

Comforting the Motherless Children: The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum

Amy L. Bentley

ON 24 SEPTEMBER 1977, a group of fifteen Latter-day Saint women met for a luncheon at the home of Anna Taylor in Orem, Utah. The group, including Taylor's sister-in-law Fern Smoot Taylor, Wanda Scott, Florence Mitchell, Alice Jensen, Helen Candland Stark, and sisters Algie Eggertsen Ballif and Thelma Eggertsen Weight, gathered to show support for Jan Tyler after her disastrous experience as chair of the International Women's Year (IWY) Utah state convention. Anna Taylor, Fern Taylor, and Algie Ballif had taken pains to invite a cross section of Utah Valley women with feminist leanings. The women ranged in age from under thirty to over eighty and included high school and college teachers, social workers, law students, writers, and homemakers—single, married, widowed, or divorced—most meeting each other for the first time. Forming a circle, the women poured out their frustrations, heartfelt confessions that resulted in both tears and laughter. By lending moral support to Jan Tyler, these women were also consoling themselves (Taylor n.d.).

Tyler had chaired the convention held in the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City the previous 24 and 25 June. The purpose of the Utah IWY convention had been to elect delegates to the National Convention in Houston for the following November and to discuss and vote on important women's issues such as child care, equal rights, women and the law, and abortion. The Utah convention proved to be as hot as the ninety-five-degree June heat. A crowd of predominantly Mormon women flooded the sessions just to vote "no" on every proposed plank in the platform, including such innocuous measures as improving con-

AMY L. BENTLEY is a doctoral candidate in American civilization at the University of Pennsylvania.

sumer information and protection; non-Mormon women resented the Church they assumed had directed its members to sabotage the convention. Mormon women who had participated in the planning for the convention were left dazed, feeling betrayed, ashamed at the actions of their sisters, and offended at the level of hysteria in the meeting (Huefner 1978; Sillitoe 1977).

Jan Tyler, doctoral candidate in educational administration at the University of Utah and previously a BYU women's studies professor, was both a Church member and an open advocate of the Equal Rights Amendment. At the convention, Mormon women who adamantly opposed the ERA constantly harassed her. One woman, assuming that she was trying to make some kind of a subversive monetary contribution, screamed and prevented her from approaching a registration table. Other women followed her to her car at midnight after an exhausting session to make sure she did not sneak back and try to pass a resolution they opposed. In a later interview, Tyler related: "I've never had an experience where I felt so alone—completely alone" (in Sillitoe 1977, 14). Tyler, raised in an orthodox Mormon home in both Idaho and Washington, had first learned about the ERA in the late 1960s at Arizona State University, where she was pursuing a master's degree in counseling psychology. The amendment, then a solid plank in the Republican party platform, made sense to Tyler, and she decided this was worth supporting. "My decision . . . was not a political one," Jan said, "but a deeply spiritual one; it felt right inside of me" (1989). Having learned early in her Church training to search for answers in a personal, spiritual way, Tyler was shocked when the Church came out so strongly against the ERA. She had come to support the ERA precisely because it made moral and spiritual sense to her, because it seemed to be in harmony with gospel principles. Now she found herself at odds not only with the Church as an institution, but with many of its members as well.

Four months after their September luncheon, on 21 January 1978, the group of Utah Valley women met again, this time in the Brigham Young University cafeteria. Again they exchanged feelings about the relationship between their feminist concerns and the Church. Wanda Scott, long-time administrative assistant for Congressman Gunn McKay's Utah County office, talked about being released from her Relief Society teaching calling after expressing her support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Helen Stark, living just south of Provo in Salem, Utah, expressed alarm over the growing censorship of books in the nearby school districts and volunteered to begin an investigation. Stark recorded in her journal that another participant, Rachel Heninger, recounted hearing conservative Utah legislator Jayne Ann Payne, mother

of twelve, characterize what she saw at the IWY convention in Houston as "only lesbians making public love." "What a distortion!" Stark wrote. "We felt almost subversive to be meeting as feminists, a dirty word. I had thought the group might just 'fold,' and maybe that would be best, but there seemed to be a felt need for it and it took off with renewed vigor" (1978).

