the family's return to Salt Lake in 1905, Richard resumed his duties at the University of Utah where he rose rapidly to the rank of full professor and eventually headed the Department of Civil Engineering while on the side he opened a private consulting business. In keeping with their improved financial position, the family decided the time had come to invest in a home of their own. They were drawn at first to one of Salt Lake's more affluent neighborhoods, recently constructed on the east bench near the University, but at the request of Richard's father, strong willed Francis M., they purchased a house just a block away from him at 1084 3rd Ave. It was in this house they would spend the remainder of their lives.⁴⁸

Established in their new home, Richard's career claimed most of his attention while Amy devoted her energies to Wendell, little Margaret, and the houseguests who soon became a standard feature in the Lyman household. Both Amy and Richard were especially generous with their assistance to family members who were continuing their education in Salt Lake. Over the years the house was filled with generations of cousins, nieces or nephews who stayed for a few weeks, months or even years.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Engar Oral History.

⁴⁹ Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 3:759; Engar Oral History; Schreiner, 40-41.

Outside the home Amy was active in teaching the youth of her local ward in the Primary and Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association (Y.W.M.I.A.). For her own enrichment she had the Author's Club and the recently organized Daughters of Utah Pioneers. Added to this were the usual responsibilities and diversions of a professor's wife which included entertaining and a regular stream of social events. It was no doubt a very pleasant, if somewhat unchallenging existence for someone of Amy's energies and intellect, but she had little chance to settle into a familiar routine. After four years, this comparatively simple, family centered existence would be exchanged for one filled with new challenges and demands.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Lyman, In Retrospect, 36; Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman," 7.

CHAPTER III
GENERAL BOARD

At the time of Amy's appointment to the General Board in October of 1909, the Relief Society was still largely the domain older women; Amy, at thirty-seven, was considered too young by some of her friends for such a position. Though they advised her to decline, she accepted but had reservations of her own, which centered around her feelings that she was ill-prepared for the position. While she held membership in the organization in her own ward, all of her church work had been with the youth through the Primary and Young Ladies' M.I.A. Further, though, while she was unafraid of hard and work, this was a new challenge in an unknown field, one which entailed greater demands than she had yet known. Indeed, when the Society's General Secretary Emmeline B. Wells officially notified her of the call, Amy "shed tears of anxiety because of the responsibility such an appointment involved."¹

The Relief Society was organized on March 17, 1842, in Nauvoo, Illinois, with the express assignment, given by

¹ Annie Wells Cannon, "Amy Brown Lyman," Relief Society Magazine 27 (January 1940): 4; Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1945), 40.

Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, to set an example for the Church in charity work. Its activities were suspended two years later and it was not until 1867 the Brigham Young advised local bishops to reorganize branches in each of their wards. The Society contributed to Young's goals for the territory as it developed home industry, gathered wheat for times of need, and especially as it promoted good health practices and provided for the training of nurses. Its organizational structure developed as its membership grew and its activities broadened, with the first major change coming in 1872 when wards were gathered under the leadership of a Relief Society stake presidency.² From 1880-1892 activities of the organization were directed by a Central Board, which consisted entirely of executive officers; however, by 1892 this was changed to a General Board which included a presidency and several non-office holding board members. Throughout this period, while closely associated with the Church and under the direction of male priesthood leaders, the organization remained independent. Membership was voluntary and dues were required.³

It is not known who nominated Amy to fill the vacancy on the General Board occasioned by the death of Annie Taylor

² A "stake" is the mormon equivalent to a diocese, and a "ward" roughly the same as a parish.

³ General Board of Relief Society, A Centenary of Relief Society, 1842-1942 (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1942), 14-25.

Hyde but it is likely that Amy's membership in the Author's Club played a role. Three of that association's members were on the General Board and prominent Relief Society leaders were sometimes guests at Author's Club luncheons. Whoever brought up Amy's name extolled her energy and ability and gave a description that was "so enthusiastic and full of praise" that when the matter came to a vote "the result was unanimous for Mrs. Lyman, though many...had never met her."⁴

Amy was anxious and ill at ease when she attended her first meeting of the General Board, which met at that time in the Templeton building in downtown Salt Lake City where the offices of the Society's organ, the Woman's Exponent, were located. "As I timidly entered the room," she remembered, "I faced what seemed to me the most imposing group of women I had ever seen at such close range."⁵

Presiding over the organization was Bathsheba Smith, a wife of the late George A. Smith, who was a cousin of Mormon founder and prophet Joseph Smith and confidant to Brigham Young. Bathsheba had been present at the first meeting of the Society in 1842 and had held a position in the general leadership of the Relief Society since 1887. Serving under her were counselor Ida Dusenberry, educator and BYU

⁴ Annie Wells Cannon, "Mrs. Lyman as a Relief Society Executive," typescript, no date, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar.

⁵ Lyman, In Retrospect, 36.

professor; General Secretary Emmeline B. Wells, who also remembered the prophet Joseph and the Nauvoo era; and treasurer Clarissa Smith Williams, who was a daughter of George A. Smith from another marriage. Others present included wives of church and political leaders, and those noted for exceptional achievements in the arts and public affairs. Whatever her own initial anxieties, Amy was soon seen by the others as a valued member of the board. "When Amy came to her first meeting," wrote Annie Wells Cannon, "her rare beauty, her grace, her charm, won all hearts and confirmed the wisdom of the choice made."⁶

Amy found the board in the middle of preparations for the move to their new offices in the soon to be completed Bishop's Building. This was a time of mixed emotions for the women of the church who had saved for years to build their own building on the old tithing block across from Temple Square. Each of the three woman's auxiliaries (the Primary, Y.L.M.I.A. and Relief Society) had contributed, but after they had raised the necessary funds, Church leaders questioned whether they would be able to maintain as large a structure as was proposed. It was decided that it would be more beneficial for the Church to erect a bishop's building, which would provide space for the three auxiliaries, than to have one constructed solely for the women. At the suggestion of the First Presidency, their funds were

⁶ Cannon, "Mrs. Lyman," 1.

combined with those of the Church to facilitate the completion of the revised project. The building was completed shortly after Amy's call and after an elaborate dedication, the Relief Society moved into its new quarters.⁷

Several months later another change came to the organization when Bathsheba Smith died in September of 1910 and Emmeline B. Wells was chosen as the new president. Amy and "Aunt Em," as she was called, became close friends and as the years passed, Wells relied increasingly upon Amy to handle the daily affairs of the organization. Even before Bathsheba Smith's death, Amy had begun to fill in as secretary at meetings when the General Secretary could not attend. Within a year after Wells became president, Amy received official recognition of her role when she was called as Assistant Secretary. When General Secretary Olive D. Christensen resigned two years later because of poor health, Amy was chosen to replace her.⁸

Joseph F. Smith, by this time president of the Church, gave Amy special responsibilities when she was "set apart"

⁷ Lyman, In Retrospect, 39,40; Amy Brown Lyman, "1959 Speech at Gen. Bd. Luncheon," holograph, n.p., original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar.

⁸ Lyman, In Retrospect, 42-43; Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, July 12, 1991, February 22, 1992, April 10, 1992, June 24, 1992, tapes in possession of author; Andrew Jenson, ed. Latter-Day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-36), 2:665.

as General Secretary. As she remembered it many years later:

... he said: I have three definite assignments for you: 1. to improve the business and record keeping of the General Organization Office. 2. To make a study of the Charity and Welfare Work. 3. And very important, to work heartily with the whole Board, to bring young women into the activities of the organization.⁹

The first of these assignments fit into the larger organizational changes then taking place within the Mormon church during this period, which were designed to modernize its administrative structure and that of its auxiliaries.¹⁰ At the time Amy became General Secretary in August of 1913, the Relief Society owned none of the equipment common to a modern business office of the period. It possessed no typewriters or file cabinets and employed no secretaries or bookkeepers. Under the tutelage of Emmeline B. Wells, Amy first sought to fully understand her new duties and then began to update and streamline office procedures and record keeping methods. Through diligent effort, she laid a firm

⁹ Amy Brown Lyman, "Relief Society Address, Parley's Ward, March 1, 1957," typescript, 1, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL).

¹⁰ For the best description of this process, see Thomas G. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), see especially chapter 6, "Administrative Modernization, 1900-1918," 93-115.

foundation for the administrative growth of the coming decades.¹¹

Record keeping had lacked uniformity and had varied considerably among the wards, so Amy utilized her organizational skills to create a record book containing standardized forms for the use of local units. First appearing in 1916, it was arranged to record information about the various activities conducted at the ward level and included space for roll, minutes, historical notes, statistical data, bookkeeping, and yearly reports as well as printed instructions to local Relief Society officers. Two years later she produced a similar set of stake records, which, in combination with those of the wards, simplified record keeping practices and established a system of records and procedures that allowed leaders to easily track the activities and progress of the organization.¹²

During this period Amy also assumed the task of compiling and organizing the Relief Society minutes and began to work on a history of the organization. She was

¹¹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 49; Vera White Pohlman, In Memoriam: Amy Brown Lyman, 1872-1959, Biographical Summary and Funeral Services, (Salt Lake City: Privately Published, 1960), 10.

¹² Mary Kimball, "Amy Brown Lyman, Relief Society Magazine, Jan. 1929," typescript, 6, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar. A shorter version of this article appeared in the Relief Society Magazine on the date cited, but the manuscript contains a number of significant details not found in the published version. See also: Lyman, In Retrospect, 55; Pohlman, In Memoriam, 10.

anxious that the records of the activities of earlier Relief Society women should be preserved and available for future reference. So, in a project that would last for years, she began to gather these early minutes beginning with the first meeting in Nauvoo and saw to it that they were carefully indexed and cross referenced with topical and marginal headings.¹³

The Relief Society had already taken steps to address another of Church President Smith's special assignments when, in 1911, the General Board formed a committee to determine ways to increase its membership, especially among younger women. As part of that committee Amy joined in the decision to introduce a uniform course of educational instruction to be taught in all local Relief Societies throughout the Church.¹⁴ Emmeline B. Wells was troubled by the creation of formal written lessons because she felt that it would strip the local units of their ability to adapt their programs, through spiritual promptings, to the needs of their own members. Though Wells resisted this change in approach, those supporting it eventually prevailed. As part of the new plan, the Woman's Exponent, which Wells had published and edited for decades, was discontinued and a new official organ containing the

¹³ Kimball, "Amy Brown Lyman," 7; Pohlman, In Memoriam, 10.

¹⁴ Lyman, "Parley's Ward," 1.

standardized lessons was created in its place. Wells found the transition extremely trying, but her feelings were somewhat assuaged when a place was reserved in each month's issue of this new publication for her to emphasize the spiritual side of Relief Society work.¹⁵

It was decided that the Relief Society Guide and Bulletin, as this new publication came to be called, would be distributed through the stake boards. This began in January of 1914, with a prospectus in the form of a lesson guide, which was followed by a monthly bulletin with sixteen pages of material developing each lesson. Issues consisted of 12,000 copies and cost a total of \$175. Susa Young Gates, daughter of Brigham Young and a member of the General Board, was chosen as editor, and Jeannette Hyde, also on the Board, and Amy were selected as business managers responsible for raising the operating capital. They solicited advertisers among business houses in Salt Lake City and were able to obtain the necessary funds despite their inexperience and the initial skepticism of some who doubted the viability of the project. Cutting costs to a minimum, they arranged for as much work as possible to be done on a voluntary basis. "With the help of our children,"

¹⁵ Lyman, In Retrospect, 53; Janath R. Cannon and Jill Mulvay Derr, "Resolving Differences/Achieving Unity: Lessons from the History of Relief Society," in Mary E. Stovall and Carol Cornwall Madsen, eds., As Women of Faith: Talks Selected from the BYU Women's Conferences (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 124-126.

Amy recalled, "we wrapped and mailed the Bulletin each month during the year." Beginning in 1915, the Bulletin became the Relief Society Magazine and remained the official publication of the organization for nearly sixty years.¹⁶

In addition to these activities, Amy's assignments as General Secretary included handing correspondence as directed by the president and running the routine affairs of the office. Included among the latter was the responsibility for dealing with problems or matters of procedure brought up by stake and ward Relief Society leaders and that of answering the questions of visitors to Salt Lake City. Because of its location directly across from Temple Square, the Relief Society headquarters became an unofficial bureau of information for tourists and visiting dignitaries during this period.¹⁷

While these demands consumed an ever increasing proportion of Amy's energies, at the same time, she was preparing to accomplish the last of President Joseph F. Smith's three assignments, that of making a thorough study of charity and welfare work. This final task would lead her to a her decades-long quest to adapt modern social work methods to the work of the Relief Society.

Amy's interest in social welfare, which had been sparked in Chicago, was heightened when she accompanied

¹⁶ Pohlman, In Memoriam, 11; Lyman, In Retrospect, 53.

¹⁷ Lyman, In Retrospect, 44, 47.

Emmeline Wells and a delegation from the General Board to the November, 1911 meeting of the National Council of Women in New York City. Kate Waller Barrett, president of the Florence Crittenden Homes for unwed mothers, presided over the conference where a variety of health and social issues were discussed, including a consideration of methods to reduce infant mortality. This was Amy's first meeting of the National Council, an organization with which she became increasingly involved in subsequent years.¹⁸

In addition to bringing her in contact with current trends in health and social work, the meeting also provided Amy with another opportunity to defend the Church. Barrett, a close friend of Mormon women over the years, informed the Relief Society delegation of an effort by the National Christian League for the Promotion of Purity to submit a motion protesting polygamous practices in the United States and the seating of Senator Reed Smoot. The League was clearly attempting to embarrass the Church, so President Wells selected Amy to sit in at the next meeting of the Resolutions Committee to block their efforts. Amy succeeded in derailing the motion and in the process even earned the grudging respect of one of the League's leaders.¹⁹

¹⁸ "Program, Nineteenth Annual Executive Session of the National Council of Women of the United States, Chicago, Illinois, November Fourteenth and Fifteenth, Nineteen Hundred and Eleven," Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI.

¹⁹ Ibid.; Lyman, In Retrospect, 88-89.

During this period the Relief Society joined other Church auxiliaries in addressing some of the societal problems that appeared in the wake of increased industrialization and urbanization in Utah.²⁰ During the months of July and August of 1916 and 1917 the Relief Society established milk kitchens in five schools along Salt Lake's west side in an effort to improve the diets of children, particularly those from homes that lacked "refrigeration facilities." Amy joined four other Relief Society women in taking charge of each of the stations where milk was furnished twice a day. Those who were able to pay did so while the rest received the milk for free. Funded cooperatively by the city, the Relief Society, and private donations, these "milk depots" were under the overall supervision of the city health commissioner and were staffed by nurses assisted by Relief Society volunteers. In addition to providing milk, the Relief Society workers went out into the community and taught motherhood education classes, examined babies, and made home visits.²¹

²⁰ For a summary of the activities of the Relief Society and other Church auxiliaries during this period, see Thomas G. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1986). Chapter 8, "The Church Auxiliary Organizations," pp. 125-56 is especially relevant.

²¹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 68-69; Amy Brown Lyman, "Notes from the Field," Relief Society Magazine 3 (August 1916): 462.

Before this in April of 1916, Amy's background and interest in social work had already become well enough known that she was asked by William J. Deeney, head of the Charity Organization Society of Salt Lake City, to represent the Relief Society in a monthly meeting aimed at coordinating the efforts of the city's charities in dealing with local problems.²² Later that year, the Church took its own steps to coordinate the efforts of its various auxiliaries in dealing with social problems when it created the Social Advisory Committee (SAC).²³

The Social Advisory Committee began with a letter in September of 1916 from the LDS First Presidency to the presidency of the Primary Association seeking that organization's cooperation with the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association in establishing standards of modest dress. The committee's concerns soon came to encompass a wide range of social issues and eventually involved representatives from all the Church auxiliaries.²⁴

By January, 1917, Mormon president Joseph F. Smith had approved of Apostle Stephen L Richard's recommendation to

²² William J. Deeney to Mrs. Richard R. Lyman, April 27, 1916, typescript, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL; Cannon and Derr, "Resolving Differences," 127.

²³ For a treatment of the Social Advisory Committee see: Thomas G. Alexander, "Between Revivalism and the Social Gospel: The Latter-day Saint Social Advisory Committee, 1916-1922," BYU Studies 23 (Winter 1983): 19-39.

²⁴ Alexander, "Social Advisory Committee," 25.

extend the formation of social advisory committees to the ward level where they served to "coordinate, organize, and encourage the auxiliaries" in their own efforts to deal with social problems. As a representative of the Relief Society to the committee, Amy was involved intimately with much of that organization's work. Her role with the Social Advisory Committee was often intermingled with her efforts in developing social welfare work for the Relief Society until the demise of the former in 1924.²⁵

In April of 1917, the United States entered the war in Europe. Anticipating social problems on the homefront, the War Department, in conjunction with the Red Cross, urged governors to send delegates to the National Conference of Social Work scheduled for June in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Utah Governor Simon Bamberger appointed Amy as official delegate from the state and, at the advice of Joseph F. Smith, she also served as one of two delegates sent by the General Board of the Relief Society, the other being Rebecca Nibley, wife of Presiding Bishop, Charles W. Nibley. This was the first of nine National Conference meetings that Amy would attend over the next decade where she would become closely acquainted with prominent leaders in social reform. Each conference also helped familiarize her with contemporary social work problems and techniques which

²⁵ Ibid., 26.

enabled her to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field.²⁶

In Pittsburgh, War Department and Red Cross officials emphasized the need to adequately prepare volunteer relief workers through the establishment of centers where they could be trained in modern social work methods. In response, the Mountain division of the Red Cross, which included Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico, held a conference in Denver from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-sixth of October, 1917. Amy attended as a delegate from Salt Lake County and was accompanied by Clarissa S. Williams, who was sent as chairman of the Red Cross committee of the Relief Society General Board.²⁷

Speakers at the conference included the general manager of the Red Cross, Harvey D. Gibson; Henry B. Davison, chairman of its War Council; and the "Rev. Mr. Davis" (as Amy referred to him) member of the Red Cross commission, recently returned from the front. In an appeal to patriotic feelings each urged conference participants to further the war effort by pushing forward the work of the Red Cross.

²⁶ Lyman, In Retrospect, 71; Amy Brown Lyman, "Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928: Including a Brief History of the Relief Society Social Service Department and Brief Mention of Other Relief Society and Community Social Service Activities," Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL, typescript, 3.

²⁷ Amy Brown Lyman, "The Red Cross Conference in Denver," Relief Society Magazine 4 (December 1917): 687; Lyman, "Social Service Work," 3.

Gertrude Vaile, chairman of the Bureau of Civilian Relief, presided over two sessions where she spoke about the necessity of assisting the families of servicemen during the national emergency and outlined the steps involved in imparting that aid through cooperative efforts involving the recipient's church.²⁸

It was decided during the conference to begin the first training institute for the Mountain States Division on the third of November. Administered in conjunction with the University of Colorado in Denver, this first session admitted only twenty-five students and continued through November 15, 1917. Upon their return to Salt Lake from Pittsburgh the previous June, Amy and Clarissa Williams had conferred with the First Presidency who supported their decision to send representatives to receive this further training. Three delegates were sent in addition to Amy: Cora Cassius from Ogden; Annie Palmer from Provo; and Mary Hendrickson from Logan. These women would work together closely over the next years establishing the foundation of a department of social services for the church.²⁹

Gertrude Vaile presided over the institute and taught the courses in case work. As part of this training, field work was performed at the Denver Charity Office, where Amy worked under the guidance of the office's director, Florence

²⁸ Lyman, "Red Cross Conference," 687-89.

