

A Great and Marvelous Work: Selected Stories from the Lives of LDS Women

with notes and pictures added by Jenny Smith

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Some notes: these articles were written by someone (a friend of a friend) who works for the Church archives. Unfortunately, none of the stories had references.

I (Jenny Smith) have added references where I could find sources, but I can not verify every word of the texts. However, I have no reason to believe they are inaccurate.

Lucy Mack Smith

Lucy Mack Smith, the mother of Joseph Smith, was an example of unwavering faith throughout her life. She prepared herself while she was young for her future mission in life by listening to her parent's religious teachings and gaining her own relationship with God.

On one occasion as a young mother she became seriously ill, and doctors said she would die. Lucy recorded, "I then looked to the Lord and begged and pleaded with him to spare my life in order that I might bring up my children and be a comfort to my husband. My mind was much agitated during the whole night. During the night I made a solemn covenant with God that if He would let me live I would endeavor to serve him according to the best of my abilities." Afterwards a voice assured her that she would live. Then she told her mother, "the Lord will let me live, if I am faithful to the promise which I made to Him, to be a comfort to my mother, my husband, and my children." (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith, by His Mother, Lucy Mack Smith*, ed. Preston Nibley, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979, pp. 34.)



On another occasion Lucy took charge of a group of about 50 saints who were traveling to Kirtland. They boarded a canal boat and had traveled as far as Buffalo. They became stuck there because there was heavy ice on Lake Erie and the boat could not pass. Most of the passengers were content to sit on the boat and wait until the ice melted, but not Lucy. She rallied the saints and said to them, "Where is your faith? Where is your confidence in God? Can you not realize that all things were made by Him, and that He rules over the works of his own hands? And suppose that all the Saints here should lift their hearts in prayer to God, that the way might be opened before us. How easy it would be for him to cause the ice to break away, so that in a moment we could be on our journey!"

As the saints began to pray, a noise like bursting thunder was heard. The ice parted leaving a space barely big enough for the boat to pass. Just after they passed through the opening, it closed up again. "The boat was so loaded that the bystanders were certain it would sink. In fact, they went to the newspaper office and published the news that the Mormon boat had sunk with all on board. When Lucy and the Saints arrived in Fairport, they were amused to read in the papers the news of their own deaths." (Jaynann Payne, "Lucy Mack Smith: Woman of Great Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 1972)

"Lucy's tremendous faith bore fruit in the many gifts of the Spirit she evidenced throughout her life: prophecy, testimony, faith to be healed, discernment of spirits, and wisdom and knowledge." (Jaynann Payne, "Lucy Mack Smith: Woman of Great Faith," *Ensign*, Nov. 1972)

Lucy Mack Smith is an example of Faith to me, and I can follow her example and develop the value of **Faith** by....

(Picture from <http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/llds/meridian/2002/martyrs.html> also available at http://www.meridianmagazine.com/sci_rel/020606martyr.html)

Eliza R. Snow

Eliza was an example to us of the importance of gaining knowledge and using it for the benefit of all. Most importantly, she gained an understanding of here divine nature and shared it with others through her poetry. Eliza was born in Becket Massachusetts, in 1804. The home she grew up in was a place where "intelligent, cultured" people gathered to talk. She gained a love of knowledge and learning as a young girl. Well known religious leaders would come to her house to help her study the scriptures and theology. Her motto was "Prove all things and hold fast that which is good." Eliza was a brilliant pupil and eager to learn. She also became proficient in the domestic arts, like needlework and cooking.

During the winter of 1830-1831 the prophet Joseph Smith visited her home and taught her family the gospel. After much study of the restored gospel she was baptized in 1835.

In her childhood Eliza began writing poetry. Her great ability was soon noticed by newspapers where she lived, including the *Ohio Star* and the *Western Courier* ("Eliza R. Snow", *Encyclopedia of LDS History*, Jill Mulvay Derr).

Many of her early poems were patriotic. When she was 22, she wrote a poem about a battle, called "The Fall of Missolonghi". This poem made her famous.