The group that met that day did not "fold." Between January 1978 and April 1981 they met regularly as the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum to discuss feminist issues, particularly the Equal Rights Amendment, in the context of Mormonism. Reba Keele, associate professor of organizational behavior at BYU, suggested adopting the name of the Alice Louise Reynolds Club, a long-standing ladies literary and cultural club organized originally in the 1930s in honor of a beloved BYU English professor, Alice Louise Reynolds (Ballif n.d.).¹ Although the group included many younger women concerned with feminist and social issues, many "old guard" members of the original ALR Club now in their seventies and eighties were represented in the new organization, some, such as Algie Ballif and Thelma Weight, having been students of Reynolds. The women decided to modernize the chapter's name to the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum.

The early years of the Forum, 1978-81, were a time of change in traditional male-female roles—a social revolution whose impact some have likened to the Industrial Revolution's. It was during these years that the slogan "the personal is political" became a maxim of the feminist movement. Theorists and historians of the female experience, and individual women attempting to understand their own lives, explored ways in which political and social values affect personal experience. Consciousness-raising groups in the 1970s, for example, enabled women to discover that others shared their concerns about the role of women in society. These therapeutic encounters allowed women to explore the connection between individual experience and public concern. Members of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum were no exception. Although these Mormon women sought each other out under the umbrella of a traditional ladies' club, to designate their reorganization a "women's forum" rather than a club is telling.

Traditional literary clubs originated in the nineteenth century to teach women "culture" through studying great works of literature and art. At the same time that high culture, or the appearance of it, helped women maintain their position as moral guardians of society, it was

¹ Reynolds' own story is a fascinating and important one, but too long to include here. For an interesting and informative sketch of Alice Louise Reynolds' life, see Reba Keele, "Reynolds Dedication," *Exponent II* (June 1977), 4.

also thought that women's brains were inferior to men's and that too much intellectual stimulation would make women weak and thus unable to bear children (see Welter 1966; Smith-Rosenberg 1971, 1975; Smith-Rosenberg and Rosenberg 1973). Thus, in nineteenth-century America, such clubs were significant because they were exclusively women's organizations—organized, planned, and conducted by women. Women-only organizations were a significant step toward self-determination for women. Many of these “club women” were early supporters of women's suffrage and advocates of progressive social causes.

Like other members of women's groups in the 1970s then, Forum members changed the focus of an established form for organized female interaction from self-improvement through high culture to self-actualization through involvement in social and political issues.² As Forum meetings continued, a clear pattern of procedure emerged. Fern Taylor describes it this way:

For the first four or five meetings, when our group was small (15 or 20), we formed our chairs in a circle where we could discuss our problems informally, with Anna Taylor or Fern Taylor as moderator. After the public was invited (this included men) and the attendance increased (30 to 100 or more), we used a conventional seating arrangement, with officers and speakers seated on the front row. For the first year, the meetings were chaired by either Anna Taylor or Fern Taylor. At later meetings, turns at conducting were extended to Loneta Murphy and occasionally to Jan Tyler. (n.d.)

Anna and Fern Taylor were middle-aged school teachers living in Orem. Few in Utah County would have guessed that the two white-haired, conservatively dressed women were committed liberal activists, always willing to post a sign on their lawns for the current Democratic candidate. Working behind the scenes for the most part, they were especially committed to women's rights.

Algie Ballif, a long-time active supporter of the Utah Democratic party, remembered the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum as “a very loosely organized group. We never elected a president, we had no membership except [we] phoned members that we wanted to notify

² For an account of women's clubs as progressive and concerned with women's rights, see Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868–1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980), especially pages xii, xiii, 5, 15, 37, 117. Though she may overstate her case, Blair uses some significant and illuminating points to challenge the stereotype of the WASP upper-middle and upper class clubwoman as anti-feminist and only concerned with “selfish” endeavors. See also Theodora Penny Martin, *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs, 1860–1910* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).

about meetings. We had no dues. It just seemed to spontaneously grow; the need was there for women to get together and discuss their problems and, of course, men too if they so desired" (n.d.). And men did join with them — an indication that both the men and the forum women were questioning and seeking to redefine traditional gender roles.