²⁹ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 3-4.

Hutsinpillar. Amy would remain in close contact with both Hutsunpillar and Vaile over the course of many years and earned their friendship and respect for her efforts in social welfare work.³⁰

As had been the case during the meeting of the National Council of Women in 1911, Amy again found the efforts of the Church viewed with suspicion and misunderstanding. The Denver Post reported the real purpose of the Utah delegates was that of proselytizing converts. Hurried apologies came from institute officials, but for a time, two of the Relief Society delegates were so offended that they threatened to leave the session and return to Utah. Instead, after consultation with the head of the local L.D.S. mission, it was decided that the best course was simply to ignore the charges and continue with their work.³¹

After their return, the delegates assumed positions in Red Cross relief efforts all along the Wasatch Front. Cora Cassius became assistant secretary of the Civilian Relief Department in Weber County; Annie Palmer became executive secretary of the Utah County chapter of the Red Cross; and Mary Hendrickson was made assistant secretary of the Civilian Relief Department in Logan. Amy became chairman of

³⁰ Wintch Oral History. Amy's correspondence with both women spanned more than a decade; see examples in Box 2, folder 10 of Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

³¹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 63-64.

the Family Consultation Committee of the Salt Lake Red Cross chapter, where she supervised assistance to hundreds of L.D.S. families during the war. This required a division of her time between the Relief Society and the Red Cross for a period of six months.³²

Amy was "very enthusiastic" after her return from Denver and reported on her experiences early the next morning to Emmeline B. Wells and again three days later to the General Board during an extended meeting. On the twenty-first of December, she went with President Wells and counselors Clarissa Williams and Julina Smith (wife of the Church President) to report to the First Presidency. Joseph F. Smith expressed intense interest in the activities in Denver and carefully examined the forms used by the Red Cross in its family social work. This interest grew deeper a few months later when an article in a national magazine reported that Mormon bishops and ward Relief Society presidents in Salt Lake City had been working through the local Charity Organization Society to organize relief efforts. For Smith, the appropriate place to clear and discuss cases involving L.D.S. families was at the Relief Society general office.³³

³² Ibid., 64; Lyman, "Social Welfare Work," 4.

³³ Emmeline B. Wells Diaries, December 17, 20-21, 1917, vol. 43, typescript, 99-100, Emmeline B. Wells Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL; Lyman, "Social Welfare Work," 4; "Jottings," The Survey 38 (June 16, 1917): 252.

Accordingly, he called Amy and Jeannette Hyde to his office in mid March, 1918 to discuss the necessity of modernizing the Church's system of relief. "He said," Amy recalled, "if there was anything in the Church that needed improvement it was the charity work; that there was much duplication and waste of effort and funds." He encouraged moves to adopt modern methods to the Church's needs and offered support for a Department of Social Services to operate out of the Relief Society headquarters at an estimated cost of \$10,000 per year. Despite her previous experience, Amy felt unprepared to assume this responsibility and expressed to President Smith her desire for further training at the offices of the Denver Charities. He agreed that she would return the following November.³⁴

In the meantime, the demands placed upon her and the Relief Society by the Red Cross continued to increase. At the end of March, 1918, the General Board recommended to the First Presidency that Beth Bradford, who was employed as a stenographer at the Relief Society, be sent to Denver for the second social service institute so that she might be properly trained to assist with the growing casework burden. The First Presidency readily approved and appropriated funds to cover her expenses. By late June, Bradford had returned and begun work as a "family visitor," with the intention of

³⁴ Lyman, In Retrospect, 64; Lyman, "Social Welfare Work," 4-5.

dividing her time between the Relief Society and the Red Cross offices. Together with Amy she attempted to visit all L.D.S. families under Red Cross care, but the number being served had grown to such an extent by this time that she ended up spending the next eight months working full time at the Red Cross offices at Church expense.³⁵

One of the fundamental steps in the so called "scientific method" of distributing relief is the creation of a confidential exchange for the use of all local charity agencies. In this manner, families receiving relief could be registered to avoid duplication of services and the resulting waste of resources. In July, Amy and Beth Bradford set about creating an exchange for all L.D.S. families known to be receiving relief from the Relief Society, the Red Cross, or the Salt Lake County Charity Department. The use of this exchange was made available to each of these agencies as well as to ward bishops, Relief Society presidents, local health agencies, and the Juvenile Court.

By November, Lyman's and Bradford's workload had grown so dramatically that it had become obvious that it was now necessary to formally establish the Relief Society Social Service Department. This meant that the time had now come for the further training that Amy had spoken about to Joseph F. Smith and so she returned to Denver on the seventh to

³⁵ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 5.

work again under Florence Hutsinpillar of the City and County Charities.³⁶

In addition to the type of dependent cases with which she was already familiar, Amy's work there included "cases in mothers' pensions, juvenile court, homeless men, etc.," which broadened her range of experience and heightened her understanding of the complex types of cases that the Relief Society Social Services would face. Her arrival corresponded with that of the influenza epidemic, then raging throughout the country. Several of the Denver caseworkers became ill, which provided an opportunity for Amy to take charge of one of the local districts and to assume a larger share of the office work. This proved to be an enormous benefit as it allowed her to obtain more intensive hands-on experience than had been planned.³⁷ By the time of her return to Salt Lake City on the twenty-third of December, Amy's apprenticeship in social work had been completed. Though she would always remain the interested student, she now became the master teacher as well.

³⁶ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 5-6; For a discussion on the creation and uses of the confidential exchange by one of the prominent social workers of the era, see Mary E. Richmond, Social Diagnosis (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917) 303-315; for a treatment of the development of modern social work techniques, see James Leiby, A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). Chapters 7 through 9, covering developments from 1850 to 1919 are particularly relevant to the present discussion.

³⁷ Lyman, "Social Welfare Work," 6.

While she was involved in developing the Church's efforts in social work, an important change had come to the Lyman family as well. In April of 1918, Richard followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather when he was called to fill a vacancy in the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. While he was able to remain active as an engineering consultant, this new responsibility required him to give up his position at the university, and to devote the remainder of his energies to the Church.³⁸ Both Amy and Richard were honored by the call, but this new responsibility required extensive travel and further limited the time that the couple would be able to spend together. While Richard remained outwardly unaffected by these new demands on him and by those previously placed upon Amy, nevertheless they seemed to add a significant strain on their marriage, one which especially affected Richard.

While Amy was absent in Denver, another significant change came when Church President Joseph F. Smith died on the nineteenth of November. Amy had come to rely on his unwavering support for her activities and together they had developed long range plans for the Social Services which were now placed on hold. While the new Church President, Heber J. Grant, would likewise support her efforts to modernize Church relief, others in leadership positions had

³⁸ Jenson, Biographical Encyclopedia, 3:760.

grown increasingly uneasy with the direction events were taking.

CHAPTER IV

EXPANSION AND CONFLICT

The Relief Society Social Services Department was first headquartered in Amy's offices at the Bishop's Building. Immediately after her return from Denver in December she created a standardized system of records and reporting procedures to replace those previously used which had been borrowed from the Red Cross. She continued to arrange other administrative details and by early January felt the department was sufficiently organized to begin work.¹

While Amy was involved in these activities, the Salt Lake County chapter of the Red Cross had been making arrangements to begin in the middle of January a social service institute for twenty-five students. In recognition of Amy's growing mastery of social work methods, Gertrude Vaile at the Divisional Headquarters in Denver had recommended to the local office that Amy assist with the academic training and the supervision of field work for one-

¹ Amy Brown Lyman, "Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928: Including a Brief History of the Relief Society Social Service Department and Brief Mention of Other Relief Society and Community Social Service Activities," Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 5-6 (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL).

third of the class. This cooperation between the Red Cross and the fledgling Relief Society Social Services Department continued later that month when the former turned over to the latter the care of twenty-five families receiving relief due to the influenza epidemic.²

These developments demanded a great deal of Amy's time and energy, and so she and Richard found it a welcome respite when they were invited to accompany President Heber J. Grant on a ten day vacation to the Church owned home "Deseret" in Santa Monica California. Richard had known the Church president since his boyhood in Tooele, where Grant was then serving as stake president. During those years he had gained the trust of the older man and the two had become close friends.³

Now in Grant's company, the Lymans marveled at the contrast between the spring-like conditions in southern California and the harsh winter back in Salt Lake. Reveling in the warmth and sunshine, they learned to play golf and enjoyed it "immensely." Amy played several times during their brief stay and even celebrated her forty-seventh birthday with a game, though sometimes feeling she was holding the men up, she joined "the ladies" and "watched

² Ibid.

³ Richard R. Lyman Journal, February 4, 1919, Richard R. Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI; Andrew Jenson, ed., Latter-Day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901-36), 3:757.

from the sidelines." The couple spent their afternoons taking long rides in the country and occupied their evenings making visits and receiving callers. Amy was particularly interested to "see the orange trees loaded with fruit," and enjoyed a trip to an old friend's orchard where she and Richard were able to fill their pockets with oranges picked straight from the tree. Richard felt their stay was a "perfect vacation" and for Amy, "one pleasant day followed another in quick succession, and this extremely happy visit ended all too soon."⁴

At the completion of their stay in Los Angeles, Richard traveled with Grant on Church business while Amy returned to Salt Lake, where work began on the next stage in the development of the Church Social Service program, that of expanding training and extending services. With the approval of stake president Joseph B. Keeler, the Utah Stake Relief Society, under President Inez Knight Allen and counselor Annie D. Palmer, organized a community welfare department on the twenty-second of May, 1919. The following month, they led a course in social welfare work which offered nine hours of instruction per week for four weeks.⁵

⁴ Richard R. Lyman Journal, February 4-15, 1919; Amy Brown Lyman to Emmeline B. Wells, holograph, no date, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI; Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1945), 77-78.

⁵ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 6.

This move to extend the use of modern social work techniques to the rank and file of the Relief Society alarmed some in the organization who perceived it as a signal that more traditional methods of Church charity were about to be abandoned. Most vocal among those protesting these changes was Susa Young Gates, who had earlier joined with Amy in advocating the uniform course of study. She listened with alarm in October of 1919 to a report of the Utah Stake's activities and feared the creation of a professional elite to administer the Church's charity work. In a long letter written to the General Board she made these fears clear and outlined some of her specific objections to what was being done. Decrying "commercialized charity," she extolled the more traditional methods which looked first to family, neighbors, and friends for relief. She also felt resentment and a sense of betrayal that Church members had turned to the learning of the world for guidance in these matters when, in her view, others should have been looking to the Church instead. Perhaps more telling were the reasons she gave for her objection to the exclusive use of those properly trained in modern social work techniques. She feared this would tend to exclude many older women who were able to function well in their usual roles as visiting teachers but would be unable to master the professional

training Amy and others advocated.⁶ Perhaps Susa, now sixty-four, saw herself in this latter category and felt threatened that she and others like her were being out paced by a new generation of leaders.

Whatever lay at the heart of her protests, both Amy and Susa were sincerely committed to their positions and determined to fight for them. Each determinedly lobbied Church leaders for what in their respective view was the correct course of action. Yet, despite their opposition to one another over this issue, each possessed the grace and professionalism that allowed them to maintain a close working relationship on other matters.⁷ As Church leaders leaned increasingly toward Amy's side, Susa sensed the inevitable and resigned from the General Board, but her

⁶ Janath R. Cannon and Jill Mulvay Derr, "Resolving Differences/Achieving Unity: Lessons from the History of Relief Society," in Mary E. Stovall and Carol Cornwall Madsen, eds., As Women of Faith: Talks Selected from the BYU Women's Conferences (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 129.

⁷ Cannon and Derr, "Resolving Differences," 126-132; Vera Pohlman, who began work as Amy's personal secretary during this period, is in agreement with the conclusions of Cannon and Derr on this point. She recalled the relationship between Amy and Susa Gates as one of mutual respect and affection and the atmosphere in the Relief Society offices during this period as being "like a family." See: Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author (cited hereafter as Pohlman Oral History).

convictions remained firm and she continued to press her position even after her release in 1922.⁸

She undoubtedly felt she had lost, but a recent discussion of the conflict concludes that her efforts significantly affected the course taken in the development of social welfare work in the Church in two important ways. One resulted in a greater emphasis on the need for a closer working relationship between the bishops and the Relief Society ward presidents in the distribution of charity. Through the Presiding Bishopric, Church leaders reiterated that the bishops had ultimate responsibility in such matters, though they encouraged consultation between them and ward Relief Society presidents before aid was distributed to ensure need and to prevent duplication of services. The second result of Gates' efforts was a renewed commitment to provide charity through traditional Church channels to Latter-day Saint families. While Amy obtained the recognition of the necessity for a professional centralized social service office, Susa was assured that the lay nature of Mormon charity would be retained at the local level.⁹ Perhaps of greatest import, the resolution of this conflict required Church leaders to thoroughly re-consider

⁸ See Richard R. Lyman Journal, July 26, 1922, for one example of Gates' continued opposition.

⁹ Cannon and Derr, "Resolving Differences," 131. I would like to thank Jill Derr for sharing with me her insights about this struggle and its significance for the charity work of the Church.

the social problems affecting members, a process which enhanced recognition of the need for the Social Services and which ensured continued support for the Department's growth.

Meanwhile, under Amy's direction the Department gained a reputation for proficiency, which encouraged others to send new responsibilities its way. In August of 1919, the Salt Lake Community Clinic asked the Relief Society to investigate Latter-day Saint families who were seeking free medical services, including those who might need surgery or any other type of follow-up treatment. After consulting with the Presiding Bishopric, the Social Services assumed this task and investigated forty families the first month. When possible, workers handling these cases consulted with the local bishops before treatment was given, but if this were not possible, due to emergency or other reasons, then a report would later be made. The Department made additional visits to the family only if it were requested to do so by the bishop or the clinic.¹⁰

While those in the Department struggled to deal with the increase in their responsibilities, the situation was complicated by the loss of three volunteer case-workers early in September. This prompted an appeal from the General Board to the Presiding Bishopric for addition funds to employ replacements. As if to reemphasize the value of the Department's activities, later that month, the director

¹⁰ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 6-8.

of the Community Clinic contacted Church President Heber J. Grant to praise the high quality of work the Relief Society was providing and to urge continued support for its activities. There is no evidence to indicate that Amy solicited this recommendation, but she was doubtlessly relieved by the results that came in its wake. Grant promised further help and authorized the General Board to temporarily supply the amount needed until general Church funds could be obtained. By the end of September, this commitment enabled the Department to hire Cora Kasius who had trained in Denver with Amy, at a salary of \$65 a month. Beth Bradford left the Social Services a short time later, and Lydia Alder and Frances Thomason, both of whom had served previously as volunteers, were employed as part-time family visitors, receiving \$40 per month in pay.¹¹

Despite these efforts to strengthen its staffing, the Department remained chronically overburdened by the continued extension of its services. An example of this came later that fall when Judge Hugo B. Anderson requested its assistance in making evaluations of L.D.S. families for the Salt Lake City Juvenile Court. After again consulting with the Presiding Bishopric, the General Board agreed to assume this task. Another request came late in the year from the Salt Lake County Charity office, which asked for help in the investigation of those applying for mothers'

¹¹ Ibid., 7.

pensions and in the preparation of budgets for them. Though Presiding Bishop Charles W. Nibley encouraged the undertaking because of the benefits it would bring to the county, Church, and Relief Society, the Department was simply unable to comply due to a lack of sufficient personnel. Seeking to keep pace with these demands, the General Board authorized President Emmeline B. Wells in March of 1920 to request additional funds from the Presiding Bishopric. The First Presidency granted an increase of \$155 which brought the Department's monthly budget up to \$250.¹²

In the meantime, as part of Amy's plan to extend familiarity with contemporary methods of welfare work to the rank and file of the Relief Society, a course of study covering the topic was added to organization's education curriculum. Beginning in January of 1920, the first year's series of lessons bore the title: "What Relief Society Women Should Know About Their Communities" and started with a consideration of malnutrition.¹³ The lessons in each course were authored by prominent professionals who, over the years, discussed a wide range of social welfare issues which provided up to date information concerning

¹² Lyman, "Social Service Work," 8.

¹³ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 8; "Guide Lessons: Social Service: Health," Relief Society Magazine 7 (January 1920), 59-62.

contemporary understandings about the family and the community to the women of the Church.¹⁴

By the time April conference came around, preparations had been made for the next step in the development of the Relief Society's administration of charity. After discussing the establishment of the Social Service Department at the organization's headquarters, "for the purpose of cooperating with the family agencies in Salt Lake City," Counselor Clarissa S. Williams announced a summer school that would be held at Brigham Young University for the six weeks beginning the thirty-first of May and ending the second of July. At the direction of the First Presidency, this special session offered a series of classes tailored to the needs of the Church's auxiliaries with the intention of improving the quality of leadership in these organizations. Stakes sent delegates to each of four courses, which covered teacher training, social leadership, recreational leadership, and charity and relief. The last of these was intended to "increase the general efficiency of family work in the Relief Society with a special view of broadening and improving the charity work...." Amy, placed in charge of the instruction in this area, took a leave of absence from the Social Services for the full six weeks of the course. She drilled her students in a detailed and

¹⁴ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 8.

demanding curriculum on the latest techniques in the field.¹⁵

Sixty-five of the Church's sixty-eight stakes sent delegates. Amy was impressed by the "splendid set of women" in her classes, whom she described as "earnest and enthusiastic, and so cheerful."¹⁶ She was well assisted in this endeavor by several experienced instructors including Annie D. Palmer, now secretary of the Community Welfare Department of the Utah Stake Relief Society, who served as class leader and brought with her a wealth of practical knowledge. Also professor John C. Swenson of BYU taught a course in sociology and Inez Knight Allen, Relief Society President of Utah Stake, discussed the practical aspects of charity work that had been developed during her administration. Other lecturers included Dr. Arthur Beeley of the Department of Sociology at the University of Utah and Dr. T. B. Beatty of the State Board of Health.¹⁷

Amy's summarized the curriculum as follows:

Sociology, in which the fundamentals of family life were discussed,...; Brief History of Charity Work; Modern Methods of Family Rehabilitation, including a

¹⁵ Amy Brown Lyman, "Class in Charities and Relief Work, Brigham Young University Summer School," Relief Society Magazine 7 (August 1920): 438; Lyman, "Social Service Work," 9.

¹⁶ Amy Brown Lyman to Florence W. Hutsinpillar, August 10, 1920, typescript, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscript Division, HBLI.

