

ST. GEORGE TABERNACLE and TEMPLE: THE BUILDERS

By Leonard J. Arrington

In October 1862, one year after he had called the 309 families to go to "Dixie" to raise cotton and other semitropical products, Brigham Young wrote to Erastus Snow, the ecclesiastical and secular leader of the settlers, suggesting that they "build, as speedily as possible, a good, substantial, commodious, well-finished meetinghouse, one large enough to comfortably seat at least 2,000 persons, and one that will not only be useful, but also an ornament to your city and a credit to your energy and enterprise."¹ Recognizing that the settlers were not in a position to finance the enterprise, the president added: "I hereby place at your disposal, expressly to aid in the building of the [Tabernacle], molasses, vegetable, and grain tithing of Cedar City and all places and persons south of that city."

The ground-breaking and dedication of the site for the structure took place on June 1, 1863, a day chosen because it was the birthday of Brigham Young—his sixty-second. Although Brigham Young was not present because he usually preferred to go to St. George in the winter—apostles Orson Pratt, Amasa M. Lyman, and Erastus Snow attended, as did the local high council, bishops of the wards, and many who would direct and participate in the work.

The chief mason, **Edward L. Parry**, was a key person in the construction process. Under the general direction of **W. H. Folsom, Church Architect** in Salt Lake City, the principal architect and construction superintendent was **Miles Romney**. A particularly important preliminary step was the erection of a tithing house to receive donations of fruit, vegetables, grain, livestock, and other contributions toward the support of the workmen. Those who worked on the Tabernacle were paid with tithing scrip which entitled them to draw supplies for their families from the tithing house. Indeed, a large share of the cost of the building required no outlay of cash. Only "imports" such as glass, paint, door locks, and tools required an expenditure of money.

A variety of calamities caused the work to proceed slowly. There was a perennial scourge of malaria; the Santa Clara and Virgin rivers were unpredictable and dams and ditches required frequent repair and rebuilding; and alkali precipitated up from watering the dry, desolate fields, causing damage to growing crops. Moreover, southern Utah settlers, as with others throughout the territory, were asked each spring to furnish companies of teams, drivers, and outfits to transport immigrants from the Missouri Valley to Utah. And, of course, all settlers were building their homes and some were setting up mills and shops.

When George A. Smith, the apostle-frontiersman after whom St. George was named, visited St. George in February 1866, he noted that the limestone foundation, six feet thick, had reached six feet.² Nine months later, in November, Erastus Snow urged a stepped-up program of construction, and within a little over a year he reported that the basement story was completed, and the main floor

timbers were about to be laid. On March 20, 1869, the first public gathering met in the basement. Sunday meetings were scheduled in the Tabernacle from then on and the basement was used for school classes, theatrics, choir practice, and other functions. Work continued on the main structure for the next two and one-half years.

This major community effort merited a special celebration on December 29, 1871, the day the last stone in the tower was laid.³ The festivities included singing by the St. George Choir under the direction of John M. Macfarlane, prayer by Jacob Gates of the Seventy, after which the church leaders climbed to the top of the rock work where President Erastus Snow, with trowel in hand, laid the stone in its place. Presidents Jacob Gates, Robert Gardner and James Bleak, in succession, then struck it with a mason's mallet. President Snow and those present took off their hats and shouted, "Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna! To God and the Lamb. Amen, Amen and Amen." This was echoed three times. The next day the last shingle on the roof of the Tabernacle was secured.

Several years ago, when the old steps of the Tabernacle were replaced, workmen found in a crevice a sealed bottle with a paper rolled up inside listing the names of the stone cutters (Charles L. Walker, Joseph Worthen, David Moss, George Brooks, James Bleak, and William G. Miles), and the following verses, presumably written by Charles L. Walker:

Full seven long years we now have worked
And from our task have never shirked
We have oft fared short, for many an hour
And now are fed on Sanpete flour.

Four hundred miles we haul our flour
Which feeds us in this trying hour,
The Saints up north have freely given
Thus laying treasures up in heaven.