Forum meetings were scheduled the second Saturday of each month at two o'clock in the afternoon, but the otherwise informal structure was in direct contrast to the formality of the original Alice Louise Reynolds Club. The original ALR Club had a constitution and bylaws, took attendance, and established rules as to how many meetings one could miss before being dismissed from the club. The chapters collected annual dues, restricted membership, invited guests, and had elected officers and formal luncheons. (At its peak the club had fourteen chapters along the Wasatch Front and in Hurricane, St. George, and even New York City.) LuRee Porter of St. George, secretary of the Club's still existing chapter, remembered in 1988 that in its heyday the Club even had club colors, a club song, and a musical number for every meeting. In recent years, she remarked, the tenor of the meetings had relaxed considerably.

In setting an informal tone, Forum members seemed to be influenced by the therapy groups of the 1970s, or perhaps they were reacting to the strict hierarchical nature of the Church organization itself. Here were women coming together in a nurturing and supportive atmosphere to console themselves and each other and to confirm their beliefs. Many, if not all, had some criticisms of the patriarchal structure of the Church with its emphasis on ordered progression up the leadership ladder. These women resented what they perceived to be an excessive emphasis on rules and regulations. They felt the spirit was being correlated out of the Church by so much emphasis on the letter of the law. Forum members felt that such demonstrations of ecclesiastical power as the Church's decisions to cease publication of *The Relief Society Magazine* and to assume the Relief Society's financial operations came at the expense of women.

Possibly because of their strong opinions on these matters, Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum members made an unconscious, if not deliberate, attempt to minimize the formal aspect of their meetings. Although Algie Ballif and Helen Stark, among others, were looked to as women of experience and wisdom because of their age and accomplishments, the group had no president, no dues, and no refreshments, although sometimes after a meeting, women interested in continuing the discussion were invited to Algie Ballif's large, comfortable, Victorian home next to the BYU campus, where as a gracious hostess she

served light refreshments (Ballif n.d.).³ After the first few meetings, Forum members felt such a sense of mission that the charter members opened the meetings to the general public, printing notices of meetings in the Provo *Daily Herald*. A *Herald* reporter often attended, writing articles about Forum activities for the next day's edition.

Algie Ballif, her sister Thelma Weight, and Helen Stark were the main force behind the Forum. Algie and Thelma, especially, grew up in an era when graciousness was a carefully cultivated art. They wore lovely dresses, carried handbags, sat with their knees together, and bore themselves with dignity. Both wore their long hair pulled back in a bun or braided in a wreath. Though always cordial, the "Eggertsen girls" were assertive and efficient. They came from a large family of strong Danish heritage, a family accustomed to hard work and active participation in both Church and community affairs. The children were encouraged to participate in discussions, to ask questions and offer opinions (Kadar 1989; Peterson 1989). Both women were active churchgoers, both were married to prominent men in the community, and both raised their children in Provo.

Algie, the elder, was the "idea woman," the director. Although Thelma was interested in politics, she let Algie take the lead. She was more interested in art and literature and often quoted bits of memorized poetry or scripture. Algie had a knack for "graciously coercing" people into doing things. Nancy Kadar, a younger member of the group and also a committed activist, recalled in 1989 that Algie would call her up and say something like, "Nancy, dear, did you know that so-and-so is attempting to pass this particular legislation? Why don't you take a minute to call his office and voice your concern—and get five other women to do the same?" There was no way you'd ever say no to Algie," laughed Kadar.