As the Saints were forced to move from place to place and finally to the Salt Lake Valley, it was Eliza R. Snow who gave courage to the saints with her songs of hope and cheer. The Mormon pioneers sang these songs with zest and would forget their inconveniences and trials for a while. One such song goes like this:

Although in woods and tents we dwell.
Shout! Shout! O camp of Israel;
No Christian mobs on earth can bind
Our thoughts, or steal our peace of mind.
We'd better live in tents and smoke
Than wear the cursed Gentile yoke,
We'd better from our country fly
Than by mobbery to die.
The camp, the camp—it's numbers swell,
Shout, Shout, O camp of Israel
The king, the Lord of hosts is near,
His armies guard our front and rear. (part of this poem is cited here
http://www.allaboutmormons.info/daily/activity/meetings/firesides_eom.htm as being from the *Journal of Eliza R. Snow*)

Through Eliza's study of the gospel, she gained a deep knowledge of our divine nature. She taught others about this through her poetry. In her poem, "O My Father," she teaches this principle:

O my Father, thou that dwellest,
In the high and glorious place!
When shall I regain thy presence,
And again behold thy face?
In thy holy habitation,
Did my spirit once reside?
In my first primeval childhood,
Was I nurtured by thy side?

In the heavens are parents single?
No, the thought makes reason stare;
Truth is reason, truth eternal,
Tells me I've a mother there.

When I leave this frail existence—
When I leave this mortal by;
Father, Mother, may I greet you
In your royal courts on high? (*Hymns*, "O My Father", #292)

Like Eliza R. Snow, I ,too, can gain **Knowledge** and learn of my **Divine Nature** by....

(Picture from <http://smithinstitute.byu.edu/wh/ERSPhotos.asp>)

Aurelia Spencer Rogers

Aurelia Spencer Rogers, founder of the Primary organization (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Press Release, 22 January 2003) , always demonstrated her belief in the individual worth of each of God's children.

This is Aurelia's story: in 1840 Daniel Spencer, Aurelia's uncle, introduced the Spencer family to the gospel, and they were baptized soon after. (Life Sketches of Orson Spencer and Others, and History of Primary Work. by Aurelia Spencer Rogers; Geo. Q. Cannon & Sons Company 1898 pg 15; reprint: Family Press 1978 SLC) Later they joined the Saints in Nauvoo. In February of 1846 they left Nauvoo along with most of the other Saints. Soon after, Aurelia's mother died. Her father, Orson Spencer, brought his beloved wife back to Nauvoo to bury her. Then he and his six children started off again. When the family reached Winter Quarters he quickly built a cabin for his children because he had been called on a mission to the British Isles and would be leaving soon. While Brother Spencer was away, 12 year old Aurelia and 14 year old Ellen took care of their four younger siblings with some help from their neighbors. Aurelia never complained because she knew that her father was doing an important work—preaching the gospel to God's children. (see David B. Haight, "The Primary Enriches the Lives of Children," *Ensign*, May 1978, page 22)



In 1848, Brigham Young took the little family in his company across the plains and into the Salt Lake Valley. Their uncle was already in the valley and he provided a one-room cabin for them to live in. Then finally in the summer of 1849 their father returned.

In 1851 Aurelia married Thomas Rogers and moved to Farmington. There they raised their family. When she was in her early forties, with her own family mostly raised, she demonstrated her love for the children in her community. She observed the rowdiness and mischief of the Farmington boys and thought seriously about the problem. She knew that all God's children were of great worth, especially the children and she wanted to do something about it. When Eliza R. Snow came to visit, she expressed her concern and asked permission to start an organization to train little boys. Sister Snow took the idea to the Quorum of the Twelve and Aurelia was given permission to begin a children's organization in Farmington. (see David B. Haight, "The Primary Enriches the Lives of Children," *Ensign*, May 1978, page 22)

Aurelia was set apart as President of the Primary Association. The children were taught obedience, faith in God, prayer, punctuality, and good manners. Eventually the primary program spread throughout the valley. Aurelia's primary children loved her because she loved them and cherished their individual worth. She expressed her great love for the children in a poem:

Little children how I love them,
Pure bright spirits from above;
What would Heaven be without them?
Or this world, without their love?
Yet these little angel spirits,
Sometimes have been heard to say
Naughty words, use impure language,
While in anger at their play.
Then dear children, be ye always
Pure and holy day by day;
Ask the Lord to guard and keep you
In the straight and narrow way.
Never grieve your Heavenly Watchers
By a coarse or impure word;
Nor forget to pray for loved ones,
For the children's prayers are heard.