¹⁷ Lyman, "Class in Charities and Relief," 438; Lyman, "Social Service Work," 9.

study of Normal Family Life, the Unstable Family, and definite methods of approach and procedure in family work; a seminar, in which specific family problems were discussed; literature of family social work in which the regularly required reading was reported and discussed; special lecture course, including subjects related to family and community life, and the best means of overcoming existing social difficulties.¹⁸

The "special lecture course" featured Dr. Edward T. Devine, prominent social worker and author of the period. Amy had met him the previous year at the National Conference of Social Work in Atlantic City when Devine showed interest in some comments Amy made about Mormonism during one of the sessions. This led to a lengthy discussion between the two which sparked Devine's interest in the social aspects of Mormonism. His book The Normal Life provided a sociological overview of normal family relationships and the common obstacles that impeded their attainment. The work greatly impressed Amy, who made it required reading for the course and at her request, Devine lectured at the summer school on the themes covered in this volume.¹⁹

As part of the curriculum, the stake delegates visited several institutions to learn about "feeble mindedness, insanity, delinquency, dependency, and infirmity, with their causes and treatment." Lectures were delivered by administrators of each of the following: the State Industrial School in Ogden; the State Mental Hospital in

¹⁸ Lyman, "Course in Charities and Relief," 438.

¹⁹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 116-117; Edward T. Devine, The Normal Life (New York: Survey Associates, 1915).

Provo; the Community Clinic of Salt Lake City; the Neighborhood House (similar to a settlement house) in Salt Lake; and the Salt Lake County Infirmary and Hospital.²⁰

This combination of course work, lectures, and field trips impressed the stake delegates who felt they had gained a much greater appreciation for modern social work methods. At the close of the session, they chose a committee to summarize how they had been benefitted and to make recommendations on how their training should be utilized in their local units. Topping this list was an encouragement for delegates to report to their stake presidents immediately upon their return and to relay to them the insights they had gained. Next, they recommended cooperation with the bishops in the formulation of a detailed plan for the distribution of relief to needy families within ward boundaries. To facilitate the training of the rank and file in correct social work methods, the committee requested that Amy and Annie Palmer provide an outline for thirty hours of course work to be used in stake conventions.²¹

Within the first few months following the summer school reports on these stake leadership institutes began to arrive at Relief Society headquarters. Mirroring the original series of courses, those in the stakes covered the same

²⁰ Lyman, "Class in Charities and Relief," 438.

²¹ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 10-11.

divisions of teacher-training, social and recreational leadership, and charities and relief work. Those who organized them made use of local and state leaders, including high school educators and "state officials, doctors, and juvenile court judges, and probation officers." Amy reported with pride that the sessions on charity and relief "have been especially well attended," and were led almost exclusively by graduates of the summer school in Provo.²²

The enthusiasm greeting these efforts was undoubtedly gratifying for Amy, but the accomplishment of this move to the grass roots, first through the social service lessons in the Magazine and now through the stake leadership institutes, did not signal a completion of her efforts to modernize Relief Society charity. Over the next year she personally took charge of several stake and regional training courses, or "Social Service Institutes" as they came to be known. In October, she presided over a two-week course which served stakes in Salt Lake County and during the same period she began to lead a series of two-day courses held in twelve stakes along the Wasatch Front and in Idaho. In January, 1921, aided by stake Relief Society president Elizabeth C. Williams, she began a three-month course in the Salt Lake Stake and in May, 1922, she led a

²² Amy Brown Lyman, "Notes from the Field: Leadership Institutes," Relief Society Magazine 8 (January 1921): 35-36.

three-week session in the Ensign Stake. Others affiliated with the Social Services presided over two joint sessions involving several stakes held at B.Y.U. and another in the Yellowstone stake during the same period. These institutes proved to be very popular throughout the Church, and by 1928 forty-seven had been taught. Though the pace declined during the presidency of Louise Y. Robinson, they remained an important tool of the organization so that by the mid-point of Amy's own presidency, twenty years later, 126 sessions had been held, which were attended by over four thousand students.²³

While Amy remained involved with these activities of the Department, she also began increasingly to pursue her social welfare goals in the larger community. These efforts would bring her greater recognition not only within the borders of Utah, but also among national and international leaders of reform.

²³ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 28-29.

CHAPTER V

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

The spring of 1921 brought more changes for Amy and the Department. Ninety-four-year-old Emmeline B. Wells, who had been unable to perform her duties as president because of increasingly poor health, was released shortly before April conference and died a few weeks later. Clarissa Williams succeeded her as General President and Jennie Knight and Louise Robison were chosen as her counselors. Amy reportedly was given a choice of retaining her present position of General Secretary or becoming a counselor. Because she felt her talents could be better used as Secretary, she chose to remain in that position.¹

At this juncture, Amy could look back with satisfaction at what she had helped achieve during her first twelve years of service on the General Board. Of the three great assignments given her by Joseph F. Smith when she was set apart as General Secretary, the first, that of modernization of the Society's business and record keeping practices, had already been accomplished, while an improved education

¹ Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Parry Sorensen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author.

course had been adopted to facilitate the second, that of bringing younger women into the organization. Regarding the last, that of adapting modern social work methods to the Church's use, she could point with pride at the strong foundation that had been laid.

Now, at age forty-nine, these efforts had brought her into a position of prominence in the Relief Society and the Church. A strong-willed woman whose resolute step betrayed the force of her personality, Amy was still outspoken and known for standing up for what she believed in. An enthusiastic and tireless worker, she was respected as someone who could be depended upon and while emotionally reserved, those closely associated with her knew that she was tenderhearted and sympathetic to those in need. She was well liked and had achieved a good working relationship with Church leaders, particularly Church President Heber J. Grant and the women of the General Board.²

A particularly close associate during this period was Dr. Arthur Beeley, professor of sociology at the University of Utah who later founded that institution's School of Social Work. They had cooperated on the Social Advisory Committee and often shared responsibilities for instruction at the Social Service Institutes. Their shared interests and activities had led them to consult one another almost daily in the Relief Society Offices. The work at the

² Pohlman Oral History.

Department also brought her into regular contact with the directors of other social welfare agencies in Salt Lake City where the high standards adhered to by her case-workers had brought the Social Services recognition and respect.³

In September, the county again requested the Department's assistance in screening mothers' pensions, noting that 95 percent of those on Salt Lake County's pension roles were L.D.S. After another consultation with the Presiding Bishopric, the Department accepted the responsibility and performed its job so proficiently that the county immediately sought increased cooperation in other cases involving L.D.S. families. A division of labor was eventually established through which responsibility for families whose head of household was a member of the Church was assumed by the Relief Society, while non-L.D.S. families were serviced by the county or other relief agencies. Reviewing these developments, Amy noted in 1928 that a significant aspect of the Department's efforts were devoted to informing county leaders of their full responsibility under state law to provide for indigent families. Largely as a result of her efforts, the number of L.D.S. patients who received care at the County Hospital and County Infirmary significantly increased. Having repeatedly reminded county officials "that it is the general rule everywhere for counties to assume full hospital care for

³ Ibid.

their dependent citizens," she noted with pride that "no doubt because of this vigilance on the part of the Social Service Department of the Relief Society, an amount equal to the salaries of two or more of the workers has been saved yearly to the Church, which would otherwise have been paid in hospital fees."⁴

Amy's efforts to promote increased cooperation with other charitable agencies in the community bore addition fruit in September when the Relief Society was authorized by the Presiding Bishop to register their cases with the county's Confidential Exchange and to join in monthly conferences with other relief agencies. This led to the formation of the Central Council of Social Agencies in Salt Lake and eventually resulted in the creation of Utah State Welfare Commission.⁵

By 1921, Utah was one of only three states in the nation lacking state supervision of charities. In recognition of this lag in regulation, the legislature that year authorized the governor, Charles R. Mabey, to appoint a commission with the following responsibility:

⁴ Amy Brown Lyman, "Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928, Including a Brief History of the Relief Society Social Service Department and Brief Mention of Other Relief Society and Community Social Service Activities," Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Department, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, typescript, 13,14, (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLI).

⁵ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 15.

[to] study and investigate the laws, conditions, practices and institutions of this and other states and countries relating to public health and to the dependent, neglected, delinquent, and defective classes, and upon the basis of such study to prepare amendments to and a codification of the laws of Utah pertaining to health, to the dependent, neglected, delinquent and defective classes.⁶

The resulting commission was composed of the governor, the state superintendent of public instruction, the secretary of the State Board of Health, and thirteen other gubernatorial appointees. Of the latter, Milton Bennion, affiliated with the University of Utah, the Salt Lake Social Welfare League, and the L.D.S. Sunday School General Board, was chosen as chairman and Amy was selected as vice-chairman. The commission was organized into five committees which studied various aspects of their overall assignment and then made a series of recommendations based of what they had learned. These included: that closer attention be paid to the rehabilitation of prisoners; that there should be a classification and segregation of residents in the State Industrial School according to ability and the establishment of a separate "colony for the feeble minded"; that a commission be created to supervise the State Hospital; that a program be created for the treatment and control of

⁶ State of Utah, First Biennial Report of the State Department of Public Welfare, July 1, 1936-June 30, 1938, With supplementary data January, 1935 through December, 1938 and a Review of Public Aid in Utah Prior to Establishment of the State Department of Public Welfare in May, 1935, written and edited by Vera W. Pohlman (Salt Lake City: State of Utah, Bureau of Research and Statistics, 1939), 1.

narcotic addicts; that existing laws be revised to allow the requirement of smallpox vaccinations for students entering public schools; and that widows' pensions be properly supervised through accepted social work techniques. Of special interest to Amy was a recommendation for the improved funding of the State Board of Health with special emphasis on cooperation with federal legislation promoting child hygiene and maternity welfare. The most important recommendation of the commission was that its existence be made permanent and that it be provided with a paid executive secretary. Many of these recommendations would be addressed by the state legislature in the coming years, but the life of the commission itself was extended for only another two years before being dissolved, which left Utah without state regulation of public welfare until federal regulations necessitated the change.⁷

Because of high unemployment in Utah in the wake of a lingering post-war depression, Salt Lake's mayor appointed a committee in September of 1921 to coordinate the activities of the city's social service agencies in providing work relief. Amy joined John Wells of the Presiding Bishopric in serving as a delegate for the Church. The committee's efforts resulted in the opening of a city wood yard in the

⁷ State of Utah, First Biennial Report, 1,2; State of Utah, Report of the State Welfare Commission of the State of Utah, 1921-1922, (Salt Lake City: State of Utah, 1923), 10-14.

winter of 1921-22 which was stocked with donated wood. This project furnished four hours of work a day for single men and six hours for married men, all of whom were paid at the rate of twenty-five cents an hour. Over 300 L.D.S. men eventually applied for openings here.⁸

As the depression continued, the Social Service Department's broadening relief efforts prompted a need for new facilities. In response to an October request by the five Salt Lake City stakes for the creation of a central location for the storage and distribution of used clothing and supplies, rooms were set aside in a Church-owned warehouse downtown. During November the Society cooperated in raising donations for a civic center milk fund for Salt Lake's needy which provided \$130 of milk the first month, of which \$76 went to L.D.S. families.⁹

Depressed economic conditions also led to the establishment of an employment bureau at Relief Society headquarters in March of 1922. In response to a report by Amy made early in the month regarding the need to assist L.D.S. women and girls in finding employment, the Presiding Bishopric provided authorization on the twenty-second for the creation of an employment exchange to be administered through the Social Services under Amy's direction. It was to be staffed by existing employees, but authorization was

⁸ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 14.

⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

received from Church headquarters to hire additional help as needed. Amy went to work and quickly developed the necessary registration materials for both employers and applicants. Her recognition of need proved accurate: by the end of the first week, the bureau placed fourteen individuals and by the end of 1922, 560 positions had been filled.¹⁰

While the Social Service department was extending its activities and establishing closer ties with social agencies in the larger community, Amy was tirelessly working to improve the quality of training received by social workers employed by the Department. In addition to rigorous course work that she administered herself, she strongly encouraged her employees to gain additional training and experience with outside agencies. As noted above, the earliest workers had trained in Denver and later employees were also sent for periods of training in other cities. As professional standards rose, the Department kept apace and eventually encouraged its workers to seek schooling in the developing colleges of social work around the nation.¹¹

Amy was always concerned that each member of her staff reach her full potential, not merely for the benefit of the Department or the community, but more importantly for the

¹⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹¹ Leona Fetzer Wintch Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of author; Pohlman Oral History.

individual involved. This led her to encourage them in the development of their abilities and to strengthen their sense of self-confidence. While Amy was always very focused on her work, she never lost sight of the aspirations and potential of those with whom she came in contact. Because of her natural and honest concern, those who shared her labors in the Relief Society often remembered her most of all for her kindness and sympathetic encouragement.¹²

For Amy, it was imperative that the best methods be used in performing the work of the Social Services. This required not only a well-trained work force in the Department, but a well informed leadership in the stakes and wards. To this end, the Social Service Institutes continued and in June of 1922 she was again assisted by Dr. Edward T. Devine, Arthur Beeley, and Dean John C. Swenson in delivering a series of lectures at a B.Y.U. leadership week.¹³

As noted earlier, the approach to charity adopted by the Church required a close working relationship between bishops and ward Relief Society presidents. To determine the extent to which this already existed, the General Board circulated a questionnaire in December of 1921 to each stake in Salt Lake County. The result of this survey showed "a

¹² Wintch Oral History; Pohlman Oral History; Gertrude Gaarth Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author.

¹³ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 17.

great lack of cooperation." As a result, in January the Board requested the Presiding Bishopric to write the bishops in the county to explain the importance of the work and to solicit their assistance.¹⁴

Throughout 1922, Amy's activities continued to increase unabated, and now, another opportunity came to further her goals to improve conditions for the needy. Her close friend on the General Board, Jennie Hyde, had been active in Republican politics for years and was then serving as a national Republican committeewoman. In September, she called Amy to ask her if she would be willing to be nominated as a candidate for the legislature at the state Republican convention being held that afternoon. The women of the party had worked through the previous night at the caucus to secure the approval of the male delegates for a short list of women to be considered at the convention. After consulting with Richard and a few close friends, Amy decided to take advantage of the opportunity and easily won the nomination.¹⁵

Unexpected responsibilities immediately came her way, the first of which was the matter of a cash contribution to the party. "Next," she lamented, "I was expected to help

¹⁴ Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁵ Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1945), 82 Richard R. Lyman Journal, September 18, 1922, Richard R. Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Department, HBLL.

with the campaign itself by going wherever I was sent, both early and late in the day, to speak before political meetings." Added to her already busy schedule, this was a very difficult task which she found all the more trying because it required her to speak in a highly partisan manner: "I found that I was expected to point out the virtues of one party and the weakness of the other." She concluded that she was neither properly versed nor skilled in politics, and was not even familiar with the issues of the campaign, so instead of following the usual strategy, she talked about women. The Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing women the vote had only recently been ratified, and many still held to the belief that women belonged in the home and were temperamentally unsuited for a role in government. Amy turned these arguments on their head by citing how those virtues traditionally ascribed to women because of their experience as mothers and homemakers endowed them with a "special knowledge of human needs and humanistic rights," which made them important assets to lawmaking bodies. This made it imperative that she join with other women in the state legislature so "that there should be enough women to foster and secure necessary humanitarian social action."¹⁶

This unconventional strategy worked well enough to win her a place among the four women elected to the legislature

¹⁶ Lyman, In Retrospect, 82-83.

that year. She reported that each of them was treated well by the men and received significant committee assignments. In recognition of her welfare work, Amy was appointed chairman of the Public Health Committee and vice-chairman of the Education Committee. She served additionally as member of the Labor and Appropriation committees. Honored by these opportunities for service, the highlight of her term was the opportunity to introduce legislation providing for Utah's acceptance of the Sheppard-Towner Act which distributed funds to the states for maternity and infancy care.¹⁷

The Federal Maternity and Infancy Act of 1921, more commonly known as the Sheppard-Towner Act, was designed to combat the unusually high rate of infant and maternal mortality in the United States. Through the cooperative efforts of federal and state governments it was designed to aid in the establishment of clinics where prenatal care could be provided for mothers, and children could be screened for life-threatening or debilitating diseases or disabilities. The act was also intended to inform the public through educational conferences and the distribution of literature about maternal and infant health care. The first year it provided an appropriation of \$1,480,000 which was to be followed each year thereafter with a disbursement of \$1,240,000 until the act expired in June of 1927. This broke down to a distribution of \$5,000 to each state with

¹⁷ Ibid., 83.

another \$5,000 available on a matching grant basis and with the remainder to be divided according to population and on the basis of additional matching funds. These allocations were dependent upon each participating state's passing enabling legislation to accept the provisions of the act.¹⁸

While the Sheppard-Towner Act was making its way through Congress, the Relief Society had been taking its own steps in the interest of maternal and infant care. During the First World War, the wheat stored by the Relief Society had been sold in the interest of national defense, and the money received placed in a special fund with the Presiding Bishopric where it accrued a substantial amount of annual interest. Now, the General Board secured the approval of the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric for the establishment of a maternity home in Salt Lake City to be financed by this interest.¹⁹ At a meeting of the Board on July 28, 1921, one week after Senate passage of Sheppard-Towner, Amy suggested that "a movement to establish a maternity home in Salt Lake City be considered as a movement

¹⁸ Loretta L. Hefner, "The National Women's Relief Society and the U.S. Sheppard-Towner Act," Utah Historical Quarterly 50 (Summer 1982): 256; J. Stanley Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in 1920s," Journal of American History 55 (March 1969): 781-82. See also chapters 6 and 7 of Lela B. Costin, Two Sisters for Social Justice: A Biography of Grace and Edith Abbott (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), which contains an extremely informative discussion of the Sheppard-Towner Act and its effects.

¹⁹ Hefner, "Sheppard-Towner," 256-57.

in the interest of maternity and motherhood throughout the Church." She advocated the continuation of this effort through the establishment of other, smaller facilities throughout the region to be staffed by trained nurses.²⁰ After discussion, the proposal was agreed to by the Board and resubmitted to the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric who added their approval to this enlarged program. Presented in the October conference of the Relief Society, it met with encouragement and praise.²¹

Amy's election in November, 1922, made her a member of the first session of the legislature meeting in Utah after the Sheppard-Towner Act was signed into law. She sponsored the bill accepting the provisions of the measure which passed without a dissenting vote in either House or Senate. With financing from both federal and state funds, the Relief Society cooperated with state agencies in the activities prescribed under the act's provisions, and nearly every stake enthusiastically participated in the work, creating hospitals and ward Relief Society maternity closets. As a result, Amy noted in her autobiography, the infancy and maternal mortality rates in the state decreased markedly.²²

²⁰ Relief Society General Board Minutes, July 28, 1921, as quoted in Hefner, "Sheppard-Towner," 257.

²¹ "Maternity Bill Passes," Relief Society Magazine 9 (February 1922): 74; Lemon, "Sheppard-Towner Act," 778.