Helen Candland Stark, the third in this trio of women, was cast from the same mold as Algie and Thelma, but was a bit more emotional, less decorous than the other two. Also a committed feminist

³ It is interesting to note, however, that in 1985 the organization, now known as the Algie Ballif Forum, did draw up a set of bylaws outlining a purpose ("to provide for the community a forum which will serve to enlighten and inform its supporters about issues of the day, particularly those pertaining to women"), meeting time and place, and format (a board of directors, acting officials including the executive committee, publicity chairman and assistant, archivist-historian, secretary, membership chairman, treasurer, and members ("the public is always welcome"). The exact reason for the need to have written rules governing the club is unknown, but my guess is now that the stalwart members are getting older, not many younger ones are filling the ranks, and the group's future is somewhat uncertain. The bylaws, then, are an attempt to legitimize the Forum and assure its continuance, if only on paper.

and supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, Helen was an avid poetry and essay writer. After having lived in Delaware for years with her family, she and her husband Henry had moved back to Utah to retire. Helen read voraciously, as did all of them, and was especially interested in Jungian psychology. Her study of eastern mysticism led her to think of the world in terms of balance and harmony. To her an excess of patriarchy in the Church upset this balance of yin and yang (Stark 1988).

All three women were firm in their support for the ERA. They remembered the suffrage movement in the 1920s and were of the opinion that the ERA should have gone through at that time. To them this amendment was not a new issue, but unfinished business. Though all three were upset when the Church began actively to oppose the ERA, it was never a choice for them between leaving the Church or staying. They set out to deal with the Church in a very pragmatic way instead of giving in or giving up. They were Latter-day Saints through and through. Mormonism was their religion, their heritage.

From 1978 to mid-1981 the Forum's monthly discussions addressed, with a clearly liberal slant, social issues concerning the group as women and members of the LDS church. Congressman Gunn McKay, one of the first invited speakers, discussed the political threat of the Far Right. According to Helen Stark, McKay took the women into his confidence as fellow victims with political horror stories, such as Cleon Skousen of the Freeman Institute distributing right-wing literature in the chapel at a Church meeting in Huntsville, Utah, and claiming that he had been set apart by President David O. McKay to follow in the prophet's ministry. Representative McKay also told of a flyer appearing in Moab claiming the congressman was pro-abortion and pro-Communist. "It was evident he is running scared," wrote Stark in a report of the 29 March 1978 meeting. "However," she went on,

this group was interested in his stand on the problems of women. Reba Keele asked why we should support him when he had no women in any key position (his male first aide was also present, David Lee, and had managed to project a chauvinist image that had raised the hackles of many). McKay was further attacked for his anti-ERA vote, his anti-consumer legislation bill, etc. He tried to defend himself on his even-handed approach to problems, he became quite defensive. I wondered how [Senator Orrin] Hatch would have come off. The discussion became quite heated, and the meeting broke up on a discordant note.

Some thought he was unnecessarily beleaguered and that [he] responded with reason. Others thought that he waffled. He certainly knew he had been confronted.

Although more liberal than most men in the Church, McKay had still come across to Forum members as a "typical" male, whose con-

sciousness had not been raised, who perhaps wanted to appropriate the group's issues for his own political gain. To explain their confrontational behavior, the women later wrote McKay a letter of decidedly mixed tone and mixed metaphor.

Dear Mr. McKay:

After your meeting with us at BYU, we were oppressed by the feeling that it had not gone well. Somehow we had slipped into an adversary relationship which was the last thing we intended.

However, our concerns are real and deep, and our frustration level has unfortunately been building for some time, which may account for our sounding shrill. Nevertheless, as educated, thoughtful, creative women, we think that we do represent a wave of the future. Therefore, we increasingly resent being swept under the rug. We consider we have gifts to offer of time, energy, money, and especially new insights. These are gifts which none of Utah's Congressional delegates seems to want. We had hoped that you would. . . .

Apparently we worry and alarm you. For this we are truly sorry. We may be prickly and thorny, but we had hoped, that, taken under your fatherly wing, our detractors might discover that the ugly ducklings were indeed swans.

