

Emma Smith's Garden Party

Narrator 1: In the early days of the Church, work and sacrifice were the daily fare of Mormon women. Much was asked of them and of one in particular - Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Emma was charged by her husband with the creation of an organization, the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, later to be known as the Relief Society, that would become a worldwide legacy to all women. The first Relief Society was organized on March 17, 1842, 155 years ago. Emma Smith had a very brief period of prosperity in her life. It only lasted two or three years in Nauvoo. She had a lovely home and her husband was mayor. Let's imagine she is having a backyard party and visit as she welcomes her guests - sisters in Relief Society from 1842 to the present time.

[Curtain opens. Stage is set with Emma in her garden - trellis, shrubs, table with refreshments, etc. She greets each guest as they come to the party then mingles.]

Narrator 2: Emma's guests are arriving now. There is Eliza R. Snow.

Emma: Eliza, how good to see you. (They shake hands)

Narrator 1: After Emma's husband, the prophet, was slain in Carthage, Emma felt she could no longer continue as head of the women of the church. She and her family stayed in Nauvoo rather than travel west with the Saints. The sister who had come to love her as an elect lady took with them memories of a woman eager to be a blessing to those who she served. Eliza Roxey Snow as called to be the 2nd General Relief Society President in 1866.

("O My Father" piano only underscoring the narration)

Eliza: Brigham Young knew of the good the Relief Society had accomplished in Nauvoo and how it blessed the lives of all the women who were members. He called me to be the General President and asked me to assist the bishops in our new Utah territory in organizing a Relief Society in every ward.

Narrator 2: Sister Snow was a talented poetess and she used her poetry to strengthen the Saints. She wrote "Though Deepening Trials" for those who needed to press on with hope after had been driven from their homes in Missouri. She wrote "O My Father" for a close friend who was mourning the loss of a parent. In all she left a legacy of some 500 poems. She served as President for 21 years.

II. The Pioneers, 1847-1888 "Rockabye Baby"- Song

Narrator 1: In 1866, the nation was recovering from the Civil War. The westward movement continued, two locomotives touched noses at Promontory Summit when the Union Pacific completed 1,775 miles of track to build the transcontinental railroad. Linoleum, margarine and root beer entered the nation's marketplaces as novelties and children started roller-skating. "Rockabye Baby" was written and became an instant hit.

III. The Gay 90's, 1890-1900 "The Band Played On" - Song

Narrator 2: The Gay 90s were noted for many things: the bustle, the bicycle, and the zipper to mention a few. Women fainted a lot, which may have had something to do with the style of 18" waists, enforced by steel corsets! Basketball and the player piano were invented and the Spanish-American war gave us new territories. Everyone read about Wyatt Earp, Annie Oakley, Calamity Jane and Billy the Kid. The barbershop quartet was popular entertainment.

(Barbershop quartet sings a medley of old songs)

Narrator 1: Just arriving at Emma's party is Zina Diantha Huntington Young, the 3rd General President of the Relief Society. She was very lovely and was dearly loved by all. She gained her testimony at age 13.

Zina: One day on my return from school, I saw the Book of Mormon, that strange, new book, lying on the window sill of our sitting room. I went up to the window, picked it up and the sweet influence of the Holy spirit accompanied it to such an extent that I pressed it to my bosom in a rapture of delight, murmuring as I did so, "This is the truth, truth, truth." I was baptized with my family about a year later. My parents both died later as a result of the persecutions against the Mormons. I was a plural wife of Brigham Young and 10 years after his death was called to be general president of the Relief Society, serving there for 13 years.

Narrator 2: In 1890, President Wilford Woodruff issued a manifesto ending the practice of plural marriage. The Salt Lake Temple was finished and dedicated becoming the symbol of the church for many. Utah became a state in 1896.

Narrator 1: There is Bathsheba Smith. She was the 4th General Relief Society President. She saw tremendous growth in the Relief Society during her lifetime.

Bathsheba: As a 19-year old I was the youngest of the 20 women present at the first meeting of the Relief Society. That same year I gave birth to my first child. A few months later, my husband George Albert Smith left on his 5th mission for the Church. I lost both my sons. One died at Winter Quarter and one was killed by Indians. I was blessed to serve as General President for nine years and saw the Relief Society grow from those original 20 to over 40,000 women.

IV. Gibson Girl Era, 1900-1920 "Meet Me in St. Louis" - Song

Narrator 2: Gibson girls were the standard of fashion at the turn of the century. Two bicycle shop owners made history at Kitty Hawk with a machine that except for the wings, looked oddly like a bicycle. The Model "T" roared through the streets at 20 mph in the country and 10 mph in town. The theme of the Worlds Fair, "Meet Me in St. Louis," accompanied the serving of the first hot dogs on buns to fair goers. Teddy bears, named after Teddy Roosevelt, were the rage. The Children's Friend sent out its first issue.