²² See Hefner, "Sheppard-Towner," 258-63; Lyman, In Retrospect, 83. Hefner indicates that infant mortality fell 19 percent from 1921 to 1928, while maternal mortality fell

While serving as a member of the legislature Amy was also involved in the sponsorship of a bill promoting protection of municipal water supplies (a cause for which she was undoubtedly sympathetic because of her earlier experiences in Ithaca) and another empowering regents of state colleges to assist faculty members in securing old-age pensions. While productive, her experience with the law-making body was not all positive. She praised the women legislators for their diligence and open mindedness, but more importantly, she felt they exercised an extremely beneficial influence by not yielding to the graft and corruption she found so prevalent in the capitol.²³ It is not known whether the unsavory realities of politics disillusioned her or whether, as friends and family believed, she simply accomplished her legislative goals and felt her time would be better spent elsewhere, but she never again sought public office. Though she remained interested in politics and public affairs, she chose to exert her influence by pursuing her goals through other means.²⁴

While she dealt with the challenges of the legislature, the work of the Social Services Department continued to

8 percent in the same period.

²³ Lyman, In Retrospect, 83-84.

²⁴ Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of author; Mark Allen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of author; Pohlman Oral History.

expand. Increasing demands on the employment bureau claimed the full attention of its new head, Evelyn Moyle, and led to a letter of June 20, 1923, making a request, through the General Board, to the Presiding Bishopric for an increase of \$100 per month in the Department's allowance. Using the opportunity to cite the accomplishments of the Department, the letter noted the increased good will and respect gained for the Church through its activities. By cooperating with other agencies both within Salt Lake City and throughout the nation, the letter stated, "prejudice had been broken down and respect gained for the methods of the Church in trying to handle its own social problems in an approved manner." Church leaders apparently agreed and after consultation with the First Presidency, Presiding Bishop Charles W. Nibley wrote Relief Society President Williams that they were pleased to be able to provide the additional funds.²⁵

The work of the Social Services continued to expand in other ways as well. In March, 1923, Amy began an association with L.D.S. hospital that would last until 1940. At its request, she delivered a series of yearly lectures to the graduating class of nurses on various aspects of hospital social work. In 1928, this training was expanded

²⁵ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 17.

at the request of the superintendent of nurses to include field work with the Relief Society Social Services.²⁶

In the summer of 1924, Amy recommended that the General Board consider the matter of summer vacations in the country for some of Salt Lake's poor and malnourished children. The Board approved and with the assistance of several generous donors and in cooperation with some of the rural stakes the first group, totaling thirty-eight children, was sent off. Each was first weighed and examined at the Community Clinic in order to enable a later determination of the degree of benefit they would derive through the program. The results were impressive. After spending two weeks or more away from home, every child gained weight and all returned in improved health. As important to Amy was the emotional benefit the children derived from the opportunity to have a vacation from the squalid conditions in their city neighborhoods. While recalling the advantages of the program, she cited a letter from one little boy who wrote the Relief Society office telling what a wonderful time he was having riding horses, feeding the chickens and pigs, and helping to "pick the eggs." This program continued each year until 1928 and extended the opportunity to 269 children in all.²⁷

²⁶ Ibid., 17; Vera White Pohlman, In Memoriam: Amy Brown Lyman, 1872-1959: Biographical Summary and Funeral Services, (Salt Lake City: Privately Published, 1960), 13.

²⁷ Lyman, "Social Service Work," 18; Lyman, In Retrospect, 67-68.

While her work at the office continued unabated, her pace at home was similarly hectic. Glancing at an account of her and Richard's activities and travels during this period leaves one wondering where they found any time for a home life. Balancing two demanding careers with the needs of a family, Amy was experiencing a plight common to a later generation but unusual for her own. While she was without question a woman of extraordinary talents and energy, in light of later events, the stresses of this lifestyle undoubtedly took their toll on the Lymans' marriage. Their lifestyle seems to have been particularly difficult for Richard, yet he recognized the significance of Amy's work and its importance to her and remained supportive of her efforts and attentive to her needs. On her part, Amy did her best to maintain a normal family life. This was an important period for the Lyman children. Margaret was pursuing serious study of the cello which would eventually lead her to France but for now she combined undergraduate work at the University of Utah with summers spent at the Julliard School of Music in New York.²⁸ Wendell received his business degree in 1923 from the University of Utah and had married Rachel Ballif, daughter of Serge F. and Zelnora Ballif, the following June. Rachel and Wendell had been extremely popular on campus and by all accounts the union

²⁸ Richard R. Lyman Journal, 1922-1925, passim; Margaret Lyman Schreiner Reminiscences (Salt Lake City: Privately Published, 1987), iii-iv.

was a very happy one. In April of 1925, a daughter, Amy Kathryn, was born and all seemed to be going well. Amy and Richard socialized frequently with their son and daughter-in-law and had grown very close to Rachel; it was thus a great shock to the family when she died without warning of a cerebral hemorrhage on New Year's Eve, 1925.²⁹

Having been raised to strictly control her emotions, Amy rarely showed her inner feelings publicly, but this event rocked her to her soul. Vera Pohlman recalled Amy's phone call that night when she was so choked with emotion that it was difficult to understand her. She had called to ask Vera to come over to write Margaret, who was then in France, of the terrible news. Indicative of the depth of her grief was the Lymans' impatience when they still had not received Margaret's reply after a few weeks. They had taken great pains to instruct Vera to send the letter airmail and were chagrined when someone finally realized that this service did not yet extend past the East coast, and that the mail was shipped by ocean liner from that point on.³⁰

²⁹ John Zimmerman Brown, Autobiography of Pioneer John, 1820-1896 (Salt Lake City: John Zimmerman Brown, 1941), 467; Evelyn Ballif Woodruff Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author; Susan Elizabeth (Beth) Swensen Driggs Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of the author; Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Richard R. Lyman Journal, December 31, 1925 and January 1, 1926; Pohlman Oral History.

³⁰ Pohlman Oral History.

Wendell followed his mother's example in the crisis and remained outwardly in control throughout the trying days leading up to Rachel's funeral. Richard praised him and described his comportment as "manly," but inwardly Wendell had suffered a loss from which he would not recover. At his request Amy took in her granddaughter and, for all intents and purposes, raised the child as her own. She had always believed that things that could not be changed must be put behind you and now, as she would when she faced each successive tragedy that would come into her life, she summoned her enormous emotional strength, and simply went on, finding peace through her demanding work and in her new responsibility of raising her granddaughter.

CHAPTER VI

COUNSELOR

A number of activities claimed Amy's energies during the mid-nineteen-twenties. Reflecting her commitment to education in the fields of public health and social welfare, she used her own money in 1926 to institute two loan funds: one to assist those seeking training in public health nursing and the other for college women studying social work and social problems. Both of these funds were later supported by the Relief Society, and the latter was designated the Amy Brown Lyman Social Service Loan and Scholarship Fund in 1931.¹

In the Social Services Department, the matter of adoptions became increasingly important. Since 1916, the Relief Society had informally handled the placement of children in L.D.S. families. Physicians often called the general offices mentioning patients who would be giving up babies for adoption and seeking homes for them. As time went on, the Relief Society extended its services to help

¹ Vera White Pohlman, In Memoriam: Amy Brown Lyman, 1872-1959: Biographical Summary and Funeral Services (Salt Lake City: Privately Published, 1960), 15; Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman, (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1945), 72.

with medical care and even placed unwed mothers in homes before the birth of their children. By 1922, the need to formalize existing procedures with official recognition was discussed with the First Presidency of the Church. The matter was made more urgent by the passage of a measure in the 1923 legislature which required child-placement agencies in the state to be properly licensed. It was not until October of 1925, however, that the Relief Society through the Social Services Department was officially designated as the child-placing agency of the Church and another two years elapsed before the General Board obtained a license from the state to receive and place children for adoption.²

This period also saw Amy's greatest involvement with the National Council of Women, though, as noted, her association with the organization had begun in 1911. The Relief Society had enjoyed a long standing relationship with the Council over the years, earning its recognition and respect as Mormon women worked closely with leaders in the organization. Susa Young Gates served as chairman of the press committee in the early years of the century and, more

² Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Amy Brown Lyman, "Social Service Work in the Relief Society, 1917-1928, Including a Brief History of the Relief Society Social Service Department and Brief Mention of Other Relief Society and Community Social Service Activities," typescript, 16, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL); Lyman, In Retrospect, 66.

recently, Ruth May Fox, aide to the General Board of the Church's Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association, served as auditor from 1919 to 1925. Amy's leadership role began in 1923 when she filled an opening in the citizenship committee where she earned praise for her thoroughness and her speaking ability. From 1925 to 1927 she served as recording secretary and produced with the assistance of Vera Pohlman, a 200 page Year Book and Directory, which included a report of the Council's Fourteenth Convention in New York City in December of 1927. At the completion of her term as secretary in 1927, Amy was elected auditor where she served until 1929 when she assumed the position of third vice-president, which she held until 1934. In all she worked for ten consecutive years in the leadership of the organization and gained both the personal affection of national women's leaders and added respect for activities of the Relief Society.³

In 1926 when the original five year mandate of the Sheppard-Towner Act was nearing an end, Amy took the opportunity in October conference to reflect upon the accomplishments it had made possible. In Utah alone, the State Board of Health reported 132 health centers established where more than 30,000 pre-school children had been examined. Of particular pride for the Church was the

³ Lyman, In Retrospect, 92-93; Pohlman Oral History; Pohlman, In Memoriam, 17.

establishment of maternity chests by local Relief Society units (which were stocked with supplies needed for deliveries) and the founding and maintenance of the Cottonwood Maternity Hospital.⁴

While the expiration of the act was approaching, signs for its extension had been hopeful. By October legislation for its renewal had passed the House and was before the Senate where it hit unexpected obstacles. A coalition of conservative groups including the American Medical Association, Daughters of the American Revolution, Woman Patriots, and the Sentinels of the Republic saw the Act as an integral link of a Communist plot to subvert the American family by extending the power of the state. After the bill's overwhelming victory in the House, this coalition lobbied hard to kill it in the Senate. Prominent among its leaders was Utah's own conservative junior Senator, William H. King.⁵

⁴ Amy Brown Lyman, "The Federal Children's Bureau and the Sheppard-Towner Work," Relief Society Magazine 13 (December 1926): 26; Amy Brown Lyman, "Report: National Woman's Relief Society for Biennial Meeting of the National Council of Women, New York City, December, 1927," typescript, 2, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

⁵ J. Stanley Lemons, "The Sheppard-Towner Act: Progressivism in 1920s," Journal of American History 55 (March 1969): 784; Loretta L. Hefner, "The National Women's Relief Society and the U.S. Sheppard-Towner Act," Utah Historical Quarterly 50 (Summer 1982): 265; Lela B. Costin, Two Sisters for Social Justice: A Biography of Grace and Edith Abbott (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 144-49.

King was proving such an obstacle that Grace Abbott, who was head of the Children's Bureau, appealed to Amy and the Relief Society for help. Amy attempted to sway King with reports of what the act had accomplished in Utah and sent letters, telegrams, and even made a personal visit, but he remained unmoved and responded with a letter of his own outlining the reasons for his opposition to the legislation. In the middle of January he filibustered in response to the renewal effort and ridiculed his opponents, terming them "neurotic women, ...social workers who obtained pathological satisfaction in interfering with the affairs of other people..." and "Bolsheviks who did not care for the family and its perpetuity." He threatened to continue until the renewal effort was dead; his efforts only ceased when he was informed that an amendment was attached to the extension of the bill which automatically terminated it in June of 1929. Amy was baffled by the Senator's vitriolic opposition and with understatement concluded in a letter to Grace Abbott that "He certainly has very little appreciation for welfare work."⁶ Supporters of the bill had hoped for a more sympathetic environment in 1929 but were met with the same rabid opposition. As a result federal support of maternity

⁶ Hefner, "Sheppard-Towner," 265-66; Amy Brown Lyman to Grace Abbott, January 28, 1927, typescript, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

and child welfare languished until the adoption of the Social Security acts of the New Deal.⁷

Nineteen-twenty-seven had also proved eventful in the Lyman home. Daughter Margaret graduated from the University of Utah and married musical prodigy Alexander Schreiner on the seventh of June.⁸ Meanwhile, the frantic pace of Amy's schedule seems to have taken its toll on her health. For many years she had experienced periods when she did not sleep well and often lay awake in bed working and writing through the night. In order to prevent disturbing Richard, she had moved to a separate bedroom and had acquired a hospital bed to facilitate her activities. She grew accustomed to working there and found it an opportunity to conserve energy while keeping up with her activities. After extended trips on Relief Society business she would sometimes stay in bed for two or three days at a stretch and would often remain there when her secretary came to the house to take dictation. Despite these efforts to preserve her health, by the end of the year, it had deteriorated noticeably. Consultation with her physicians revealed that her condition was life threatening. They informed her that she was suffering from kidney disease and recommended a procedure that was unusual for its time: removal of the afflicted organ. Unwilling to publicly disclose her

⁷ Hefner, "Sheppard-Towner," 266-267.

⁸ Brown, Autobiography, 467.

personal problems, Amy arranged to have the necessary surgery performed at the Mayo Clinic after the December meeting of the National Council of Women. The surgery went well, but a year later Amy had still not recovered fully. Friends and family members had sensed that something was amiss, but her pace did not noticeable lag and it was not until years later that they knew of the surgery.⁹

Other changes came the following year when, in October of 1928, Clarissa Williams resigned from her position as Relief Society General President because of declining health. Second Counselor Louise Y. Robison was called in her place and Amy received a change in responsibility from General Secretary to First Counselor, which surprisingly left her with less influence in the affairs of the Relief Society. Insiders had known for years that Amy had been the moving force behind many of the organization's innovations during the last two administrations. She had become so influential that in February of 1928, Annie Wells Cannon, daughter of Emmeline B. Wells and member of the General Board, had complained to Church president Heber J. Grant that then President Williams was not even listening to her counselors but instead allowing Amy to run the Relief

⁹ Pohlman Oral History; Amy Brown Lyman to Margaret Lyman Schreiner, December 23, 1927, holograph, n.p., Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL; W.F. Braasch, M.D. to Mrs. Richard R. Lyman, January 8, 1929, typescript, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

Society. Amy acknowledged on at least one occasion the disproportionate burden she had assumed.¹⁰

Presidents Wells and Williams had welcomed Amy's assumption of daily responsibilities; each was considerably older than she and seemed undisturbed by any sense of competition from the younger woman, Williams particularly had been a strong supporter of Amy's efforts in the Social Services department. In contrast, Louise Robison, only six years older than Amy, was unwilling to relinquish her dominant role in the organization. Not as well known as Williams or Wells had been, she had come to the General Board from relative obscurity, and doubtlessly found it a daunting task to compete with the seemingly superhuman energies and accomplishments of Amy Brown Lyman. Irritating the situation was a personality conflict between the two women: Amy's direct and sometimes outspoken manner seems to have been threatening to the more soft spoken Robison.¹¹ Differences in philosophy may also have affected their

¹⁰ Thomas G. Alexander, "Between Revivalism and the Social Gospel: The Latter-day Saint Social Advisory Committee, 1916-1922," BYU Studies 23 (Winter 1983): 37; Pohlman Oral History.

¹¹ Pohlman Oral History; Leona Fetzer Wintch Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Mary Schindler Nielsen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author; Parry Sorensen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author. Though Lyman never spoke of a conflict in their presence, each of the above informants knew it existed and had similar views as to its nature and cause.

relationship. While not abandoning that which Amy had been so influential in building, like others, Robison may have felt the Relief Society was becoming too much of a social welfare organization.¹²

Amy's strong emphasis on social work was perhaps a result of the closeness she felt to the problems of the community. In a common observation through the years, she would note that those who did not directly participate in the work simply did not understand the pressing human needs involved. For Amy, it was always important to have an overview of every situation and in light of her perspective, she saw no reason to cease her efforts which were aimed at developing more effective means of performing the Relief Society's role in charity work.

For whatever reason, or combination of reasons, Amy did not enjoy the closeness to Louise Robison that she had known with both Emmeline B. Wells and Clarissa Williams. Yet, as she had done before with Susa Young Gates, she suppressed any outward show of differences in the best interest of the organization; however, as time went on, she found herself playing a more limited role in the leadership of the Relief Society. Nevertheless, she did what she could to strengthen the Social Services during the Robison years,

¹² Alexander, "Social Advisory Committee," 37.

and, always a loyal member of the organization, later give Robison credit for many of her own accomplishments.¹³

One early project during Robison's administration was the Relief Society's role in the creation of the State Training School for the Feeble Minded in American Fork.¹⁴ For many years Amy had been aware of the need for such a facility and had joined in recommending its creation while she was part of the State Welfare Commission in 1923. By 1929, she had worked tirelessly over many years seeking funding for its establishment. As part of the Legislative Committee of the General Board, which included Annie Wells Cannon, Inez Knight Allen, and Ida P. Beal, she had secured the cooperation of President Robison for a petition drive among Relief Society sisters in support of a legislative appropriation for the creation of the institution. Over 25,000 signatures were gathered while the Legislative Committee of the General Board and local Relief Society leaders joined in lobbying efforts which included personal visits to legislators. As a result of all this activity, a

¹³ Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History; Susan Elizabeth (Beth) Swensen Driggs Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of the author. Each of the above informants used terms like "under used" and "ignored" to describe Amy's position during this period.

¹⁴ While the more sensitive euphemisms "mentally retarded" and "developmentally handicapped" are more commonly used today, the term "feeble minded" was frequently used by reformers of the 1920s and at the time was a significant improvement over other terms which had been previously used.

\$300,000 appropriation was passed during the 1929 legislative session to finance the establishment of the school.¹⁵

Amy was appointed by the governor to a five-member committee responsible for selecting a site and after reviewing several possibilities, a location in American Fork was selected. This was only the beginning of Amy's long standing association with the institution. In May of 1930 she received another appointment by the governor, this time to the school's newly created board of trustees, a position she held until the board was reorganized in 1941.¹⁶

Mark Allen, who served as assistant superintendent at the school during those years, recalled Amy's concerned interest in the affairs of the school. Composed of those prominent in the field of medicine and social work, the board served without pay and its members seldom, if ever, missed a meeting. Each trustee was strong-willed and committed to the good of the institution; differences of opinions sometimes led to heated arguments during board meetings. Amy took an active role in these discussions and

¹⁵ "Utah Provides for the Care of the Feeble-Minded," Relief Society Magazine 16 (May 1929): 253-54; Loretta L. Hefner, "This Decade Was Different: Relief Society Social Services Department, 1919-1929," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 15 (Autumn 1982): 70; National Woman's Relief Society, Handbook of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1931), 60.

¹⁶ "Care of the Feeble-Minded," 253; Pohlman, In Memoriam, 14.

often expressed firmly held opinions of her own. Though well informed, "she wasn't always right," Allen remembered, "but she always had the best interests of the institution at heart."¹⁷

A second project of this period began during the closing months of Clarissa William's administration. Because Relief Society officers had assumed increased responsibilities during the dramatic changes of the previous decades, Williams saw the need for the creation of a comprehensive manual to be used as a reference by the local leaders of the organization. As a result of this concern, Amy and Annie Wells Cannon, with the assistance of Vera Pohlman, were given the assignment to produce a Relief Society handbook. Not finished until 1931, it consisted of a lengthy history of the Relief Society written by Amy, followed by a series of brief biographies of previous Relief Society presidents written by Cannon. Rounding it out was comprehensive review of policy and procedure produced by Amy and Vera Pohlman.¹⁸

As these efforts with the training school and the handbook progressed toward completion, economic conditions in the nation began to deteriorate rapidly. Utah's economy had never fully recovered from its post-war decline, and now

¹⁷ Mark Allen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of the author.