So now, kind friends, we say farewell;
This house and steps our work do tell,
God will preserve and bless his own
With life eternal and a crown.⁴

Following the completion of the afternoon ceremonies the workers were honored with a "Social Party and Festival" at the St. George Hall. There were many rousing songs, and frequent toasts, presumably with everyone raising a glass of Dixie Wine. Of special interest is the following toast praising Archibald McNeil and the quarry hands:

The solid rocks had to give way before them and the mountains have had to remove because of their faith and works. May their bodies be like steel to endure

hardship, and their faith ever continue, and may they ever feel that their yoke is easy and their burden light, and may the noble McNeil outlive all his troubles and the enemies of Zion, and may he do good execution even with his last blast or shot.⁵

McNeil, who was born in Tranent, Scotland, joined the church in 1847, emigrated to America in 1849, and went to St. George in 1861. His fellow workmen in the quarry included:

**Alex Fullerton,
Jim Dean,
Ephraim Wilson,
and Lewis Robbins.**

Other toasts were presented as tributes to:

William Burt and his sons who did the plaster of paris decorating and plastering;

John Pymm, the commissary who dispensed commodities at the tithing office;

George Jarvis, the British sailor who erected the scaffolding;

and **John O. Angus**, the timekeeper who kept the workers on a daily schedule.

After the walls were up and the roof was on, meetings were held in the upper part, but finishing work remained. Window panes ordered from New York City had arrived at Wilmington, California, with a bill for \$800. **David H. Cannon** appointed to raise the money, had succeeded in collecting \$200. In nearby Washington, **Peter Neilson**, a Danish immigrant who had saved \$600 to enlarge his two-room adobe house, put his personal desires aside and contributed his money to the cause and the freighters left to bring back the glass.

The community clock and bell were installed in the tower in 1872. The interior was finished in 1875, a beautiful silver sacrament set and organ were provided in 1877. Brass chandeliers were added in 1883, and the structure stood for more than one hundred years until its recent remodeling. The edifice is one all of us have marveled at and admired. As Karl Larson wrote, "The Tabernacle is the finest example of the chapel builder's art in the whole Mormon experience."⁶

In the meantime, Brigham Young had concluded that the Salt Lake Temple, a massive undertaking, would never be completed in his lifetime. Observing the effectiveness and beauty of the work that had gone into the St. George Tabernacle, and the faithfulness of the workers, and considering the need of these colonists to receive support from the central church, he wrote to Erastus Snow, in the spring of 1871, that the time had come for the southern Saints to build a Temple, the first Temple in the Mountain West.

Ground was broken on November 9, 1871 and excavation for the basement and foundation began immediately. At the dedication ceremony. President George A. Smith prayed that God would control "all who purpose evil against" these people of God, and added: "Put hooks in the jaws of the enemies of Zion and turn them from their wicked purposes."⁷ In addition to southern Utahans from St. George, and neighboring wards who had been more or less regularly employed on the Tabernacle, workers came from Beaver, Minersville, Fillmore, and Sanpete to work on the Temple.

Edward Parry was in charge of masonry work.

Miles Romney was superintendent of construction,

Archibald McNeil supervised the quarry,

Alexander F. McDonald operated the tithing office,

Truman Angell was the Church Architect, and

George A. Smith, trustee-in-trust of the Church, guaranteed the financing.

The cornerstone was laid April 1, 1874. The lower story was completed on January 1, 1877, and Brigham Young and others immediately began to perform baptisms and endowments for the dead. During the months of January, February, and March Brigham Young inaugurated the various rites and ceremonies of temple service and, as he expressed it, "passed on the keys." At the annual conference of the Church held in St. George on April 6, 1877, the Temple was dedicated and the Hosanna Shout was uttered by those in attendance.

One can imagine the magnitude of the investment of the southern Utah Saints, finishing the Tabernacle and beginning the Temple at the same time. Committees were appointed for each settlement to make sure that sufficient men were maintained at all times at each building site. These and other major enterprises were a cooperative effort. This had also been true of their dams and canals; the bowery which was their first place of worship; the St. George Hall where they held dances, vaudevilles, concerts, and theatrics; and their local meetinghouses and schoolhouses. The donations of teams and labor were heavy. The men ran the fresnoes and drove the teams, completed the excavation and site preparation, did the carpentry work and masonry, and the women provided meals, made shirts and work clothes, and performed other labors like painting and decorating. Women made the exquisite cloth for the Sacrament service table and copied sheets of music that were used by the St. George Tabernacle Choir.