(Ragtime piano music underscores next 2 narrations beginning at (*))

Narrator 1: In 1910, tensions between the nations of Europe were rising. *In America barbers were selling the side part for men, ice cream cones were in and Alexander's Ragtime Band peaked in popularity - a scandalous new rhythm that many thought would drag the youth of America down.

Narrator 2: In 1912 the unsinkable triumph of maritime engineering, the Titanic, sank after hitting an iceberg. In 1917 America entered World War I. Prohibition came, along with votes for women. Voting was nothing for Utah women - they had been doing it as early as 1870.

Narrator 1: Here is Emmeline Woodward Wells, the 5th General Relief Society President. Emmeline was a tiny woman with striking white hair.

Emmeline: I spent a happy childhood in a God-fearing England community. Though my father died when I was young, my mother saw that I received a good education at an early age. At 14, I was baptized into the Mormon Church. When I was 15, I married James Harris. The next year I lost a 3-month old baby and my sadness continued as my husband left me and the Church, giving no explanation. I became a plural wife to Bishop Newel K. Whitney and after his death, later married Daniel Wells. I was called to be General President of the Relief Society by Joseph F. Smith in 1910.

Narrator 1: As World War I progressed, the sisters supported the war effort by selling 200,000 bushels of wheat to the U.S. Government that had been stored under Sister Wells' direction. She served as President for 11 years and was released three weeks prior to her death at the age of 93.

V. Roaring 20's, 1920's "Charleston" piano music

Narrator 2: The 1920's, often called the "Roaring 20s" brought the flapper. You could recognize her by what she wore: bobbed hair, bobby pins, headache bands, chemises, costume jewelry, flesh-colored stockings and pointed strap sandals, not to mention lipstick, rouge, powder, nail polish and hair permanently waved by a Frankenstein machine. Her escort wore a raccoon coat, bell-bottom pants, argyle socks and saddle shoes. Together they sang to the twang of a ukulele when they weren't doing the Charleston or the Black Bottom.

(Charleston Dancers)

Narrator 1: Clarissa Smith Williams has arrived at the party.

Clarissa: When President Heber J. Grant called me to be the 6th General President of the Relief Society, I replied, "Brother Grant, I know you are a very busy man and you might call me to have a conference with you in the late afternoon and I want you to know during school days I intend to leave my office just before 3:30 p.m. I have three children yet in school and I want to be home when they arrive." My husband William and I had 11 children. My first responsibilities were those of wife and mother.

Narrator 1: Clarissa had unusual business and executive abilities. Under her leadership the Welfare Department services were expanded. The Primary Children's Hospital opened in 1922 and 1923 saw the dedication of the Alberta Temple. Radio broadcasts of general conference began and the

first Institute of Religion was built. Thousands toured the Arizona Temple before its dedication in 1927. Clarissa served from 1921-1928.

VI. 1930s "Stormy Weather" - Song

Narrator 2: The crash of 1929 ended a comfortable era of expansion for many. One bank lost 400,000 depositors. "Brother Can You Spare A Dime?" was a theme song as many sold pencils and apples on street corners to get money for food. Radio blossomed with Amos & Andy and The Lone Ranger. Monopoly, Bisquick and Pluto made their bows to public notice. Roosevelt unleashed a landslide of letters -AAA, CCC, TVA, NRA, and PWA. Hemlines dropped to midcalf, waistlines reappeared and fur pieces resembling animals were the rage. Masses of little girls had their hair done in Shirley Temple ringlets.

Narrator 1: Arriving now is Louisa Yates Robison, 7th General President of the Relief Society whose warmth, wit and practicality made her an instinctive leader. However, her feelings of inadequacy about her lack of formal education and her shyness made such positions hard. She adopted the motto, "Welcome the task that takes you beyond yourself." In order to increase her knowledge, she studied from 4-6 a.m. every morning for 2 years, then did her gardening and housework, arriving early for a full day at Relief Society headquarters.

Louisa: was fashionable in the 1930's for women to wear large hats and the General Authorities had counseled the women to remove them during meetings, a counsel often disregarded. As I opened one conference, I looked over a sea of hats and said, "Sisters, we are going to remain seated while we sing our first song. I'm sure you have books and papers and your hats on your laps and I'm afraid it would be hard for you to hold all of them if you stand." You should have heard the gasps and scattered laughter ripple through the congregation as heads were ducked and hats whisked off!