We should value the individual worth each of Heavenly Father's children like Aurelia did. I can value my **Individual Worth** and the worth of others by....

(Picture from <http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/museum/primary/exhibit/1,16230,4088-1-32-1,00.html>)

Mary Ann Weston Maughan

Just like all of us Mary Ann Weston had some very important choices to make.

Mary Ann was born and reared in Gloucester, England. When she was 22 years old she went to live with the Jenkins family to become an apprentice as a dressmaker. While staying with this family, she was introduced to the missionaries and joined the church. The rest of her family was not interested, but they were not opposed to her becoming a Mormon.

A few months later she met a young Mormon carpenter named John Davis who she married on Dec. 23, 1840.

During this time there were mobs that opposed the church and persecuted the Mormons. One such mob attacked John and kicked him. He was bruised internally and never recovered from his injuries. He died just four months after their marriage. He was buried on April 6, 1841. Mary Ann then decided to join the saints in Nauvoo. The following is an account in Mary Ann's own words:



"The next day I left my home a sad lonely Widow, where less than four months before I had been taken a happy bride. I did not go home for I felt that my parents would try to stop me from gathering with the saints. I prayed for strength to settle our business and then I would gather with the saints. I had no debts to pay and the Lord blessed me with success in collecting the money due my husband and myself. This was a very trying time for me. Every day I had to take leave of some dear friend that I never expected to see again in this world. The last and hardest trial was to take leave of my Father, mother, brothers, and sisters. My dear good mother was most broken hearted to see me go but Father was more calm. My two little sisters clung around my neck saying we'll never see you again. Oh the grief and sorrow of this time I can never forget, thus on the 4th of May 1841 I left all that was near and dear to me to travel some thousands of miles alone, and cast my lot with the people of God. We started to walk a little way. On the way we passed by the church where John and I were married. On seeing the church, I thought of the girl I was not six months ago. Now I had left all and was traveling alone to a land unknown to me, but I had cast my lot with the people of God and in him I put my trust." (this quote is probably from Mary Ann Weston [Davis] Maughan, "Journal of Mary Ann Weston Maughan," *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1959), see also Fred E. Woods, "Seagoing Saints," *Ensign*, Sept. 2001, p. 54 and Lavina Fielding Anderson, "In the Crucible: Early British Saints," *Ensign*, Dec. 1979, p.51)

Mary had some hard choices to make but she chose wisely and relied on the Lord to help her. I can make good **Choices and be Accountable** for my actions by.....

(Picture from <http://www.dragongoose.com/LewHisLumBm.html>)

The Women of Nauvoo

On March 17, 1842, The "Female Relief Society" was organized "to seek out and relieve the distressed—that each member should be ambitious to do good." (from Minutes of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, 17 March 1842, as quoted in "Voices of Faith," *Ensign*, Mar. 1992, 7)

With Emma Smith as president, the members of the Relief Society went about doing good works for those in need. Each week the sisters would meet to discuss the needs of the people of Nauvoo and to collect the resources that they had. Some women donated money, others gave material goods. Some donated cloth while others gave of their time to sew clothing out of the donated cloth. As the work on the temple continued, the women of Nauvoo collected what little money they could to buy materials for the temple. They also made clothing for the workers.