The various industries founded to build the Tabernacle and Temple—the sawmills, wood camps, lime kiln, and stone quarries were also helpful in building homes, barns, and shops. The quarries and sawmills furnished rock and timber not only for the Tabernacle and Temple but also for the big house of Erastus Snow, the winter residence of Brigham Young, and the Court House.

Many of those who labored on the Tabernacle and Temple used this as a means of working off their outstanding accounts with the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, which

had assisted them in traveling from Europe. In essence the whole community was built as part of the process of building the Tabernacle and the Temple.

Construction of the Tabernacle and Temple not only served to develop the skills of local workmen, but also was a means of redistributing other income. Those of greater property and other income supported the craftsmen and laborers who worked on these major projects.

The story of these edifices has been told in books by Albert Miller, Juanita Brooks, and Karl Larson. Another thirty years and more have passed since they wrote, and this seems an appropriate time to remember the persons who made these grand things happen—whose hearts and muscles gave us these superb examples of human architecture.

We begin with **Edward Lloyd Parry**, the master mason.⁸

Brother Parry was born in the village of St. George, Denbighshire, North Wales. His mother died when he was four, so his two sisters were placed with foster nurses and he and his father went to live with his Parry grandparents. His father, grandfather and great grandfather were stone masons. He attended school until he was twelve, worked for his father and grandfather at the mason's trade, and at fourteen received another term of schooling. He was a frail youth and his father decided he would never make it as a stone mason, so he apprenticed him to a tailor. After a few months disgusted with tailoring, Edward returned to his father and grandfather who resignedly put him back to work. For the next twenty years he helped erect dwellings, churches, vicarages, and railroad bridges in his native Welsh village and adjacent towns.

Although he was religious and attended Church of England services, Edward was attracted to the Latter-day Saint gospel, and in 1848 was baptized by Abel Evans who, in 1844, was the second Welshman to join the LDS Church. Edward's wife Elizabeth, whom he had married two years earlier, was likewise converted, as were his father and other relatives. He became a leader in the Denbighshire conference, and kept open house for Elders and saints. With the assistance of the Perpetual Emigration Fund, he and his family and other branch members migrated to the Salt Lake Valley in 1853. He was thirty-four.

The Parrys were followed three years later by the handcart migration of 1856 that featured a Welsh company that included some of Parry's friends and relatives. One of them was his attractive twenty-one-year-old, brown-eyed cousin, Ann Parry, one of a family of fourteen. When Ann went to Edward's home in Ogden, Elizabeth welcomed her and the two chatted until Edward returned from work. Elizabeth presented Ann to her husband by saying, "Here is your cousin, Ann Parry; she will be your second wife." Edward and Ann were married in the Endowment House in February 1857.

Elizabeth was unable to have any children, and Ann eventually bore eleven. When Ann gave birth to her first child in 1858, she named her Elizabeth Ann and gave her to Elizabeth. The child was taught to call Elizabeth her mother and Ann "Aunty Ann." The rest of the children were taught to call the first wife "Mother" and their mother "Ma." None of them knew which was their own mother until they were quite grown. The family always lived together in the same house and Elizabeth and Ann were like mother and daughter.

Another handcart emigrant was eleven-year-old **George Brooks** whose mother had died enroute to Utah, and whose father died two days after his arrival. The Parrys, who had been friends and neighbors of the Brooks's in Wales, took George into their family as a foster son, and George worked with Edward throughout his life. **In addition to his work on the Tabernacle and Temple, George did the stone work on the Dixie College Administration Building.** George was the grandfather of Karl Brooks, our mayor and college vice president.