¹⁸ Pohlman Oral History; Handbook of the Relief Society, passim.

more trying times awaited the state with the onset of the Great Depression. The resulting upheaval overwhelmed existing social agencies including the Social Services Department. Developing the resources and organizations able to deal with a crisis of this magnitude resulted in a national revolution in the administration of relief and brought fundamental changes to the activities of the Relief Society.

CHAPTER VII
THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Utah's economic dependence on mining and agriculture which left it particularly vulnerable to the effects of the Great Depression. The mining industry was one of the first to suffer, while agriculture reeled under the double blows of declining markets and a severe drought. Increasing unemployment rapidly overtaxed the resources of the county commissions that were legally responsible for the distribution of relief. By the fall of 1930 municipalities in urban areas were forced to supplement county efforts through the creation of emergency work programs such as snow shoveling and wood cutting. As conditions continued to worsen the following year, local governments joined with private charity organizations to form committees to coordinate their relief activities. As a result of this cooperation, contributions in cash and commodities were solicited and used to establish work relief programs, employment exchanges, and commissaries for the distribution of food, clothing, and fuel. These efforts were

administered through existing private and public agencies including the L.D.S. Church.¹

The Relief Society Social Service Department played an active role in these efforts by serving as a liaison between the county and the local bishops. In response to the requests of the latter the Department cleared cases and issued commodity orders. Meanwhile, Church leaders realized the need to clarify and strengthen their own procedures with a more unified approach to the distribution of relief. As a first step, a pamphlet, Ward Charity: Details of Administration, was issued by the Presiding Bishopric's office in February of 1930 which encourage local units, particularly in urban areas, to create stake and ward employment committees. Those in the stake were to consist of a member of the high council or stake presidency and a Relief Society stake social aide who would be drawn from either the Relief Society stake presidency or the stake board. The aide was to serve as a contact officer between Church leaders and the county; it was expected that both members of the committee be selected on the basis of their

¹ State of Utah, First Biennial Report of the State Department of Public Welfare, July 1, 1936-June 30, 1938, With supplementary data January, 1935 through December, 1938 and a Review of Public Aid in Utah Prior to Establishment of the State Department of Public Welfare in May, 1935 (Salt Lake City: State of Utah, Bureau of Research and Statistics, 1939), 3-4. This report, written and edited by Vera Pohlman while she was serving as Director of the Utah Bureau of Research and Statistics of the State Department of Public Welfare, is an extraordinarily useful document for tracing the relief activities in the state through 1938.

familiarity with employment opportunities in the area. Likewise, in the wards a similar committee was to be formed with representatives from each of Melchizedek priesthood quorums and a representative from the Relief Society. The pamphlet reemphasized the Relief Society's responsibility to work under the direction of priesthood leaders to investigate requests for relief within ward boundaries and develop plans to assist families by providing free medical treatment, budgeting assistance, and temporary relief with cash and commodities in cases of emergency.²

This cooperative program necessitated renewed training of local Relief Society leaders in social welfare methods, so at the request of the Presiding Bishopric, the Social Service Institutes, which had not been held since the change in the Relief Society presidency in 1928, were resumed in the summer of 1930 under Amy's direction. The first was

² I have relied heavily on the work of Jill Derr to place Amy's activities during this period in context. See Jill Mulvay Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity to Make Way for Welfare, 1930-1944," in Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher eds., New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1987), 245-46. See also: Ward Charity: Details of Administration (Salt Lake City: Presiding Bishopric, 1930), 3-5; Evelyn Hodges Lewis Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tapes in possession of the author. The Ward Charity pamphlet clearly states, however, that Church relief was only to be turned to in emergencies. The ultimate goal was to provide more permanent solutions by directing those in need to employment or to their families or the county for long term aid (see p. 3). Evelyn Hodges Lewis indicated that Church relief was very temporary in nature and that assistance for rent and utilities, for example, was provided for no more than one month (Lewis Oral History).

attended by delegates from twenty-five stakes and involved six weeks of intensive course work on the same principles laid out over the previous decade. Amy Whipple Evans, then supervisor of the Social Service Department, assisted with the instruction and stressed repeatedly the importance of preventative over curative methods. Genevieve Thornton took the delegates to state and county institutions including the State Hospital in Provo and the County Hospital in Salt Lake where they noted improvements and observed conditions. A second institute attended by representatives from twenty-three stakes began on the fifth of January and ran to the fourteenth of February with a third, attended by twenty-three delegates, running from the fourth of October to the thirteenth of November, 1931.³

Mirroring conditions in the rest of the nation, the economy of Utah continued to worsen. Despite the best efforts of charitable organizations (including the Church) and local governments, by the spring of 1932, resources had been strained to the breaking point. In July Congress passed the Emergency Relief and Construction Act which created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to provide loans to states, counties, and municipalities, but in order to receive these funds, the states first had to certify the

³ Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 246,248; Laura A. Watkins, "What the Social Service Institute Means to Us," Relief Society Magazine 18 (January, 1931): 225-26; "Notes to the Field," Relief Society Magazine 18, (April, 1931): 225.

inadequacy of local resources. To facilitate the gathering of the necessary information the Social Services Department was requested by Salt Lake's City and County governments to assist in a survey to determine the extent of unemployment and magnitude of relief needs. Together with Evelyn Hodges, Amy combined some representative case histories with the statistics compiled from the survey and presented this material at the hearings being held at the state capitol to assess Utah's need for the federal funds. This material was then forwarded to Washington, D.C., together with other evidence documenting conditions in the state.⁴

In August, 1932, the first RFC funds arrived in Utah and were distributed to the counties through the Committee on Emergency Relief which had been appointed by Governor George H. Dern. The state's role remained limited to disbursement until the following March when the legislature granted the governor full authority to administer relief through public and private organizations. In an arrangement worked out among local agencies, the Church assumed responsibility for all relief cases where the head of household was L.D.S. Anticipating the increased responsibilities that would come to the Department as a

⁴ State of Utah, First Biennial Report, 4; Derr. "Changing Relief Society Charity," 251.

result of this agreement, the Social Services moved to enlarge its staff.⁵

At the same time officials at the Salt Lake County Welfare Department were desperately seeking trained social workers and approached Amy for help. She encouraged some of the Department's employees to make the move and provided a list of six women who she felt were particularly qualified for county positions. Vera Pohlman was one of these women. While she had never actually served as a social worker, she had assisted Amy for years in the administration of the department and in the production of statistical and educational material. Amy's confidence in her abilities proved well founded, and on September 9, 1932, she was hired as manager of the business office of the County Welfare Department where she supervised twenty women in the transcription and filing of case histories. In January of 1934 she moved to the newly created Utah State Department of Public Welfare where she headed the Bureau of Research and Statistics, in which position she remained until called to be General Secretary of the Relief Society in 1940.⁶

⁵ State of Utah, First Biennial Report, 4,6; Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 252; Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of author; Leona Fetzer Wintch Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of author.

⁶ Pohlman Oral History.

The changes that came with the introduction of RFC funds added dramatically to the workload of the Social Services and led the Department's staff to work long after normal hours and into the weekends clearing cases for food, clothing, and fuel orders. There was now little time for the types of aid offered in the past, which involved long term contact and counseling. These increased responsibilities revealed a critical shortage of trained case workers in the Church, and word began to circulate that the Relief Society was willing to accept untrained volunteers. Leona Fetzer (Wintch) accepted such a position in May of 1933. Because funds were tight, at first her pay was only in bus tokens for the trip to and from the office. A few months later she received \$25 per month which was raised to \$60 in three months when the federal minimum wage took effect.⁷

Amy took charge of the necessary training herself, Wintch recalled rigorous course work, question periods, and tests combined with on the job experience doing home studies. Many of the women who volunteered were veterans of earlier Social Service Institutes, some of whom were older women, local leaders who adjusted poorly to the demands of

⁷ Lewis Oral History; Wintch Oral History.

clearing a case and using modern business machines in their work.⁸

During this difficult period, tragedy again struck the Lyman family. Wendell had moved home with little Amy Kathryn after Rachel's death but despite the passage of time, he continued to find it very difficult to adjust to his loss. While he remained active in business affairs and socialized often with friends, his inability to fully overcome his emotional scars deeply troubled Amy and Richard. He sometimes kept very late hours which they frowned upon and he drank socially and had some other minor Word of Wisdom problems which created strains in their relationship with him. Richard felt these matters of such import that shortly before departing on an lengthy tour on Church business in April, he gave Wendell an ultimatum to straighten up or face being cut out of the family business. Despite these problems, Wendell had remained attentive to his parents needs and was very well liked by both friends and family.⁹

On Saturday, May 13, 1933, Amy returned after an afternoon of work at the Social Services and Richard, who

⁸ Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 252; Wintch Oral History; Pohlman Oral History.

⁹ Richard R. Lyman Journal, April 15, 1933, Richard R. Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL; Susan Elizabeth (Beth) Driggs Oral History, Interviewed by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author; Wintch Oral History; Pohlman Oral History.

had recently completed his extended trip, had just arrived home from a late luncheon at the Lion House. Richard was settling down to a quiet afternoon at home when he was startled by Amy running into the house in hysterics. She had just found Wendell dead in the garage. The newspaper accounts indicated that he had been working on his car with the engine running and was asphyxiated by carbon monoxide fumes when he closed the door to keep dry during a rain shower. Reportedly he had a wrench in his hand which led Richard to later speculate that he had been looking for a leak in the radiator when the accident occurred.¹⁰

Richard and Amy were devastated by the blow, Richard to the extent that he found himself unable to write in his journal for more than a year. Amy keenly felt the pain but held her emotions out of the public view. At the funeral she sat with head bowed in grief but remained outwardly in control. As before, she put the tragedy behind her, and focused her attention on her work and on eight-year-old Amy Kathryn who was now more dependent than ever on her grandparents.¹¹

¹⁰ "Funeral Set On Tuesday for Business Man: Wendell B. Lyman Victim of Carbon Monoxide Gas," Deseret News, May 15, 1933, 1; Richard R. Lyman Journal, May 29, 1934.

¹¹ Ibid.; Evelyn Ballif Woodruff Oral History, Interviewed by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author; Driggs Oral History; Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History.

Demands on the Social Services were at a peak during this period, and Amy's work provided a particularly good diversion from her grief. Franklin Roosevelt had taken office in March, and the first of his New Deal programs, the Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933 (FERA) was approved on May 12. While the act extended federal participation in relief for two more years, it changed the nature of funding from loans to direct grants to the states. Utah's first allocation under the new plan arrived on the first of June.¹²

In August word came that the federal government had ruled that public funds must be spent by public agencies. Because existing government structures in the state were unable to adequately administer relief, private agencies were federalized to comply with these new guidelines. As a result, the Social Service Department was temporarily designated as District 7 of the Salt Lake County Department of Public Welfare until adequate public administration could be created. Workers during this period received half their pay from the county and half from the Church.¹³

These demands also led to a change in the organization of the Social Services at the end of the year. Responsibilities were split in December when Amy Whipple

¹² State of Utah, First Biennial Report, 5.

¹³ State of Utah, First Biennial Report, 6; Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 255-56; Wintch Oral History.

Evans took charge of the department's activities as District 7 and Amy devoted her attention to training Relief Society women in social welfare techniques. She had continued to teach classes in social work during these changes and presided over another Social Service Institute in January of 1934.¹⁴ She also began teaching a series of classes on sociology and social work at Brigham Young University. A student who attended one of these sessions recalled it as "a class not to be missed." Her description of the experience gives valuable insight into Amy's characteristics as a teacher:

Barely getting there on time, in a rush from Salt Lake, she came each week, with lots of books and papers. However, she'd come to the front of her desk, and with a little hop (she was not tall), she'd perch on the desk, and begin to talk....We were as one, as she wove a spell over us. Delightful, insightful, funny, tremendously earnest, she opened the range of the Church social work programs, and how they applied to us and our future assignments or work opportunities.

We felt she saw and recognized each one of us....After class she would stay a little and answer questions and visit briefly, and then off again in a little whirlwind.

....Warm, witty, kind, fun, knowledgeable, and an excellent teacher, she added a fresh dimension to my life....AMY BROWN LYMAN is a person one does not forget.¹⁵

While involved in these efforts outside the department, Amy remained concerned that the training her case workers

¹⁴ Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 256

¹⁵ Virginia Brand Smith, "Amy Brown Lyman," typescript, March 24, 1992, n.p., copy in possession of the author.

received be continually improved. As professional standards rose in the field of social work, she encouraged talented employees to seek additional education at the better schools across the nation. This was important not only to the proper functioning of the Social Services but also because the Department set the pace for charity work in the Church. In this way she knew her staff would be adequately prepared to fulfill their dual role as caseworkers and as teachers to local Relief Society women.¹⁶

As mentioned previously, Amy's concern for proper training extended beyond the requirements of the department and focused often on the needs of the individual. Leona Fetzer Wintch remembered fondly the role Amy played in her own development. Her mother's lengthy illness and eventual death had hindered her earlier studies, and higher education in the depths of the Depression was considered an unwarranted luxury by her father and step-mother. Recognizing her natural abilities, Amy sent her to discuss continuing her education with Dr. Arthur Beeley at the University of Utah, who, after reviewing her record, bluntly told her that she showed no potential. A short time later, when Beeley asked Amy to send someone to lecture to one of his classes on social work, she sent Leona. Upon her return, Amy asked her wryly, "Well, do you feel vindicated now?" She did and soon, with Amy's encouragement, went to

¹⁶ Wintch Oral History.

the University of Southern California where she graduated with honors in social work.¹⁷

Amy and Richard also did a great deal to help others through this difficult time. A nephew remembered approaching them for a loan to enable him to continue his studies in civil engineering at Stanford. "I knew that they were the ones you could turn to at times like that." The Lymans provided the money and gave similar help to several others. From the early days of the marriage their home had remained open to family members who were finishing school or attending the University of Utah. This period was no exception, and their personal generosity in helping those in need was a prominent characteristic remembered by family and co-workers.¹⁸

Yet, while generous with others, Amy and Richard remained especially careful not to lavish money on themselves. Though her busy schedule often required the employment of outside help in her home, Amy took the time to save where she could, whether that meant reducing dry-cleaning bills by cleaning Richard's everyday suits on the back porch with a can of gasoline, or preparing a freshly killed chicken from a relative's farm. She was always a

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Keith Hayes Oral History, Interviewed by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of author; Driggs Oral History; Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of author.

careful manager and never afraid to work a little harder to save a few dollars. Since the early years of struggle in her marriage when serious economizing was necessary in order to repay Richard's loan, she had also been careful not to spend too much on her clothing which, though always clean and neat, was never overly stylish or ostentatious. When working in the Social Service Department, especially during the Depression, she often seemed to "dress down" when going about her duties in sensitivity to their clients. She "made over" old clothing, sewing a top from one dress to the bottom of another and while an excellent seamstress, and careful about matching the colors, the origin of her attire was obvious.¹⁹

Later after she was Relief Society president this frugality with clothing became somewhat of a humorous problem. She had one dress in particular which she wore frequently, and while she took good care of it, it was worn and out of fashion. In recognition of her role as the Society's representative when guests dropped in, the women in her presidency felt it important that she update her wardrobe. So counselor Donna Sorensen was given the delicate task of relaying these concerns through Amy's daughter, Margaret Schreiner, who passed the word along to

¹⁹ Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History.

her mother who, without comment, added some new dresses to her wardrobe.²⁰

While never forgetting the small details in her work, Amy always kept in mind an "overview" of the challenges facing the social worker. She followed a philosophy that had prevailed among Church leaders during the first three decades of the twentieth century which recognized a need for cooperation with government in matters of charity and relief. From this perspective, Church members had a right to turn to public assistance when in need since their taxes had helped support these same services in better times. In the October 1932 Conference of the Relief Society Amy, reiterated her continued acceptance of this view when she observed that the approved manner of assisting members through difficulty was to turn first to the family, then the county government, which, she observed, "is legally responsible" and last to the Church. She noted that the Church had "in the past assumed more of the burden of caring for those in need than it can carry," and while it was willing to help, it was "cooperating with other agencies and groups in placing responsibility where it rightfully belongs." It belonged, in her view, not only with the

²⁰ Pohlman Oral History.

families but especially the county governments who possessed more abundant resources than the Church.²¹

As the depression worsened, it became clear to those like Amy, who were closely involved with the administration of relief, that the resources of state and local governments and of private charitable organizations, including the Church, were wholly inadequate to deal with the magnitude of the crisis. At a meeting of the General Board in May of 1932 she noted a shift in thought among social workers and the general populace of the nation which had led the majority to believe "that the only source of relief in the future will be through federal channels as the States and local communities have just about exhausted their resources." In August of 1933 she again emphasized this shift in thought among social workers in another meeting of the board.²²

Many saw an increased role for the federal government in the distribution of relief as a logical step in the

²¹ Wintch Oral History; Amy Brown Lyman, "Transients and Transportation," Relief Society Magazine 19 (November 1932): 648-49. For a good description of the conflicts arising during the 1930s between this sympathetic view of the cooperation between Church and government and the more antagonistic views that would prevail, see D. Michael Quinn, J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1983). The chapter entitled "The Welfare of This People," 251-278, deals extensively with this conflict.

²² Relief Society General Board Minutes, 19 May, 1932 and 30 August, 1933 as cited in Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 251, 268, n.30.

development of social welfare, and Amy seems to have shared this view. Social workers had labored long and hard to prod government into assuming a greater share of the burden, and Amy had long looked for a more active role at all levels of government in dealing with social issues. Locally, she had worked tirelessly to get the Salt Lake County government to assume its legal share of the relief burden, and on the state level had orchestrated the campaign to assure financing for the Training School. For more than a decade she had actively supported federal efforts, notably the programs of the Shepherd-Towner Act. Now, as the federal government assumed a greater role in the administration of relief, she seemed to see this step as a necessary progression, an inevitable one, only hastened by the national emergency.

In December of 1933 the completion of the transfer of responsibility in the state for the administration of government relief to public agencies signaled the end of the Relief Society's role as District 7. As part of this change, six stake aides who had been employed in the Social Service Department at county expense were transferred to the County Welfare Department. With the accompanying expansion of county and state services, the role of the Relief Society in providing relief greatly diminished. After the flurry of activity that began in the twenties and greatly intensified with the onset of the Depression, the Relief Society now

began to contemplate a new approach in its charity activities.²³

With her understanding of the scope of the crisis Amy saw the changes that came with increased governmental responsibility as inevitable. And while the government had accepted primary responsibility, there still remained a large supplementary role to be played. There were still plenty of opportunities to provide service through charity to the members of the Church and the larger community. Amy remained sympathetic to a cooperative relationship between the Church and the government, as indicated by several statements made over the next decade.²⁴ Other Church leaders did not share that view, prominent among whom was counselor in the First Presidency, J. Reuben Clark.

While many social workers had come to see government intervention in positive terms, Clark, a veteran of thirty

²³ Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 256-57; State of Utah, First Biennial Report, 5,6; Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History; Lewis Oral History.