Caroline Butler was a young mother who lived near Nauvoo. She wanted to give money to help build the temple, but her family was very poor and she longed for a way she could help. One day as she drove into the city, she saw the men who were cutting stones for the temple walls. Some of the men were standing around a small fire to get warm. She could see their breath in the cold air as they stood talking to each other. She noticed how cold they looked. She wished she could do something to help.

A few days later as Caroline and the children were riding home, they saw two dead buffaloes lying near the road. As Caroline looked at the long, shaggy hair of the buffaloes, she suddenly got an idea. Caroline and the children pulled the long, dark hair from the buffaloes and took it home. She washed the buffalo hair and spread it out on the table to dry. When it was dry she spun the buffalo hair into yarn. Then she began knitting. Each night Caroline knitted big warm mittens until she could no longer stay awake. After many nights she had knitted eight pairs of mittens. The next day she drove her wagon to the temple site and gave the mittens to the temple workers. Her service to others had helped the work on the temple go a little easier.

Caroline and all the women of Nauvoo are a great examples of good works. (see *Our Heritage*, 5: Sacrifice and Blessings in Nauvoo)

Like the women of Nauvoo, I can incorporate the value of **Good Works** into my life by. . . .

(Picture of Emma Smith from Gospel Art Picture Kit #405, <http://lds.org/hf/art/display/0.16842,4218-1-4-117,00.html>)



Mary Fielding Smith

Integrity is defined as uncompromising adherence to principles. Mary Fielding Smith demonstrated this value, because no matter what obstacles came in her path, she followed the principles of her belief.

When her husband, Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was killed in Carthage Jail, Mary was left a widow with a large family. It became her responsibility to care for Hyrum's children from his first wife, the two children she and Hyrum had, and several other helpless or ill people who had depended on her and her husband to provide for them. Mary and her family left Nauvoo in 1846 with many of the other Saints.

In the spring of 1848 most of the Saints were leaving Winter Quarters to travel to the Salt Lake Valley. Mary was determined to go with them. She had no money, no oxen and no provisions for the journey, but she relied on the Lord and managed to reach the starting point with seven "almost ready" wagons. When the captain of the group saw Mary's situation, he told her that she would be a burden to the company and insisted that she would never make it. Mary calmly replied that not only would she not ask for his help, but that she would beat him to the Valley.

Despite hardships, it seemed Mary's group would make it to the valley. Then one hot day, one of Mary's best oxen collapsed. The wagons behind Mary's were forced to stop. It looked as though the ox would die. The captain came and declared that the ox was dead. He said he would have to find a way to take that wagonload the rest of the way and that he had known all along Mary would be a burden.

But Mary's faith never faltered; she "went to her wagon and returned with a bottle of consecrated oil. She asked her brother Joseph and James Lawson to administer to her fallen ox". So Joseph Fielding "knelt, laid his hands on the head of the ox ... , and prayed over it." When the prayer was finished, a moment passed; then, to the astonishment of the onlookers, the stiffened ox stirred, gathered his legs beneath him, stood, and "started off pulling again as if nothing had happened".

Not far from the end of the journey, some of Mary's cows were lost. While her stepson John went to find the cattle, the captain ordered the rest of the company to move on. Mary waited for John and prayed he would be able to find their cows. Then a sudden rainstorm came, and the company that had moved ahead was thrown into confusion. The cattle scattered, and it took all day to round them up. Meanwhile, John had returned with the lost cows. The Smith party moved forward, past the rest of the company, and on into the valley.

Mary had kept her word. Her courage, faith, and integrity had led her family across the plains and finally into the Salt Lake Valley, 20 hours in advance of the captain who had tried to discourage her. (This story is pretty much a direct quote from *Gospel Art Picture Kit*, Mary Fielding and Joseph F. Smith Crossing the Plains, 412)

Like Mary Fielding Smith I can be firm in my values. I can show **Integrity** by...

(Picture from <http://www.atlasbronze casting.net/about.html4.html> of a statue of Mary Fielding Smith going to pay her tithing from her crop of potatoes. A life-size version of this sculpture of Mary Fielding Smith is in place next to her cabin at This Is The Place State Park in Salt Lake City Utah.)