Narrator 1: Music and The Spoken Word with Richard L. Evans began in 1930. The church welfare program was organized, the first Deseret Industries opened and the Hill Cumorah Pageant appeared for the first time. While Louisa served as General President she was moved to compassion by the condition which many women found themselves during the depression. The Mormon Handicraft Shop was instituted as an outlet for handiwork done by women in the home to supplement the family income. In spite of her shyness, Louisa presided over and was loved by thousands of women for over 11 years.

VII. 1940s World War II "I'll Be Seeing You" - Song

Narrator 2: In 1939 a nickel bought cupcakes, candy, the paper or a phone call. DDT and nylons went on sale. Everyone alive then remembers where they were when they heard the news about Pearl Harbor - a good part of the American Navy capsizing or sinking around Ford Island. World War II was in full swing.

Narrator 1: Emma is welcoming Amy Brown Lyman. In 1940, President Heber J. Grant called her to be the 8th General President of the Relief Society. Her first task was to thoroughly modernize the equipment and business affairs of the organization.

Amy: During my 5 years in office, my board served under particularly difficult circumstances. There were the many problems of war. The Church called its European and Pacific missionaries home. The Relief Society Centennial scheduled for April of 1942 was postponed. So much of life was centered around the war.

Narrator 1: In addition, Amy bore the sorrow of her apostle husband's excommunication. Two years before her release, Bell Spafford, a friend and coworker said this of Amy: "She met disappointments and challenges in her personal life during these years with composure. She never panicked in time of trouble. She always placed her faith and trust in the Lord and was poised always in time of trouble. I don't know anyone who better taught me how to meet adversity than Amy Lyman."

Narrator 2: The war indeed had influence over every aspect of life. Hard to find items were gasoline, tires , soap, sugar, flour, butter, and margarine. Swing was big - the big bands were in and the Suzy Q and jitterbug were the dances. Women wore wrap-around skirts and tailored suits with padded shoulders. The singing Andrews Sisters were a big hit with their popular wartime boogie.

"Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" – Song

VIII. 1950s "Earthangel" - Song

Narrator 2: The war was over. Servicemen returned home to begin families. Tract homes were everywhere, TV came into many homes. Margarine came white and you tinted it with yellow powder. The latest fashions were poodle skirts, sweaters, bobby socks, saddle oxfords and ponytails.

Narrator 1: The Church took the lead in post-war aid, sending supplies to the Saints in Europe who could be reached. Elder Ezra Taft Benson traveled in Europe for a year distributing supplies and setting the branches of the Church in order. David O. McKay was sustained 9th president of the Church. Television broadcasts of conference began and the Swiss, New Zealand and London temples were dedicated. The Family Home Evening program was inaugurated, complete with a manual for use on Monday evenings.

Narrator 1: Belle Spafford has just joined the party. Her period in office as the 9th General President of the Relief Society covered nearly 30 years. She was a woman richly endowed with driving executive and leadership abilities, a charming forthright personality, and a deep abiding faith.

Belle: I would like to relate a personal experience which taught me a great lesson. I recall at one time when I first served in a Relief Society presidency the ward had built a new meetinghouse. They had to raise a few thousand dollars in order to have it done and dedicated on time. The Relief Society was called upon to prepare a turkey dinner for a large group. It was the first dinner in the new building. We found the kitchen to be insufferably small, the women-were in each other's way, slowing up the service. One woman fainted from the heat. The next day, distressed about this circumstance, I went to see the bishop. I explained the situation and requested we knock out one wall and extend the kitchen to include the adjoining space which had been allocated for a classroom. He responded with sharpness, "Certainly not," he said. "We aren't going to start remodeling this building before it is dedicated." On my way home, discouraged and feeling somewhat reprimanded, I called at the home of one of the older sisters and I poured forth my

troubles. I concluded by saying, "In this church men have all the power, the women are helpless." To this she replied, "Oh no, my dear, the women are not helpless. If someone came to you, Sister Spafford, and had a great but different gift in each hand and one was power and the other was influence, which gift would you choose?" I thought seriously for a moment and then I said, "I think I would choose influence." "You probably did, my dear," she said. "Influence is a great gift of God to women." Then she said, "Appreciate it and use it right. Do not envy that which has been given to the brethren."

IX. 1960s "I Want To Hold Your Hand" - Song

Narrator 2: The 1960s was a turbulent time of changes, tragedies & accomplishments. Things seemed to fall apart for a while - assassinations, riots and bombs... But it was also a thrilling time with events such as the first man on the moon! The Beatles dominated the music scene. Ratted hair dramatically changed hairstyles as teens and others "back-combed" their hair to get the fullest style possible. The Twiggy look with go-go boots and miniskirts was also popular. This was a challenging time for women of the Church. Sister Spafford encouraged the sisters to "dare to be different" and not wear the immodest styles.