²⁴ Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 256-57. Two articles that appeared in the Relief Society Magazine during the early years of Amy's presidency indicate her continued sympathy with government relief efforts. Both were written by General Secretary Vera W. Pohlman at Amy's request. They emphasize the need for Relief Society workers to be familiar with government programs in order to help families in their wards and stakes. It is reiterated in the text that Church members have a right to these programs because they pay taxes. See Vera W. Pohlman, "Public Welfare Provisions," Relief Society Magazine 27 (November 1940): 767-75 and Vera White Pohlman, "Child-Welfare Provisions of the Social Security Act," Relief Society Magazine 28 (March 1941): 183-95; see also Pohlman Oral History.

years of public service for the federal government, had learned to be distrustful of politics and governmental power. He had long been unsettled by the close cooperation of the Church with public agencies, and the creation of the FERA in 1933 disturbed him to the point that he began to work on a plan where the Church would assume full responsibility for the care of its "faithful poor."²⁵

Clark's views were not shared by all Church leaders at this time. Presiding Bishop Sylvester Q. Cannon was particularly unreceptive to them and strongly defended the traditional cooperation with government agencies as the most effective method in providing relief. Cannon had been chosen as one of three members of Utah's advisory committee for the Public Works Administration and in that capacity counseled stake leaders to work closely with county officials in the supervision of relief efforts. In 1933 he was able to block Clark's efforts to issue a pamphlet which advised members to look first to the Church in matters of relief. Instead, the Church issued another pamphlet, Care for the Poor, in 1934 which reiterated that members of the Church could rightly look to the county for relief and only then come to the Church.²⁶

Clark waited quietly for another year and a half for his opportunity. It came after Roosevelt signed the Social

²⁵ Quinn, J. Reuben Clark, 258-59.

²⁶ Ibid., 260-63.

Security Act in August of 1935, when a survey the following month revealed that ten times as many members were choosing public funds over Church relief. President Heber J. Grant was deeply disturbed by these figures and joined Clark during October Conference in severely chastising those members on the county rolls. A threatened termination of direct relief by the government in the following months tipped the scales further in Clark's favor. In April of 1936 his plan was officially announced at the Church's annual general conference.²⁷

The Church Security Program, as Clark's plan was known, placed the distribution of Church charity under the control of a central committee, which encouraged local units to produce commodities and develop enterprises to create employment for needy members. Through these efforts he hoped to supplant New Deal programs, which he felt were merely demoralizing doles. Over the course of the Depression the results of his efforts did bring a renewed involvement by Church members in relief, but the Church Security Program was never able to achieve Clark's goals. Its primary success, in the minds of those administering relief, was in supplementing, rather than supplanting, federal programs,

²⁷ Ibid., 264-65.

which were themselves unable to provide adequately for all of Utah's needy Church members.²⁸

Nevertheless, in the long run, the Church Security Plan led to important alterations in the part played by the Relief Society in the administration of Church relief, though it would take months and even years before the organization's new role was clearly defined. In the short run, however, the Security Plan brought some of the same changes that the Relief Society leaders had been advocating for many years, including greater cooperation between bishops and stake presidents with the Relief Society in the determination of need and the distribution of aid. While the Relief Society was now in more of a supportive role and less of an initiatory one, the responsibilities of the sisters were in many ways the same as they had been in previous years.²⁹ Many of the details of this cooperation between the Relief Society and the Church Security Program would be worked out over the next few years, but Amy was not able to fully participate in this process of clarification because a new series of challenges awaited her.

²⁸ Quinn, J. Reuben Clark, 266-268; Vera Pohlman to Mrs. Burton W. Musser, June 20, 1939, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI; Pohlman Oral History; Lewis Oral History.

²⁹ Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 260; Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History; Lewis Oral History.

CHAPTER VIII
MISSION INTERLUDE

In June of 1936, Richard was called as president of the European mission of the Church which required the Lymans to move to England. He was to be responsible for coordinating the activities of the several European missions, which at that time included all of Europe, the Middle East, and South Africa. Amy was to preside over the Relief Society, Y.L.M.I.A. and the Primary in the same areas. These new responsibilities came with no previous notice and caught the family completely by surprise. Amy was in California with Amy Kathryn visiting Margaret, while Richard was attending his regular meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when the announcement was published in the Deseret News. After a large farewell tribute, the couple left in September accompanied by their granddaughter Amy Kathryn and the family's housekeeper.¹

With the rise of fascism and the rearmament of Germany, tensions were high in Europe and many felt war was

¹ Richard R. Lyman Journal, January 17, 1937, Richard R. Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLL); Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman (Salt Lake City: General Board of the Relief Society, 1945), 123.

inevitable. Despite these forebodings, this period was a pleasant interlude for Amy and Richard. While both maintained active schedules they found that "far from home and from all local affairs and former personal problems, we were free to devote ourselves wholly to missionary work." This, they felt, "was a joy and satisfaction and an inspiration throughout."²

The European mission was headquartered in the same building as the offices of the English mission at No. 5 Gordon Square in London. The Lymans had to climb four floors to get to their living quarters which Amy, at sixty-four, found somewhat of a daily chore. Her only other complaint about living conditions concerned the coldness of the dwellings. She had long been sensitive to cold, and after their arrival she saw to it that the mission home was heated with unheard of liberality. It was reputed among the missionaries to be the warmest building in the country. She had fewer controls over conditions when she ventured from home and often found it warmer outdoors than it was inside. In a letter home she joked to the family that she often found herself going outside to warm up.³

Central heating also played a role in the selection of a school for Amy Kathryn. Amy sought out a facility for her

² Lyman, In Retrospect, 124.

³ Ibid., 124; Amy Brown Lyman to Dear Folks, February 15, 1937, typescript, 2-3, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author.

granddaughter that kept the temperature in the class rooms above sixty degrees. In line with her progressive views on education, she also avoided schools that resorted to corporal punishment. The one selected met these criteria, but ironically, as Amy Kathryn remembered, her grandmother was unaware that the students drank water from a common cup suspended from a chain at the faucet.⁴

Amy's first activity after arriving in England was to depart for the Triennial Meeting of the International Council of Women in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, where she served as an official delegate of the National Council. She traveled alone by train across Europe and, not knowing a word of any foreign language, was unable to read any of the signs. When she returned home she confided that her experiences on the journey had given her heart palpitations. Once, when walking from car to car she nearly fell to the tracks when she opened a door expecting to find the next coach and instead discovered it was the back of the moving train.⁵

The nine days of the conference were stimulating and exciting ones for Amy, who was exposed to many of the ethnic and national tensions present in Europe during the period.

⁴ Engar Oral History.

⁵ Amy Lyman Engar, "Amy Brown Lyman: Transcribed from a talk given at the University of Utah Institute, 'Women of the Restoration,' February 26, 1987," 10, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author.

While the experience gave her greater understanding of the obstacles to lasting peace, it also reinforced her views on the special role women could play in promoting international cooperation.⁶ In recognition of this, one of Amy's first projects in the mission was to encourage all Relief Society units in Europe to renew their affiliation with the International Council. Many had previously enjoyed such an association, but some areas had been allowed to lapse in their membership through insufficient encouragement by the previous mission leadership.⁷

In order to properly fulfill their responsibility to preside over the affairs of the Church, Richard and Amy had to be intimately familiar with conditions within each of the individual missions that were collectively under the jurisdiction of the European mission. To this end, they traveled widely to attend local branches and visit conferences in order to become acquainted with members and local leaders. In 1937 they visited the East German and Holland missions and in 1938 took an extended tour through all the European missions. Because of the lack of language

⁶ Amy Brown Lyman to Mrs. Ruth Haller Ottaway, National Council of Women, November 5, 1936, typescript, 1, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL; Amy Brown Lyman, "Report: International Council of Women Triennial Meeting, Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, September 28 to October 9, 1936," typescript, 29-30, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

⁷ Gertrude Gaarth Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author.

barriers, Amy was best able to associate with the Saints in Great Britain, whom she admired for "their courage, their faith, and their ability."⁸ These tours also allowed Richard and Amy to get acquainted with the presidents and their wives of each of the missions. Among this group, the Lymans were known to be especially approachable and concerned leaders. Mark B. Gaarth, president of the Danish mission, and his wife Gertrude were the youngest couple in the Church serving in such a role at that time. She recalled Amy's kindness and encouragement and special sensitivity to the insecurities that came with their assumption of such a responsible position at a relatively young age. As she had in the Social Service Department, Amy did not fail to perceive the needs of the individual as she pursued the goals of the organization.⁹

After she gained familiarity with conditions in the mission, Amy became busily involved in updating procedures and instituting innovations. Seeing a need for greater organizational efficiency, she introduced a system of standardized record keeping practices like those that she had created for the American Saints more than twenty years before. In another project she began a series of Social Service Institutes in the mission, which, typically ahead of

⁸ Lyman, In Retrospect, 129-31; Lyman to Dear Folks, 6-7.

⁹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 130-39; Gaarth Oral History.

her time, were adapted for use in the area by emphasizing the European tradition of social work.¹⁰

Tours to local units not only provide insight into mission affairs but also gave Amy the opportunity to do some sight-seeing. The same was true when friends or Church leaders came to visit as when Amy's close friend Alice Louis Reynolds arrived in England for an extended visit in early June of 1937. Alice had traveled widely during her years at B.Y.U., and this latest trip was her fourth visit to Europe. It would also prove to be her last as she would die of cancer in December of 1938. Alice and Amy made the most of this time together by attending the theater, visiting with old friends, and touring the countryside.¹¹

Later that month, Church President Heber J. Grant arrived in England to take part in the centennial celebration of the British mission. He was accompanied by his counselor J. Reuben Clark and Clark's wife Luacine Savage Clark. Despite Clark's and Amy's different approaches to relief, the Lymans and the Clarks enjoyed a close association and friendship during this period. Indeed, a highlight of Amy's summer was the extended tour of

¹⁰ "Amy Brown Lyman," Relief Society Magazine 27 (January, 1940): 5; Amy Brown Lyman, "Social Service Institutes--European Mission," typescript, i-xiii, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

¹¹ Amy Brown Lyman, A Lighter of Lamps: The Life Story of Alice Louise Reynolds (Provo Utah: Alice Louise Reynolds Club, 1947), 38,72.

the British mission they took together during which they enjoyed a lengthy sight-seeing trip by car where Clark, an avid reader and history buff, served as their guide to many of the shrines of British literature and history.¹²

Another highlight was the extended tour through the European missions, which they took in the spring of 1938 when they assessed conditions and offered support, encouragement, and advice. The missions were found to be generally functioning quite well, though a few problems in procedure were encountered from place to place. Yet by this time, more ominous developments seemed to run through Amy's report of this tour. War threatened Europe more closely now, and she sensed the anxiety felt by many of the people they visited. They arrived in Austria after the Anschluss where she noted that the people there had become "a serious, anxious group." In Czechoslovakia national leaders feared the worst, and an undertone of anxiety colored her comments throughout the mission. In May, a mission president's conference was held Copenhagen where the work was discussed. The greatest need was for simplified lessons to meet the needs of working class members. The wife of the West German mission president noted another problem; the theology lessons for the following year contained so much material

¹² Lyman, In Retrospect, 126,129.

relating to "Jewish folk" that they might not be able to be used in Germany.¹³

The climatic event of Amy's mission came the following June when she served again as a delegate to the International Council of Women during its meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland. Here too, the subject of war dominated the agenda as it had two years earlier in Yugoslavia. Amy reported that "there was not a single session where it did not come up in one connection or another."¹⁴

While the prospect of war loomed over Europe, word came during the summer that the Lymans were to be released from their mission. Unsettled business affairs at home had long troubled them, and they undoubtedly looked forward to their return to Utah.¹⁵ They sailed for the United States in September and found ample responsibilities awaiting them there. With the institution of the Church Security Plan, Amy saw the need for renewed training in the principles of social work to enable Relief Society women to aid the bishops and stake presidents in properly assessing the needs of families receiving assistance. At the request of the Presiding Bishopric in 1939 she joined Amy Whipple Evans in

¹³ Amy Brown Lyman to General Board of Relief Society, typescript, no date, 1-11, original in possession of Amy Lyman Engar, copy in possession of the author.

¹⁴ Amy Brown Lyman, "International Council of Women," Relief Society Magazine 25 (September, 1938): 578.

¹⁵ Parry Sorensen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author.

presenting a new series of Social Service Institutes which stressed the fundamentals of case work and the options available in providing assistance to families.¹⁶

Amy also continued to encourage an increased degree of professional training among employees in the Social Service Department. Leona Fetzner was again among those taking part in this upgrading of standards. After obtaining her undergraduate degree in medical social work from the University of Southern California, she planned to return and begin work in the L.D.S. hospital. When this plan failed to materialize, with Amy's encouragement, she returned to school where she completed a year of advanced study at the University of Chicago under social work pioneers Edith Abbott and Sophonisba Breckenridge.¹⁷

As Amy turned her energies to the familiar challenges of the Social Services, changes were on the horizon that would bring her new opportunities and challenges. Previously, Church leaders had decided that the leadership of the Church auxiliaries should be rotated more frequently. In keeping with this decision, Amy was notified in December

¹⁶ Jill Mulvay Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity to Make Way for Welfare, 1930-1944," in Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, eds., New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 262. A copy of the syllabus that Amy prepared for the 1939 Social Service Institutes is found in the Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLL.

¹⁷ Wintch Oral History.

of 1939 that she would be the next General President of the Relief Society.

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL PRESIDENT

Amy began her term as General President with over thirty years of experience in the leadership of the Relief Society. Many expected her administration to usher in a remarkable period in the organization's history and in many ways they were not disappointed. Now in a position to build on her previous work, she took her first step by surrounding herself with women of extraordinary talent and ability. Her presidency and board were composed of an accomplished group of women of varied interests who formed a complementary whole.¹

Under this leadership important changes came to the organization. Amy had introduced modern business practices thirty years before; now she presided over another period of administrative change designed to realign the Relief

¹ "Relief Society Reorganization," Relief Society Magazine, 27 (January, 1940): 38. In her presidency, Counselors Marcia Howells and Donna Sorensen both had experience in education and General Secretary-Treasurer Vera Pohlman had extensive administrative experience through her previous work with Amy and with the county and state governments. Her board included skilled social workers like Leona Fetzer (Wintch), those with administrative experience through Church callings, like Gertrude Gaarth, and others whose strengths ranged from scriptural knowledge, to the arts, to home economics.

Society's policies to reflect its redefined role in administration of Church relief. By the time of Amy's return from England, many details of the part to be played by the Relief Society in the Church Security Plan (or Welfare Plan as it was known after 1938) had already been worked out. The Society remained responsible for family investigations, the formulation of plans for relief, and for home economics, including the production of clothing and food items both for personal and charitable purposes. The most significant change came because now the Church as a whole, rather than the Relief Society by itself, had assumed both moral and financial responsibility for care of the needy. While this led to a weakening of autonomy in the Relief Society as the organization's own charity efforts were subordinated to those of the centrally directed Welfare Program, it benefitted relief efforts by bringing more abundant resources to the task.²

In order to function efficiently, the plan required close cooperation between bishops and Relief Society presidents. As previously discussed, Relief Society leaders had attempted for years to bring about this type of relationship, but it was only now with the greater degree of interest shown by high ranking Church officials that bishops

² Jill Mulvay Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity to Make Way for Welfare, 1930-1944," in Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, eds., New Views on Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard Arrington, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1987), 260.

began to respond in earnest. While this led to the resolution of one longstanding problem, it created another for Relief Society workers. As the bishops turned more frequently to the ward presidents, many of the latter were overwhelmed by the added work load and resigned. This problem began during the presidency of Louis Y. Robison and had not yet been resolved by the time Amy assumed her duties.³

Partly in response to these strains, one of Amy's first assignments from the First Presidency resulted in a simplification of the Society's program in the wards and stakes. Several changes were made to reduce the demands upon Relief Society women to enable them to spend more time with their families. On the ward level the education year was shortened from nine to eight months, and weekly meetings were limited to the period of October through May with only monthly work and business meetings held June through August. Yearly stake conferences were reduced from two days to one with the general meeting being eliminated and only the one-day officers' meeting being held. Stake leaders were encouraged to limit the number of members on their boards to no more than twelve or fourteen in order to avoid depleting

³ Derr, "Changing Relief Society Charity," 259; Louise Y. Robison, "The Church Security Program," Relief Society Magazine 23 (November 1936): 713.

the wards of potential leadership, while board members were to visit each ward of the stake no more than twice a year.⁴

While these reductions in programs were being worked out, Amy initiated steps to expand the Relief Society's social welfare work by creating a branch office of the Social Service Department in Ogden for the benefit of those members of the Church living in Weber county. A similar branch office had been opened in Los Angeles during the 1930s to serve the area's large L.D.S. population. Leona Fetzer had worked there while attending the University of Southern California. Now on the General Board, she was Amy's choice to open the Ogden branch where she assisted the area's bishops by clearing cases through the county exchange and by providing counseling in particularly difficult instances.⁵

While working to extend the availability of the services of professionally trained social workers, Amy also hoped to continue training stake leaders through a new series of Social Service institutes. But restrictions on non-essential travel enacted at the onset of the Second

⁴ Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman, (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1945), 148-49; General Board of Relief Society, A Centenary of Relief Society, 1842-1942, (Salt Lake City: General Board of Relief Society, 1942), 32; "Notes to the Field: Change in Relief Society Annual Stake Conventions," Relief Society Magazine 27 (February 1940): 113.

⁵ Leona Fetzer Wintch Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author.

World War forced the cancellation of her plans after only two institutes had been held. Efforts were already underway at this point to create a handbook for the use of stake and ward social service aides. Amy had given Vera Pohlman this assignment shortly after Pohlman was called to be General Secretary-Treasurer. The nature of the Church organization, which involved a periodic shuffling of responsibilities, virtually guaranteed that social service aides already trained in proper techniques and procedures would move on to new callings on a regular basis. In order to establish consistency, the handbook was designed to outline basic social work procedures and serve as a ready source of reference. It included a full set of sample records that could be copied for the use of local units. Pohlman soon developed a preliminary draft and testing began in some wards early in 1942.⁶

A whole series of activities planned in celebration of the Relief Society centennial in March of 1942 demanded a great deal of attention during the first years of the Lyman presidency. A drive to bring the membership of the organization up to 100,000 had begun during Louise Y. Robison's administration and was making good progress by the time Amy became president. Other commemorative events planned by the General Board and local units included a

⁶ Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author.

special conference, pageants, concerts, tree plantings, and exhibits. A special history entitled A Centenary of Relief Society was published and a collection of poetry from past issues of the Magazine and the Woman's Exponent appeared under the title Our Legacy: Relief Society Centennial Anthology of Verse. Souvenir plates, centennial pins, and even a doll collection, which recreated the original 1842 meeting of the Society in Nauvoo, were offered for nominal prices as souvenirs to the women of the organization. A special highlight was the planned presentation of a memorial campanile, a gift from the women of the Relief Society to the Church. The structure housed the bell from the Nauvoo Temple and contained decorative grill work and panels which depicted scenes from the history of the Church, sculpted by Utah artist Avard Fairbanks. It was planned that the campanile would occupy a site near the tabernacle at the Church's Temple Square.⁷

All preparations for the celebration had been completed when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, just three months before the anniversary. Nevertheless, all local celebrations were held but the large central pageant and the erection of the campanile were canceled. A large cyclorama stage and curtains had been purchased by the women's auxiliaries for use in the pageant and these were put into storage while the dozens of yards of blue and gold material

⁷ Lyman, In Retrospect 154-55; Pohlman Oral History.

planned for use in decorative banners were sold to the women of the General Board for quilts and dresses. The campanile had been the principle concern of the Centennial Committee of the General Board who, with an eye to the impending war, had taken great pains to ensure that it was constructed from non-strategic metals. Nevertheless, after the United States entered the war, committee members felt that because of the strong public disapproval for any non-military use of metal, the components of the structure should be stored until after the national emergency.⁸ In compensation for the cancellation of the central celebrations, several Church and Relief Society leaders made radio broadcasts marking the anniversary and a phonograph record was distributed to all the wards in the Church which contained a message from Amy and Church president Heber J. Grant.⁹

The onset of war brought other changes and responsibilities to the Relief Society. Since the beginning of hostilities in Europe in 1939, local units there and in Canada, South Africa, and Australia had been involved in sewing and knitting projects. These were designed for the benefit of their military, the Red Cross, and other war-related relief projects. As the United States entered the conflict, Relief Society sisters here assisted the national

⁸ Ibid.; Vera W. Pohlman, "The Campanile on Temple Square," typescript in possession of the author.