In April 1862 Edward Parry and family were called to St. George. Ann was pregnant with a third child and shortly after their arrival gave birth to Mary Ellen; she was the first white girl born in St. George. In October 1862 Edward was called to supervise the masonry work on the **St. George Hall and Tabernacle**, the **County Courthouse**, the second story of the **Washington Cotton Factory**, and many **private residences including those of Erastus Snow and Brigham Young.** Among his skilled assistants were **George Brooks** and **William Miles.**

After serving as master mason for the St. George Temple, Edward and Elizabeth and Ann were given their second anointings in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. As they left the sealing room Brigham Young called Edward to supervise the mason and stone work for the Manti Temple. His excellent St. George reputation followed him and one night when the Parrys finished their new home in Manti, Edward was due to attend the High Priest meeting. Another High Priest came on an errand and stayed so long that Edward became uneasy. As they were about to leave the door opened and in came a large crowd, bringing roast chicken, cooked vegetables, cake and pies. When the surprise banquet was over they spent the evening singing, reciting and dancing.⁹

Upon completion of the Manti Temple, Edward took up a quarry near Ephraim and furnished and laid up stones for the Salt Lake Temple Annex, the Kearns Mansion (now the Governor's Mansion in Salt Lake City), the Park Building at the University of Utah, the City and County Building in Provo, the E. H. Harriman Mansion in New York City, and many family gravestones in local cemeteries. He died in 1906, age eighty-eight. Elizabeth had died in 1880 and Ann in 1886. He was one of the great builders in the Mountain West.

A second major builder of the Tabernacle and Temple was **Miles Romney.**¹⁰ The Romneys were a prominent family in England. About 1700 John Romney is said to

have invented the wheel with spokes; his son, George Romney, was an English historical and portrait painter and is compared favorably with Reynolds and Gainsborough. Still another Romney was Lord Mayor of London and became a peer. Miles was born in Dalton in Furness, Lancaster, England. A carpenter who specialized in circular stair building. Miles married Elizabeth Gaskell, and to them were born seven children.

In 1837, the year Apostles Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, and others introduced the gospel into England, the Romneys listened to their message with interest and in September 1839 were baptized. Miles was thirty-three. Obeying the call to emigrate, they left England in 1841 and gathered with the Saints in Nauvoo. Miles worked as a master mechanic on the Nauvoo Temple until its completion in 1846. They journeyed to Utah in 1850. Shortly thereafter he was appointed foreman of the Church Public Works Shops on Temple Square. He held that position until 1856, when he was called on a mission to England, where he presided over the Manchester conference, and later the Liverpool and Preston conferences. He remained two years. After additional service in the Church Public Works, he was called in 1862 to join others in southern Utah, where he was made architect and superintendent of construction of the Tabernacle, and later of the Temple. Of course, he had many assistants: Edson Barney, William Barnes, Willis Copeland, Hosea Stout, David Rogers, Thomas Cottam, Benjamin Blake, Warren Hardy, and his son. Miles Park Romney. He died in St. George in 1877, at age seventy-one. Among other things. Miles designed and built the Tabernacle's beautiful circular stairs.

Robert Gardner

We have highlighted a Welshman and Englishman; we now come to a Scotsman, **Robert Gardner**.¹¹ Robert Gardner was born in the village of Kilsyth in central Scotland, the youngest of seven children. His parents moved to Dalhousie, New Brunswick, Eastern Canada, when he was two. They lived in this poor, timbered, rocky country for twelve years. There was no school, but his mother taught him to read, and his diary, misspelled as it was, was not as atrocious as that of many modern high school students.

When Robert was fourteen, the family moved to Warwick, east of Montreal, on the lower end of Lake Huron. Once again, Robert helped clear land and plant crops. His older brothers having gone off to provide their own livelihood, Robert was the principal support of his aging parents. In 1841, at age twenty-one, he married Jane McKeown, an Irish-Canadian, and Robert and Jane continued to live with his parents.