Narrator 1: In a time of so much change and upheaval, a woman in the Church had the legacy of stability and spiritual security.

XI. 1970s & 1980s "Endless Love" - Song

Narrator 2: The 70's and 80's were an exciting time of changing lifestyles due to modern technology. Homes welcomed computers, VCRs, video games and microwave ovens. In 1981 Princess Diana was married. Her elegant wedding dress influenced fashion in America. You may have attended a wedding reception and seen bridesmaids and flower girls attired in dresses with the puffy sleeves and full skirts. Running, (***) jogging and exercise in general became a popular way to work off the excess caused by fast foods. Of course some people don't eat these things, they enjoy sprouts, whole grains, fruits, vegetables and less red meat, which is something Joseph Smith advocated 150 years ago.

(***)2 joggers run across and wave

Narrator 1: Emma's next guest is Barbara Bradshaw Smith, the 10th General Relief Society President. To replace Belle Spafford, who had been President for nearly 30 years, must have been overwhelming. But those who had worked with Sister Smith knew of her humility, intelligence, energy and devotion to the gospel.

Narrator 2: Isn't that Barbara Winder arriving with her?

Barbara Smith: You can't pray for sisters every single day and then not feel a great love for them. I do pray that the Lord will bless the sisters. I pray they will be unified. I pray that they will understand that the Relief Society is there to help them and that they will avail themselves of the opportunities it affords them. Above all, I pray that they will have great love for one another.

Barbara Winder: I am Barbara Winder, the 11th General Pres. of the R.S. I was called while my husband was serving as president of the San Diego, California mission. I truly had mixed emotions as we left our field of labor. Bless my dear husband! He sacrificed that I might serve my Heavenly Father in this capacity. We have come a long way, sisters, since the prophet first organized Relief Society. Joseph was far ahead of his time when he said the Church would never be fully organized until the sisters were organized.

XII. 1990s "Sisters" song (Irving Berlin's with Relief Society words)

Narrator 2: Emma's guests arriving now are Sister Elaine Jack and Sister Mary Ellen Smoot. Elaine Jack was called to be our 12th General Relief Society President in 1990. There were over 3 million Relief Society sisters in 135 countries and territories worldwide. As we listen to her counsel, we feel she is speaking friend to friend, sister to sister, about women's concerns, always with a vision of the reality of being daughters of god.

Elaine Jack: Our goal is that each of you enjoy the process of life; that you have hope and joy in daily living, that you know the joy and necessity of making Jesus Christ the center of your life, that you realize your importance and goodness, and that you see the great scope of Relief Society. Relief Society is the sum of righteousness of each sister. Your life is a testament to your testimonies of your Savior. You are something extraordinary.

Narrator 1: Sister Smoot, with her special spirit, lead and inspired the sisters of Relief Society as the 13th General Relief Society President The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has experienced much growth in recent years. Our church has worldwide influence.

Narrator 2: We are building temples all over the world. We have 60,000 missionaries, all over the world. We have 11 million plus members all over the world. We are worldwide in numbers but united in purpose. We're sisters in Zion and each one of you will add to the legacy which is to be left for those to come.

Mary Ellen Smoot: Everywhere I have traveled, whether it was Finland, Idaho, Brazil, Washington D.C., or Russia, I have witnessed the gospel of Jesus Christ in action and the radiant light of the gospel in the countenances of courageous and faithful sisters. The spirit has born "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14) To each of you, no matter your nationality, race, social status, or individual talents, whether you are married, single or widowed, whether you were born into the Church or are a new convert and the only member of your family,-I say, "Welcome home!" The Relief Society is your home, and you are an integral part of a worldwide sisterhood with a divine mission."

XIII. 2000s "My Sister's Hands" - Song

Narrator 1: Emma's last guest to arrive is Sister Bonnie Parkin, the 14th and present General Relief Society President.

Bonnie Parkin: My desire as General Relief Society President is that sisters will feel the love of the Lord in their lives daily as they keep their covenants, exercise charity, and strengthen families. I am more and more convinced that feeling the love of the Lord in our lives daily is an essential thing for

our joy and happiness. Knowing that God loves us in a personal way changes our concept of self and fortifies us to meet life's daily challenges. Feeling the love of God helps us to live our lives more meaningfully and successfully. It literally changes us.

Narrator 2: Please join us in singing "As Sisters in Zion."

[All cast comes onto stage and sings with Congregation "As Sisters in Zion"]