⁹ Lyman, In Retrospect, 156.

war effort. Many local units turned their work days over to sewing projects for the Red Cross, while others offered their services to adjacent hospitals and military bases. The organization also mobilized the women of the Church to join in efforts to salvage kitchen grease, tin, and other strategic materials and was responsible for a survey of trained and practical nurses in all the stakes and wards in the United States and Canada. Local Relief Societies were encouraged to buy war bonds and individual sisters were admonished to plant victory gardens. In the area of health and social work, the organization sponsored classes in first aid, the training of nurse's aides, and basic nutrition. In all these efforts, close cooperation with the Red Cross was encouraged.¹⁰

While local units became very active in the war effort, restrictions on unnecessary travel forced the cancellation of the General Conferences of the Relief Society as well as stake conferences and union meetings.¹¹ Amid all the unexpected activity brought by the war, Amy and the rest of the Relief Society waited and planned for the end of the hostilities which were bringing so much suffering and tragedy to the world. After that day she could again

¹⁰ Ibid., 156-57; James M. Kirkham, "Vegetables for Vitality and Victory," Relief Society Magazine 29 (February 1942): 105-107.

¹¹ "Notes to the Field: Discontinuance of Relief Society Stake Union Meetings and Conferences," Relief Society Magazine 29 (February 1942): 111.

preside over a renewed effort by Relief Society women to carry forth their role in meeting the needs of the Church. But for Amy, one last great heartache awaited her, one that in her view destroyed her effectiveness and prevented the culmination of her accomplishments from ever taking place.

The news of that tragedy hit the Church like a bombshell and made headlines around the world. In a meeting of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on November 11, 1943, Richard R. Lyman, ashen-faced and apparently in shock, confessed his guilt to a long standing extramarital relationship. At the decision to excommunicate him, he stood, shook hands with his former colleagues, all of them in tears, and left the quorum, never to return during his lifetime.¹²

Richard had been an apostle of the Church for twenty-five years and was a popular speaker, charming, and well-liked. Considered more open and approachable than many church leaders, he was a special favorite of youth and had worked for years with the Y.M.M.I.A. speaking often about maintaining high standards of morality. He was a favorite too of the intellectuals of the Church who saw him as a champion, more rational in thought and broad-minded in opinions. The news of his fall was overwhelming to many who

¹² Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball Jr., Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 208-09.

felt they had lost a friend and a role model. Richard himself seems to have been in shock in the aftermath of his public humiliation. Only the closest members of his family seem to have known the full extent of his sorrow and remorse.¹³

Many have wondered how one as dedicated to the Church and its moral values as Richard could fail to adhere to such fundamental teachings. As each passing generation removes us further from the attitudes and mores of the era in which Amy and Richard came to maturity, it has become increasingly difficult for the average person to understand the complex environment of the period. While history cannot hope to provide a definitive answer to the complexities of human personality and relationships, a careful consideration of the social environment of an era can provide clues which will help us make sense of actions which might otherwise seem incomprehensible. An important place to begin in this case is by looking at the morality of the Victorian era and

¹³ Mark Allen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of the author; Keith Hayes Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of the author; Susan Elizabeth (Beth) Swensen Driggs Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tapes in possession of the author; Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Pohlman Oral History.

the transition within the Mormon community from polygamous to monogamous marriage.¹⁴

Victorian morality has come to be viewed as having been based upon unrealistic expectations concerning human behavior. In popular marital guides of the era, authorities repeatedly advised women to maintain an absolute standard of purity before marriage and after. Both on the basis of religious ideology and the belief that surrender to "man's passions and instincts" would only delay his "higher spiritual attainment," sexual relations were taught as a necessary evil in order to bear children.¹⁵ From this perspective, the ultimate marital relationship during the era was a platonic one. For women who accepted this view (and when the popularity of this literature is considered, there would seem to be a great number of them), this implied

¹⁴ For a careful treatment of Victorian morality, see John S. Haller, Jr., and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian American (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1974). For the transition within the Mormon community, see Thomas G. Alexander, Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1986), esp. chapter 1, "The 1890s and the Challenge to the Mormon World View," 3-15, and chapter 4, "Recurrent Encounters with Plural Marriage," 60-73. Also see: D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 18 (Winter 1985): 9-105, and B. Carmon Hardy, Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage (Urban: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Haller, Physician and Sexuality, 126.

that after the completion of one's family, abstinence became a way of life, and indeed, a virtue.¹⁶

It is not hard to imagine that such attitudes could impose severe burdens on Victorian marriages and, indeed, the era was notorious for its moral double standards involving male infidelity. While women were to remain pure, the baser nature of man was understood; although men too were encouraged to live the higher law, in practice their infidelities were often winked at. The Mormon community was able to mitigate this double standard through its practice of polygamy which allowed men (albeit, perhaps unconsciously) a legitimate release for their sexual urges. While the generation before Richard was able to maintain their marital fidelity within the broader confines of plural marriage, he came to maturity just when the practice was

¹⁶ For a thorough discussion of the literature of the period see: Haller, Physician and Sexuality, esp. chapter III, "Behind the Fig Leave," 89-137. While I am unable to cite any study about how widespread such beliefs were in the Mormon community, I have encountered a considerable amount of anecdotal evidence over the course of my research that indicates that these ideas were not uncommon. Most of my informants remember the prevalence of these attitudes among the women of their mother's or grandmother's generation, women born and raised within the last three decades of the nineteenth century. These views were summarized succinctly by Evelyn Hodges Lewis who remembered her grandmother's attitude that "good girls never enjoy sex." See: Evelyn Hodges Lewis Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tapes in possession of the author; Pohlman Oral History; Driggs Oral History. Also conversations with Barbara Carlson, 1992, and Dorothy Lauritzen Hall, 1992, notes in possession of the author. Driggs is Amy's niece. Her recollections of family attitudes about morals are particularly relevant to the understanding of possible influences on Amy and Richard.

being publicly disavowed through the Manifesto of 1890. Being the son of a prominent Church leader who was himself a strongly committed polygamist, it is likely that Richard was raised to see Mormonism's distinct practice as his own religious obligation and that he had not been prepared during his upbringing to make the transition to monogamy and was left somewhat in the lurch by this alteration of marital mores. Brought up in a polygamous society, he was now left to deal with the excessive and abnormal constraints of Victorian America. Added to the strains caused by such a transition must be the realization that the abandonment of plural marriage was a difficult change for many Church members to accept. Further, Richard was no doubt aware of the continuing secret sanction of some post-Manifesto unions. These continued to take place until 1904 when the negative publicity resulting from the Smoot hearings forced Church leaders to seriously discourage the practice through the issuance of the Second Manifesto. The lag between public proclamation and private practice coupled with a continuing ambivalence among some leaders concerning the practice even after 1904 no doubt added to the confusion that made it easy for Richard to rationalize his own later conduct.¹⁷ While it is impossible to say just what role

¹⁷ Alexander, Mormonism in Transition, 60-73; Quinn, "New Plural Marriages," 49-105. Richard considered the woman he was involved with as a "prospective Plural Wife." Richard R. Lyman to Melvin A. Lyman, February 16, 1963, original in possession of Dr. Melvin A. Lyman, copy in

such factors played in his later difficulties, it seems justified to believe that the repressive morality of the era which pressured couples to minimize the physical side of their relationship could have combined with the change in community mores regarding marriage to have placed Richard in an extraordinarily stressful and difficult situation.

Other factors can contribute to an understanding of Richard's difficulties, one of the most important of which was the incredible demands placed on each partner in this unique marriage by the nature of their church responsibilities. Both Richard and Amy followed schedules, often conflicting, which took them away from home and each other for extended periods of time. Likewise, these same demands often kept them occupied seven days a week and sometimes late into the night even when they were at home. Their relationship faced many of the problems now being confronted by later generations of working families.¹⁸

It must also be remembered that while they were in many ways so well suited as a couple, Amy and Richard were known to be quite different temperamentally.¹⁹ He was far more

possession of the author.

¹⁸ Richard R. Lyman Journal, passim., Richard R. Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Pohlman Oral History; Driggs Oral History.

¹⁹ Nearly all of my informants commented on how different they were temperamentally. See for example: Pohlman Oral History; Driggs Oral History; Wintch Oral History; Allen Oral History.

outgoing than Amy, and he seemed to crave attention and affection. Amy, while compassionate and tender-hearted, seemed more self-assured and, publicly at least, was reserved and not particularly demonstrative. While these and other factors may have contributed to Richard's actions, when one considers the strength of the couple's marriage in other ways, it seems likely that a lack of communication lay directly at the heart of this problem. Given Amy's nature which led her to doggedly pursue solutions to problems, it seems likely that the attitudes brought by the couple to their marriage from their upbringing made it impossible for an open discussion to be held before Richard's excommunication forced the issue. Because he had always been so attentive to her needs and supportive of her activities, Amy had no previous cause for suspicions. The news came as a great shock to her, which affected her physically and left her prostrated for several weeks afterward.²⁰

With his fall from his respected position of prominence, Richard brought a weight of shame that unfairly reflected on both his immediate and extended families, a stigma that is still felt to this day.²¹ None suffered

²⁰ Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History; Wirthlin Oral History; Engar Oral History.

²¹ Melvin A. Lyman Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author; Engar Oral History.

more under its weight than Margaret's family and young Amy Kathryn. Typically, they drew close to one another and supported both Amy and Richard through this trying period. The couple went into seclusion for several weeks and saw only a few very close friends and family members. Yet Amy quickly began to come to grips with the situation in a manner that reflected her commitment to her principles and the strength of her character. She had often cited something she had learned years before while working with the Denver Charities: "The hardest problem," she would say, "was getting people to realize there was a problem, then they could go on and deal with it." She had long counseled couples to accept their husband or wife for what he or she was and not to try to change the person into someone else. "Personalities," she concluded, "should be respected in families."²² Some of their friends among the Church leaders advised her to get a divorce and move to California to make a fresh start, but she refused to do so. She had long believed that difficulties must be faced and now refused to betray this great principle. She still loved Richard and knew that he loved her. Now, perhaps for the first time, she understood how the differences between them and the strains of their careers had affected their

²² Gertrude Gaarth Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tapes in possession of the author (cited hereafter as Gaarth Oral History); Amy Brown Lyman, "Family Ties," Relief Society Magazine 12 (June 1925): 307.

relationship. Typically, she supported him throughout the trial, and together they rebuilt their marriage within the new parameters they faced.²³

Like her family, Amy's counselors and board rallied around her during this time of crisis and carried on the daily functions of the organization, freeing her from all responsibility until she was ready to return. She was unable to do so for several weeks, when, sensing her anxiety and embarrassment on her first day back, David O. McKay, second counselor to the president of the Church and friend to the Lymans, escorted her through each department of the Relief Society as a token of support from the Church leadership.²⁴ Among her co-workers she followed the advice she had given to family members and put the tragedy behind her, and never spoke of it publicly. Her only acknowledgement of it was an expression of gratitude to the General Board for "holding up my arms" during that period in which she was unable to preside over the Society's affairs.²⁵

Amy had always kept her personal life private and now one of the greatest trials she faced was the public knowledge of the affair. Hating to waste money, she had

²³ Wintch Oral History; Engar Oral History.

²⁴ Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History; Gaarth Oral History.

²⁵ Engar Oral History; Pohlman Oral History; Gaarth Oral History; Wintch Oral History.

made it her practice to travel on the bus from her home to Relief Society headquarters in the Bishop's Building. But in the wake of Richard's excommunication, she found this daily journey a difficult trial during which she found herself greeted by knowing stares and whispers. General Secretary-Treasurer Vera Pohlman learned of her discomfort and secured taxi tickets to spare her the embarrassment. As time wore on, Amy became concerned about how Richard's situation might affect her position in the eyes of the rank and file of the Society. Eventually, she became convinced that it had proved too much of a distraction to allow her to continue to work effectively as General President. In the fall of 1944 she made the difficult decision to submit her resignation to President Heber J. Grant. Church leaders respected her feelings but told her they were not yet ready to act upon her request and for the time being advised her to continue in her duties.²⁶

Amy was obedient to their counsel and remained active in adjusting Relief Society programs to the changes that had come in the wake of the Church Welfare Plan and the demands of the war. One significant adjustment involved charity funds. At the recommendation of her board, the long

²⁶ Pohlman Oral History; Engar Oral History; The First Presidency to President Amy Brown Lyman and Officers and Members of the National Woman's Relief Society General Board, April 4, 1945, typescript, 1, original copy in possession of Leona Fetzer Wintch, copy in possession of the author.

standing responsibility of ward visiting teachers to collect contributions for the benefit of the poor was ended in October of 1944. With the bishops assuming complete financial responsibility for all such expenses as part of the Church Welfare Plan, charity funds collected through the Relief Society became an unnecessary duplication of effort. Like other changes, many sisters, including some on the General Board, were upset with this alteration of traditional roles, but Church Welfare made such adjustments inevitable. Amy had never been afraid to adopt changes when necessary, and now she was unflinching in her support for the decision made by the majority of her Board in this matter.²⁷

The continued war effort required a balancing of priorities between traditional Relief Society roles and cooperative efforts for the national defense. Even as Amy presided over this dual responsibility she joined with others in looking forward to a return to normal activities. Adherence to national restrictions on unnecessary travel had left the organization unable to closely monitor the needs of and conditions in the local units from headquarters. Amy knew that this would leave many Relief Societies in disarray and would require the careful attention of the general leadership to bring back conformity to standardized programs

²⁷ "Notes to the Field: Collections by Visiting Teachers Discontinued," Relief Society Magazine 31 (December 1944): 705; Pohlman Oral History.

and procedures. As time wore on, progress on the battle front indicated that the end of the war was only a matter of months. The suggestion was made that it was necessary to begin assessing conditions throughout the West in preparation for the task that awaited them at the cessation of hostilities. Assigned this duty were Counselor Belle Spafford and General Secretary-Treasurer Vera Pohlman, who began a lengthy tour to all the states in the western United States.²⁸

Also weighing heavily on Amy's mind during this period was the planned completion of the Relief Society Welfare handbook. Samples had been successfully tested in several wards, and preparations were being made for its general distribution. Vera Pohlman went through the proofs word by word with Marion G. Romney of the Welfare Department and had gained approval for every part of the text. Knowing that in the wake of her resignation her position was tenuous, Amy was particularly anxious to see the handbook distributed. Symbolizing a formalization of the new role of the Relief Society in the Church Welfare Plan, the handbook was in many ways an important part of her legacy, a symbol of acceptance and approval for the approaches to charity work she had championed for so long. It was undoubtedly a great disappointment then, when just before its publication, word was received in March of 1945 that her resignation had

²⁸ Pohlman Oral History.

finally been accepted and that she was to be released from her position as General President.²⁹

²⁹ Pohlman Oral History; Belle S. Spafford, "Amy Brown Lyman," Relief Society Magazine 32 (May 1945): 269.

CHAPTER X
RETIREMENT AND LEGACY

After being informed of Amy's release, members of her board were asked for their recommendation for the next General President. Energetic and ambitious, Belle Spafford was favored for the job and became the choice of Church leaders. Spafford picked members of Amy's board for her presidency and was expected to continue with the policies and programs of her predecessor.¹

Despite the relatively short tenure of Amy's administration, it had been an intensely active and eventful period for the Relief Society. General Secretary-Treasurer Vera Pohlman recalled feeling that she had accomplished ten years work during that five-year period. Amy had brought the organization into line with its new role and had seen it through an international conflict; now it was time for others to carry on.²

She had remained energetic during her thirty-five years of service to the Relief Society, through wars, depressions, ideological conflicts, and personal tragedies and now at age

¹ Vera White Pohlman Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author.

² Ibid.

seventy-three her "retirement" did not signal an end to her activities or to her continued service. Because she valued her association with the women who had shared in her efforts, one of her first acts after her release was to suggest that former board members form an Emeritus Club and meet together socially twice a year. The idea was enthusiastically received and at her recommendation the group adopted a regular organization with a secretary to keep minutes and accounts, and committees to prepare programs and arrange speakers. The club thrived, and continues to meet to this day.³

Other social activities claimed her attention during these years. Earlier, after Richard's excommunication, she had sought to resign her membership in the General Authorities Wives Club, but they refused to accept it, and she continued to associate with these women even after her retirement. She became active again in the Authors' Club and Friendship Circle and maintained a close relationship to these women throughout the remainder of her life. Amy also sustained an interest in politics during this period. Back in 1921 she had helped organize the Women's Legislative Council and over the years she had remained active in its activities, and this did not change after her retirement. In 1946 she was elected president of the Utah chapter of the

³ Pohlman Oral History; Gertrude Gaarth Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author.

Order of Woman Legislators (OWLS), which was an organization formed by women who had served either in Congress or a state legislature. As late as 1956 she lent her name in support of the reelection campaign of Utah's conservative senator Wallace Bennett.⁴

Other activities that she particularly enjoyed came through her affiliation with the Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP). She contributed a number of lessons which were taught at local DUP meetings and later published with others in the organization's periodic compilations. Her heritage and knowledge made her a favorite speaker at church meetings honoring the pioneers and she was particularly pleased at the opportunity to speak at the dedication of the organization's Pioneer Memorial Museum.⁵

Her speaking talents were claimed in other ways too. As the passing years brought the death of more and more of

⁴ Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of author; Vera White Pohlman, In Memoriam: Amy Brown Lyman, 1872-1959: Biographical Summary and Funeral Services, (Salt Lake City: Privately Published, 1960), 19; "Mrs. Amy B. Lyman to Head OWLS," Salt Lake Tribune, (July 9, 1946) p. 6B. I am indebted to Maureen Ursenbach Beecher for bringing to my attention Amy's attempted resignation from the General Authorities Wives Club and their refusal to accept it and to John Sillito for making me aware of Amy's involvement in the Bennett campaign.