In 1844, Mormon Elders, preaching in their neighborhood, converted Robert's oldest brother, William, who lived nearby. William, in turn, urged Robert and Jane and his parents to join, which they did in January 1845. Robert, who was now twenty-six, wrote that they went into the woods to a suitable place, cut a hole in the ice which was eighteen inches thick, and William baptized him. Robert wrote,

"While under the water, though only about a second, a bright light shone around my head and had a very mild heat with it."¹² Robert was confirmed a few minutes later by Elder Samuel Bolton, as they sat on a log near the water. "I felt like a child," Robert wrote, "and was very careful what I said and did and thought, lest I offend my Father in Heaven."

Once they had embraced the gospel, the Gardners had a strong desire to move to Nauvoo. When they learned that the Saints were leaving Nauvoo for the Rocky Mountains in 1846, all the members of the little Canadian branch left to join their brethren. The Gardners arrived at Nauvoo in April, acquired the supplies for a journey west, then crossed the Mississippi River and headed for Winter Quarters. They joined the company of John Taylor, another Canadian convert, in the 1847 crossing of the Plains, and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on October 1, 1847. Robert and his brother Archie (Archiblad Gardner) built sawmills on Mill Creek and on the Jordan River and sowed wheat.

Two of Robert Gardner's experiences are worthy of mention. The first occurred during the winter of 1856-57 when he went to the canyon to slide down some timber for firewood; the snow was about five feet deep. Unaware that another party had climbed up the same slide earlier, he was half-way up when he was met by a log hurtling down the incline; it struck his right leg below the knee and peeled off a six-inch strip of the calf of his leg, clear to the bone. He felt his leg with his hands and found it was not broken.

Crawling off the path to a high place, he saw two men coining up the canyon and yelled for help. He found the strip of flesh in his boot and tied it to his leg with his handkerchief, hoping it would grow back. He was placed on a wagon and taken to the mill of John Neff, in present-day Draper, where he was attended by Porter Rockwell. "Old Port," as he was called, gave him a tumbler of whiskey and molasses. Robert began to put it on his wound, but Porter said to put it inside, "so I dun both." After washing and salting the wound. Port started to sew on the ripped-off flesh with a needle and silk thread, but his heart failed. "So they held me up," Gardner wrote, "and I sewed it myself, and made a good job of it."

His neighbors were all very kind during his recovery and got up "tea parties," as they called them, and he was very grateful. In expressing his thanks, he jokingly blessed the pregnant women of three neighboring homes that they would have twins. He didn't mean it or think any more about it, but shortly all three women had twins—the only twins born that year in the Salt Lake Valley. "Whether my words had anything to do with it or not... they all believed it had. I have been cautious about blessings ever since," he wrote.¹³

In the fall of 1861 his name was among those called to go to southern Utah to make new settlements and raise cotton. Gardner wrote in his diary, "I looked and spat, took off my hat, scratched my head, thought, and said "All right."¹⁴ He traded for a span of mules, left his fifteen-year-old son to gather the crops, and

started on his mission on November 12. He met George A. Smith at Parowan, who told him to settle in what became St. George and to find suitable places for sawmills. With tongue in cheek, George A. told him and other missionaries that wood was rather scarce, "but by going twelve or fifteen miles to where there was some cedar, by hunting around we might find some sticks long enough for the fireplace by splicing two sticks together." George A. said that "another advantage of the country was that it was a great place for a range. When a cow got one mouthful of grass, she had to range a great way to get another. He said the sheep done pretty well, but they wore their noses off reaching down between the rocks to get the grass. ... In St. George, water left in the sun got warmed enough to wash dishes in, while thirty miles away the people had to wrap up in bed quilts to keep from freezing."¹⁵

At Harrisburg, fourteen miles north of St. George, they saw friends who had gone south in 1858 to test the country for growing cotton. "The appearance of these brethren and their wives and children was rather discouraging," Robert wrote. "Nearly all of them had fever and ague. . . . They had worked hard and had worn out their clothes, and had replaced them from the cotton they had raised on their own lots and farms. . . . Their clothes and their faces were all of a color, being blue with chills. This tried me harder than anything I had seen in all my Mormon experience.... but I said, 'We will trust in God and go ahead.'"¹⁶