⁵ Engar Oral History; Amy Brown Lyman, "The Utah Pioneers: A Tribute by Amy B Lyman, July 24, 1950, Being Given at the Dedication of the P. Memorial Museum," holograph, 1, Amy Brown Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereinafter abbreviated as HBLI).

her friends and coworkers, Amy became a popular speaker at funerals. More enjoyable occasions were the frequent invitations she received to address the sacrament meetings and social clubs of friends and family members.⁶

Similarly, her writing talents also continued to be utilized. Shortly after her retirement, she was approached by the Alice Louise Reynolds Club, which had been formed by former students and associates of the late educator, and asked to write a short biography of her close friend. Amy solicited the assistance of Vera Pohlman and produced a volume recounting Reynolds' life and accomplishments entitled: A Lighter of Lamps: The Life Story of Alice Louise Reynolds.⁷

She also continued her devotion to the Relief Society and prepared a series of lessons on the pioneers for the Magazine which appeared during the 1946-47 education year. Her own ward president jumped at the opportunity to utilize her talents and shortly after her retirement asked her to teach the monthly literature lessons. In typical fashion, Amy prepared meticulously and even rehearsed several days in advance with friends chosen to read selected passages. The

⁶ There are many examples of the eulogies and speeches she gave in her later years contained in her papers as B.Y.U.

⁷ Amy Brown Lyman, A Lighter of Lamps: The Life Story of Alice Louise Reynolds (Provo: The Alice Louise Reynolds Club, 1947), v-vii.

results were worthy of her preparation, and attendance always soared when she taught. In addition to her continued association with the Emeritus Club, she also spoke occasionally before the General Board, and found herself particularly honored to speak at the ground-breaking ceremonies for the new Relief Society building, and attended its dedication two years later.⁸

While active socially and in the Church, Amy also had more time to spend with her grandchildren after her retirement. Margaret had a growing family by this time, and Amy Kathryn would soon marry Keith Engar and begin one of her own.⁹ In addition Amy remained active in her role as matriarch of her large extended family. A niece confided the enormous anxiety she felt about beginning her job as a teacher in the public schools of Salt Lake City, but Amy sensed that all she needed was some extra encouragement. Nearly overcome with fear, the young woman was surprised to

⁸ Emily Pollei Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of author; Mary Schindler Nielsen Oral History, Interview by David Hall, June 19, 1992, tape in possession of author.

⁹ Amy Engar remembered her grandparents taking a liking to her fiance' Keith, but they were somewhat uneasy with his choice of profession--that of acting. At dinner one evening, Richard suddenly asked, "Keith, wouldn't your rather be an engineer?" Amy and Richard's anxieties about his career were assuaged when he decided to go into the academic aspect of the profession. Engar went on to an extremely distinguished career with the University of Utah, eventually heading the College of Fine Arts and in the process made a series of extremely significant contributions to the artistic life of Salt City and Utah (Engar Oral History).

find Amy suddenly appear in her classroom on the first day of the term. Turning her to face a room full of fourth graders, Amy told her to look into the children's faces, then reassured her that they were wonderful and she would have a marvelous experience teaching them. Taking heart, the young woman went on to become a successful educator. Another niece, widowed with four young children, received needed aid of another sort. "You save your mending!" Amy told her, and left instructions to bring a basket by once a month and she would take care of it.¹⁰

Amy always felt special ties to Brigham Young University beginning with her days at the old Academy and had long been an active member of the Alumni Association. In 1937, her achievements in the Church and community earned her that organization's Distinguished Alumnus Award, a tribute of which she was especially proud. After her retirement, friends and associates were anxious to see her receive some formal acknowledgement for the contributions she made to the Church during her decades of service, so when it was announced in the early 1950s that the university would be building a series of women's residence halls named after prominent Mormon women, many saw this as a logical opportunity to bring some of the recognition that she

¹⁰ Emmeline Wirthlin Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1992, tape in possession of the author; Susan Elizabeth (Beth) Swensen Driggs Oral History, Interview by David Hall, 1991, tape in possession of the author.

deserved. Vera Pohlman was selected to write a short biography chronicling Amy's activities to be submitted to the committee in charge of selecting which women were to be honored. At the time of Amy's death, there had still been no decision made concerning her nomination.¹¹

As the years passed from the 1940s through the 1950s, Amy began to suffer some of the ailments of increasing age. She developed some heart problems and endured recurring inflammation of her sciatic nerve. But while visitors noted that she spent more time working and writing in bed, she remained quick in her actions and to the end maintained the firm, determined step that could part a crowd. All who knew her agreed that she never became an old woman and to the end, when she was up, she was vigorously about her business.¹² Ironically, it this energetic demeanor that precipitated her death.

At the end of November, 1959, she was starting a typical week of activities. Nearly eighty-eight, she taught the literature class at Relief Society, and early in the week busied herself by canning fruit in her kitchen. Typically, she worked quickly and when turning to get

¹¹ Pohlman Oral History; Leona Fetzner Wintch Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author.

¹² Wintch Oral History; Pohlman Oral History; Wirthlin Oral History; Amy Lyman Engar Oral History, Interviews by David Hall, 1991-92, tapes in possession of the author; Pollei Oral History.

something, spilled some water and then slipped in the puddle, fell and fractured her wrist. The injury was not considered serious, but it was thought best to move her over to Margaret's while she recuperated. On the evening of the fourth of December, she phoned Vera Pohlman to thank her for her efforts with the short biography. Vera did not wish to tire Amy, so she gently tried to conclude the conversation several times, but Amy talked on and on. Later, Pohlman would feel that this was her old friend's way of saying good-bye. The added strain from the fall proved too much for her Amy's weak heart and sometime later that night she died quietly in her sleep.¹³

Amy's death was noted prominently in the local press, and her funeral was well attended by family and friends. Amid the solemn speeches and activities of the day, a lighter note appeared after the services when Vera, who had recorded the proceedings in shorthand for the family, was unable to find a ride to the cemetery. Eventually she joined the owner of the mortuary in the front of the hearse. Seeing her there, notebook in hand, Amy's daughter Margaret joked to the family that she must be waiting for any last minute dictation.¹⁴

Following Amy's example, with time family and friends adjusted to the loss. Richard sorted through her papers

¹³ Pohlman Oral History; Engar Oral History.

¹⁴ Pohlman Oral History.

with Margaret and Amy Kathryn, then donated them to her beloved Brigham Young University. Richard lived on four more years before joining Amy in death.¹⁵

It is difficult to sum up a life as active, varied, and full as that of Amy Brown Lyman, and it is impossible to even begin to do justice to the topic in a study of this size. Her contributions were many and she left a great legacy of accomplishments. Some of the earliest came through the special assignments given her by Joseph F. Smith which formed the foundation for the Relief Society's transition from a nineteenth- to a twentieth-century organization. A basis for all this was her effort to modernize operations and record keeping practices to enable the Relief Society to more efficiently administer its expanded activities and more accurately gauge its progress and effectiveness. Similarly she moved with others to create the unified lesson plan that brought greater unity of purpose to the organization and led to the creation of the Relief Society Magazine which developed into a dynamic tool that informed and educated the membership.

Perhaps her greatest achievement during her early years on the board, and indeed of her life, was the creation of the Relief Society Social Services. It almost seems as if

¹⁵ Engar Oral History; Richard R. Lyman to Donald T. Schmidt, July 7, 1960, typescript. Richard R. Lyman Collection, Manuscripts Division, HBLI.

this were the role that she was destined for by her temperament and experience. The fortuitous stop-over in Chicago planted an interest in social welfare work that grew and developed after her call to the General Board. Her association with others of like mind, particularly those on the Social Advisory Committee, helped her to formulate and clarify her thoughts about a new approach to Relief Society charity and enabled her to place her plans for the organization within the larger context of other Church and community activities. From the beginning her efforts received the support of Relief Society leaders and the President of the Church, but while always assisted and encouraged by talented individuals, the Department was in a very real sense the direct result of her own driving realization that a more efficient method of helping L.D.S. families was needed. Without her, if the Department had taken shape at all, it is unlikely that it would have functioned as effectively.

Over the years Amy tried to keep abreast of developments in the field of social work because of her desire that the best available methods be utilized in the Church. Just as importantly, she strove to keep the activities of the Social Services relevant to a changing society and to ensure that the rank and file of the Relief Society maintained a meaningful role in charity work. This meant that they had to be informed and actively involved

which prompted the educational program of the organization to include the course of instruction in the Magazine on social welfare and led to the creation of the Social Service Institutes.

Even as the responsibilities of the Relief Society changed dramatically because of the expanded role the federal government assumed with the New Deal, Amy hoped to keep the women of the organization directly involved in charity work. The activities of the Church Welfare Plan mirrored in many ways those of the government; both took over some of the activities, such as the administration of relief, previously directed by the Relief Society, but neither duplicated other types of programs that the organization had been involved in since the 1920s. When Amy became General President she sought to strengthen and expand the supporting role the Relief Society played in relationship to both the Church Welfare Plan and government relief efforts. Under her leadership, the women were to continue to do what they had done for decades: supplement the programs of the government and Church, for while much more was being done, there remained much yet to do. The Social Welfare Handbook was to be the fruition of one part of that plan, but Amy did not see this or other goals come to completion because she was hindered during her presidency by the war and her own personal tragedy. When others took over leadership after her departure, they did not seem to

share the same commitment to involve the rank and file, and as a result, the bulk of the organization's charity activities became the domain of professionals. Relief Society women were then limited largely to so-called "Christian charity," which, while important, was only a fraction of the dynamic, informed, and systematized program that Amy had developed.¹⁶

Another aspect of her contributions to relief work was her role in bringing greater government assistance to the poor and disadvantaged. She would have undoubtedly been happy to turn to Church funds alone for the support of the Relief Society's activities had they been available, but she realized that by themselves these resources were wholly inadequate. Not only was it proper, in her view, to turn to the government for help, it being an instrument of the people, but such a course was unavoidable given the magnitude of need. On several occasions over the years she actively supported efforts to solicit government assistance in solving societal problems. One of her most important early activities in this regard was her support of the Sheppard-Towner Act and sponsorship of Utah's enabling legislation accepting its provisions. This began a period of close cooperation between the Relief Society and the state in the use of federal grants which resulted in a

¹⁶ See the Pohlman and Wintch Oral Histories for their evaluation of the changes that came after Amy's retirement.

dramatic drop in infant and maternal mortality in Utah. Also during the twenties, she frequently encouraged Salt Lake County's government to accept its legal responsibility to assume a larger share of the relief burden and was successful in these attempts. A few years later she orchestrated a drive to obtain state funding for the creation and maintenance of a training school for the mentally handicapped. During the Depression she led the Social Services through a period of unprecedented cooperation with county, state, and federal agencies, and was actively involved in securing federal relief for Utah under the RFC. Amy was not afraid of the government because she realized that it was the only possible source of funding that could begin to deal with problems of the magnitude encountered before and during the Great Depression. As the New Deal progressed, she continued to encourage the women of the Relief Society to be familiar with all available sources of aid so that they might better be able to fulfill their roles in helping the needy members.

This brings us to another important aspect of her legacy, that of her complete devotion to the Church and its leaders. Late in life she reiterated her feelings in a letter to a close friend. "Isn't the Church wonderful?" she wrote, "It is surely the greatest thing in the world. And

next to it comes the blessed Relief Society."¹⁷ But despite this unwavering dedication, her views, which were well informed and strongly held, sometimes brought her into conflict with those she worked with and even some who presided over her: with Susa Young Gates she contended over the proper approach to take in the Relief Society's charity activities; a personality conflict left her largely ignored and underused during Louise Robison's administration; her support for cooperation with the government certainly placed her in opposition to the views of J. Reuben Clark. But in each case, while she defended ideas that she felt were important, she remained first of all loyal to the Church and supportive of its leaders: Amy and Susa Gates were able to work well together despite their differences; Amy gave Louise Robison credit for many of her own achievements; and she maintained a friendly and respectful relationship with J. Reuben Clark and led the Relief Society in a strong supportive role to the welfare plan. She was unwilling to let their differences drive them apart because of her complete commitment to the Church. This above all else must be understood about her, because it was this total dedication that motivated so much in her life.

An example was her service in prominent positions of the National and International Councils of Women which

¹⁷ Amy Brown Lyman to Leona Fetzer Wintch, February 17, 1952, holograph, original in possession of Leona Fetzer Wintch, copy in possession of the author.

helped introduce the Mormon women to the world. Through her efforts here, as with the Red Cross, the National Council of Social Work, and other organizations, she made friends with leaders of reform and brought recognition to the contributions of the Church and the Relief Society.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable facets of her legacy was the example she set in the wake of personal tragedy.¹⁸ Again and again, she gathered her courage and went forward, refusing to look back. In many ways, her greatest triumph came in the face of her worst embarrassment when she moved beyond the pain and renewed and rebuilt a damaged relationship through increased understanding, acceptance, and love.

Another less documented aspect of her legacy, which diminishes each day as a generation passes, is the influence she exerted on the hearts and minds of those with whom she came in contact. This included not only a group of loyal friends and co-workers whose numbers are now few, but a host of women whom she touched through her conference addresses and through the pages of the Relief Society Magazine. The life and activities of Amy Brown Lyman had a profound effect on countless individuals and she was an inspiration to many. In her family, her accomplishments and manner have become

¹⁸ Vera Pohlman felt that the most important things to understand about Amy were her complete devotion to the Church and her ability to carry on after personal tragedy. See Pohlman Oral History.

legendary; when grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins get together, the topic always somehow seems to come to "Aunt Amy."¹⁹

Considering the magnitude of this legacy it is especially ironic that today many members of that organization which she served so devotedly, for so long, in such prominent positions, have not even heard of her. Sadly, Richard's mistakes have caused Amy's accomplishments to be swept under the carpet. And yet, despite this lack of recognition, she remains one of the most remarkable and fascinating individuals Mormonism has produced.

Though it was not her way to complain or criticize, it must have been difficult and a little disappointing for Amy to see some of the changes that came during the last fifteen years of her life. The Relief Society initially retreated from the attempts she had initiated to extend the activities of the Social Services, when it was decided to close the branch offices of the Department in Ogden and Los Angeles.²⁰ Her goal of institutionalizing the case-work method at the stake and ward levels went unrealized when the Welfare Handbook, which she wanted so badly to see adopted, fell through the cracks during the transition to the

¹⁹ Driggs Oral History; Engar Oral History.

²⁰ Later both reopened as continuing need became obvious. See: Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History.

Spafford administration. To this day a gap remains in the administration of the Church Welfare Plan. Other things went undone. The campanile created for the centennial celebration was left unassembled and its pieces were scattered to the wind. Finally, in August of 1966, at the initiation of some of those involved in the centennial, the scattered components were tracked down and assembled on Temple Square next to the Tabernacle, twenty-four years after the planned dedication.²¹ The effort to name a women's dormitory at B.Y.U. after Amy was still unresolved at her death, and soon fell through. For some, it was too soon after Richard's fall. Tragically, these feelings continue to this day and obscure the accomplishments of the women of the Relief Society during this remarkable period.

Amy Brown Lyman's life was an example of triumph over adversity, of achievement in the face of immense obstacles, and perhaps, most of all, it was an illustration of what one individual can accomplish when possessed with an overwhelming will to do good, and is granted the opportunity to act on their desires. Amy Brown Lyman led a life of consequence. She was never a mere spectator. She was

²¹ Vera White Pohlman, "The Campanile on Temple Square: A Statement Prepared for the Howard and Rae Barker Family," typescript, 1990, original in possession of Vera Pohlman, copy in possession of the author.

involved and made a difference, and she left behind a rich legacy to inspire those who followed.²²

²² Pohlman Oral History; Wintch Oral History.

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Amy Brown Lyman and Social Service Work
in the Relief Society

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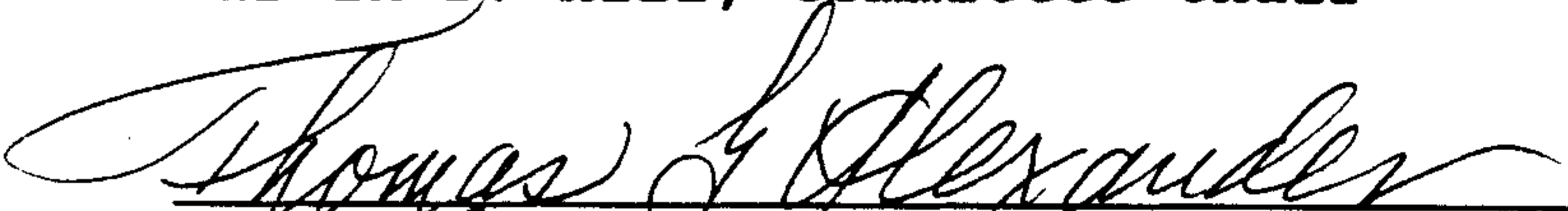
ABSTRACT

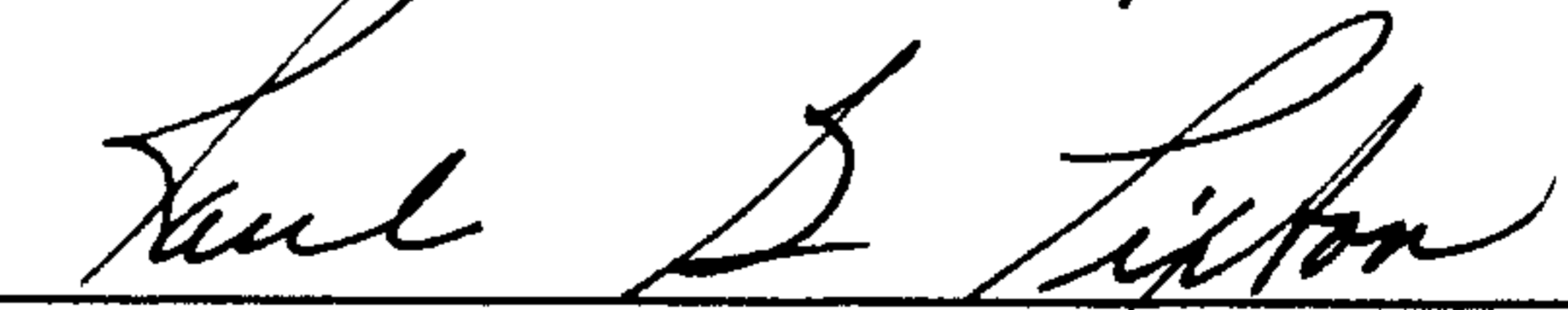
This thesis examines the life and accomplishments of Amy Brown Lyman, particularly as they relate to charity activities and social service work of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It considers her early life, her call to the General Board in 1909, her contributions to the creation of the Relief Society Social Services Department in 1919, her association with national and international leaders of reform, and her efforts in sponsoring and supporting social welfare legislation in Utah. Also examined are her work with the Social Services Department during the Great Depression, her mission to Europe from 1936-38 with her husband, her years as General Relief Society President, 1940-45, and her release and retirement from Relief Society leadership with attention given to her last years and legacy.

Lyman was one of the most significant figures in twentieth-century Mormonism and this account sheds light on the effect of her activities on her Church and the larger community.

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