Robert, his family, and his companions spent that 1861 Christmas Day in St. George by holding a meeting and a dance. They immediately laid out the townsite and began building homes. Robert was superintendent of construction for the St. George Hall. "We were united in everything we did in those days," he wrote. "We had no rich nor poor. Our teams and wagons and what was in them was all we had. We had all things in common in those days, and very common too, especially in the eating line, for we didn't even have sorghum."¹⁷ Robert was chosen as the St. George bishop, and when they organized four wards in 1862, he was sustained as bishop of the Fourth Ward and also of Shoal Creek, Meadows, Pinto, and Pine Valley. He served as bishop until 1869, when he was released to become a counselor in the stake presidency. Upon the death of the stake president, Joseph W. Young, in 1873, he served as acting president in the stake until 1877. He also served as mayor of St. George for two four-year terms.

In 1864 Gardner moved his families to Pine Valley, thirty-two miles away, where he logged and sawed timber for the Tabernacle, other public buildings, and private residences. He also supplied the yellow pine timbers free from knots and resin that went into the beautiful Salt Lake Tabernacle Organ. The lumber for the distinctive and eye-catching frame chapel designed by Ebenezer Bryce in Pine Valley in 1868 was also selected and cut by Robert Gardner.

In the 1860s crops in St. George failed for several seasons. Many suffered from hunger, but Robert's brother Archie and others in northern Utah sent flour and other necessities to sustain them.

In 1876 Brigham Young, now seventy-five years old, suffered from rheumatism and prostate problems, and was anxious to complete the St. George Temple before he died. He had keys which he wanted to give, which could be given only in the temple. Brigham had sent a large steam sawmill to Mount Trumbull, about sixty-five miles southeast of St. George and fifteen miles from the north rim of the Grand Canyon, to provide timber for the Temple and other structures. Workmen at the mill had many problems, and some of them left. Brigham Young was irritated; their failure was holding up work on the Temple. George A. Smith, who was with Brigham, went to Gardner and said that he felt compelled to get someone "who will not be stopped by a trifle, but will get out lumber no matter what it will cost, that the Temple may be finished without delay." Gardner said he would do so if the President insisted. Shortly thereafter he received a telegram asking him to go to Trumbull and "get out that lumber."¹⁸ He went immediately.

Bishop Gardner took men and equipment, arranged for teams and drivers to haul logs to the mill, organized another group at Antelope Springs under Isaac Haight to haul lumber to the Temple for which the masonry work was finished, and soon had a steady stream of lumber running from standing trees to the Temple. After a year he returned to St. George and Pine Valley. He was ordained a patriarch in 1900 and worked as an officiator in the Temple until he died in 1906, age eighty-seven. Before his death he said, "The Dixie country was never much of a country in which to make money, but it is a fine country in which to make men and women."¹⁹

There were many other builders, of course. David Milne who painted the Tabernacle; Charles Walker, a stonecutter who provided the poetry and song that inspired the workmen; George Jarvis who erected the scaffolding; John Macfarlane who directed the choir that performed for all of the celebrations; and the women, who looked after the men, their children, and, in most cases, their farms, bookkeeping, and letter-writing.²⁰

In Brigham Young's family there was Lucy Bigelow Young, who he married in 1847, and their three daughters, Eudora, Susa, and Rhoda, all born in Salt Lake City but who spent their teenage years in St. George in the house Brigham built for them in 1865. Susa, in particular, made a reputation as a precocious teenager. She learned shorthand and took down the proceedings of the dedication of the St. George Temple. She recited original poems and verses in celebratory ceremonies in the Tabernacle, and she kept the northern Utah public informed of developments in St. George with regular letters to the Woman's Exponent.

At the age of sixteen she married a local dentist. Alma Dunford, and had two children, one of whom was Leah Dunford, who earned a degree in home economics in the East, wrote several books, and married John A. Widtsoe, president of Utah State University and the University of Utah, who became an apostle of the Church in 1921. Susa later married Jacob Gates and had eleven

additional children. She became an officer of the International Congress of Women, was editor of the *Young Woman's Journal*, headed LDS genealogical work, and had an office in the Church Administration Building in Salt Lake City. Lucy was also a patron of the International Congress of Women and attended at least one of their international conferences—the one in London in 1899.

Lucy entertained church and national officials in her St. George home, including General and Mrs. Thomas L. Kane, great and good friends of the Mormons, who visited Utah in 1873 and at which time Kane drew up Brigham Young's will. Lucy often exhibited her remarkable gift of healing in St. George. As a historical writer noted in the *Young Woman's Journal* in 1893:

How many times the sick and suffering have come upon beds to that temple, and at once Sister Young would be called to take the afflicted one under immediate charge, as all knew the mighty power she had gained through long years of fastings and prayers in the exercise of her special gift. When her hands are upon the head of another in blessing, the words of inspiration and personal prophecy that flow from her lips are like a stream of living fire. One sister who had not walked for twelve years was brought, and under the cheering faith of Sister Young she went through the day's ordinance and was perfectly healed of her affliction.²¹

When the Manti and Logan temples were dedicated, Lucy went to train ordinance workers and to outline procedures to be used in administrations for healing.

In the family of Erastus Snow, his daughter Artimesia, the fifth of eleven children of Erastus's first wife, Artimesia Beman, was a cultural and religious leader. In 1868, when she was nineteen, she married Franklin B. Woolley, son of Brigham Young's business manager, Edwin D. Woolley. Called to settle Utah's Dixie in 1861, Franklin became a merchant and trader. Less than a year after the marriage he went to California on a purchasing mission for the newly organized St. George Co-operative Association. Having engaged teamsters and a wagonmaster, he accompanied the train from San Francisco to San Bernardino. On his return to St. George, he was overtaken by hostiles at a site where there had been an Indian massacre several years earlier and was shot.

For the next five years the grieving widow was the leading soloist for the St. George Tabernacle Choir. In 1873 she married Daniel Seegmiller and raised his motherless family of eight as her own.

Early teachers and persons of influence in St. George were Orpha Everett, Annie Maria Woodbury Romney, and Martha Cragun Cox.

When the Relief Society was organized in St. George in 1868, the first president was Anna L. Ivins, the mother of Anthony W. Ivins. Anna and her husband, Israel Ivins, both born in New Jersey, were among the first to arrive in St. George in 1861. Israel became County Surveyor, was a medical doctor, operated a drug

store, and with his son Anthony looked after Indians at the Jackson Farm on the Santa Clara.

The sisters in the Relief Society collected rags and wove them into rugs and carpets that were placed in the Tabernacle and Temple, and ward meetinghouses. The Tabernacle alone required four hundred square yards of this hand-crafted carpet. The Relief Society raised funds to build and furnish their own meeting places (the oldest church building at Washington is the Relief Society House, erected in 1875) and to care for the poor among their membership. They made quilts, braided straw and made hats, and cleaned the Tabernacle and Temple. They took up the culture of silk; the members donated the eggs their hens laid on Sunday to be exchanged for grain, cloth, or cash, which was in turn contributed to the Tabernacle and Temple. They subscribed for stock in the cooperative stores, Washington Cotton Factory, and cooperative livestock companies. They cared for the seriously sick, and when death came the Relief Society made the burial clothing for the deceased and prepared them for burial. They trimmed the caskets made by expert carpenters.

The women operated a cooperative store; established programs to preserve health; owned a Lyceum which was a cultural center, public library, and a meeting place for the Relief Society and Mutual Improvement Association; and directed the work of the Mutual Improvement and Primary associations.

In addition to Anna Ivins, other Relief Society leaders included Catharine Jane Cottam Romney and Elizabeth Graham McDonald. Daughter of Thomas and Caroline Cottam, who accepted the gospel in Lancashire, England in the 1840s and migrated to Nauvoo, Catharine moved with her parents to St. George when she was seven. Her father built a one-room house with a willow and mud ceiling and dirt floor, where the family lived four years until he was able to build an adobe home. He opened his own turning shop. When construction began on the Tabernacle in 1863 he worked on the structure and produced beautiful furniture for the interior. Catharine and her friends often gathered in her father's shop where he taught them spelling and arithmetic. He taught Catharine to braid straw hats and weave chair bottoms from local brushes. Some of these chairs were placed in the home of Brigham Young; others were in the St. George Temple, where thirteen are there to this day. At age nineteen Catharine married Miles P. Romney, and the couple eventually had nine children.²²

Elizabeth McDonald was born in Perth, Scotland, the fifth of ten daughters. She was baptized in 1847 when she was sixteen, the second LDS convert in Perth. Expelled by her family, she went to Edinburgh. After two years her father, who had become partially paralyzed, welcomed her back home, and he was soon baptized, blessed and restored to health. In 1851 Elizabeth married Alexander McDonald, a Scottish Elder, baptized the same year as Elizabeth but who was immediately called on a mission to the Scottish Highlands. Upon his return he was called to take charge of the Liverpool conference, where he and Elizabeth made their first home. They left Liverpool for the States in 1854 and settled in

Springville, Utah, where Alex helped build a new gristmill and subsequently served as mayor. From 1862 to 1872 he was in charge of the tithing office in Provo. In 1872, anxious to hasten the completion of the St. George Temple, Brigham Young called Alex to take charge of the tithing office and temple accounts in St. George. Elizabeth enjoyed St. George, headed the women's cooperative, and was a leader of the Relief Society. In 1879, when her husband was called to help settle the Salt River Valley in Arizona, she became the first stake Relief Society president in Maricopa Stake and helped spur Arizona women to campaign for female suffrage, which Utah women had enjoyed since 1870.

We cannot but wonder at the miracle that brought together these Welsh, English, Scots, New Englanders, Southerners, and Midwesterners to work together in projects of such enormous significance. Clearly, St. George had a remarkable pool of talent, even among the most humble of its settlers.

Latter-day Saints, all of us, are impressed with the grandeur and magnificence, the massiveness and durability of the Tabernacle and Temple, as being physical embodiments of superlative ideals. These are places where the Saints can receive instruction, be inspired to lead better lives, and reach out to God-places to which the Savior could come to dwell. In a sense the buildings are spiritual sentinels, reminding us of obligations and opportunities while watching over our peaceful habitations.

During this week of rededication, the Tabernacle can be viewed as a symbolical demonstration of the early settlers' belief that life is more than a struggle for physical survival. To the thousands who built it and labored on it "without purse or scrip," it was a visual reminder of the omnipresence of eternity.

SOURCES

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1. Andrew Karl Larson, "I Was Called to Dixie," *The Virgin River Basin: Unique Experience in Mormon Pioneering* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961) 118.

2. *Ibid.*, 568.

3. *Ibid.*, 569.

4. *Ibid.*, 570-71.

5. *Ibid.*, 572.

6. *Ibid.*, 576.

7. Journal of George A. Smith, 74, copy in my possession.
8. See "Edward Lloyd Parry" in Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1898-1904), 4:459-61; Edward Thomas Parry, "Biography of Edward Lloyd Parry," typescript in possession of Parry Sorensen, Salt Lake City; "Elizabeth Evans Parry: The Other Mother," in Kate B. Carter, ed.. Heart Throbs of the West. 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1936-48), 1:287-88.
9. Heart Throbs of the West, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1936-48), 5:62.
10. See especially Thomas Cottam Romney, Life Story of Miles P. Romney (Independence, Mo.: Zions Printing and Publishing, 1948).
11. See the Journal of Robert Gardner in the BYU Library and "Journal and Diary of Robert Gardner," Heart Throbs of the West 10:269-324.
12. Heart Throbs of the West. 10: 273.
13. Ibid., 289.
14. Ibid., 311.
15. Ibid., 313.
16. Ibid., 313.
17. Ibid., 315.
18. Ibid., 321.
19. Ibid., 324.
20. See Janet Burton Seegmiller, "Women Who Pioneered Southern Utah," paper delivered at the Mormon History Association Annual Conference, St. George, Utah, May 14, 1992, copy supplied to me.
21. "Sketch of the labors of Sister Lucy B. Young in the Temples," Young Woman's Journal 4 (April 1893): 299. See also Linda King Newell, "Gifts of the Spirit: Women's Share," in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds. , Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 122-50.
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