We empathize with you in your precarious and embattled position. Life seems not to deal to either of us its certainties. We consider you a man of sincerity [sic] and integrity (albeit perhaps somewhat rigid). You likely consider us rabid feminists (which we think we aren't). Nevertheless, we want to cheer you on your way to success in the upcoming battle. With all our hearts we wish you well.

Sincerely,

Committee for BYU meeting

By calling themselves "ugly ducklings" waiting to be taken under McKay's "fatherly wing" with the hope of being changed into swans, the writers were either inserting a barb in an otherwise polite explanation, or they were unaware of the distinct images of control and domination they evoked and thus undermined their primary aim in writing the letter—presenting themselves as independent and credible. Gunn McKay had become an image of benevolent control, and these women had unknowingly bought into that image.

In taking pride in having "confronted McKay" through argumentation, the women had employed the tools endemic to the fundamentally male-dominated Western system of rational thought: persuasion through confrontation and argument with a winner and a loser at the end. Despite the deferential language of the letter, the women were proud that they "scored one" over Gunn McKay. And if one were to ask these women today if it is necessary to use the rhetoric and tactics of the dominant group to gain an advantage, which I did, they would answer yes, emphatically.

Though liberal in their outlook, these women clearly were not radical feminists. Whether active or inactive, they identified strongly with the LDS Church and concerned themselves with "family" issues. To

overthrow the religious and political institutions of which they were a part was not their agenda. They were seeking social advances and institutional changes "within the framework," as historian Claudia Bushman termed it at a 24 March 1979 meeting (in Stark n.d.). Although the Church might have perceived this kind of social thinking as a threat, Forum members did not consider it a threat at all, but rather a healthy attitude towards change within a heavily bureaucratic organization.

The topics the women discussed in their meetings show their serious concern with current issues affecting women: sex discrimination, depression among Mormon women, political lobbying, the rhetoric of polygamy, female bonding and networking, a history of sexual equality in Utah, growing up black in Utah, suicide, rape, planned parenthood, historian Juanita Brooks, the legitimacy of responsible dissent, the John Birch Society, and the pamphlet "Another Mormon view of ERA," a tract written by Mormon men and women supporting the passage of the Amendment.

For their planned parenthood session, they invited a panel of four qualified women—a high school counselor, a mother of teenage children, a registered nurse, and the director of Planned Parenthood in Utah—to debate the issues. A large group of women, all carrying babies, attended the meeting to protest providing contraception information for teens and to denounce abortion. One woman kept interrupting the panelists, shouting "Abortionists! Murderers!" At the end of the meeting, each left a dirty diaper on her seat in protest (Kadar 1989; Stark 1988).

Sonia Johnson visited twice. One speech had the title, "Obedience to Authority or the Miss Jane Pittmans of the Church Are Marching Steadily toward the Fountain Marked 'Men Only'." In her other speech, she discussed her congressional testimony in Washington on the ERA. Loneta Murphy, active Forum member and president of the Utah League of Women Voters, recorded in the minutes of the 12 August 1978 meeting that the group agreed with her "with only a few exceptions."

The issue of the Equal Rights Amendment eventually proved to be the most significant for the Forum. In 1976 the Church had issued a statement against ERA as a moral rather than a political issue and warned that the Amendment "would strike at the family, humankind's basic institution" (in Sillitoe 1979).⁴ Members were urged to align

⁴ Another letter, issued 12 October 1978, six days after the extension for ratification of the ERA, reiterated this point, emphasizing the Church's concern for women, advising that protection against discrimination should be addressed through

themselves with groups who opposed the Amendment. In spite of this official opposition, both a Church spokesman and President Spencer W. Kimball later made statements to the effect that the Church had never excommunicated anyone for merely supporting the ERA. When the time limit for state ratification was extended in 1978, there was more heated rhetoric and less civility both nationally and within Utah. Pressure on Church leaders increased. Many wanted them to do something to quell what was perceived as opposition to Church edicts. A group of approximately one thousand Mormons for ERA, headquartered in Virginia and represented by Sonia Johnson, seemed to be a thorn in the side of the Church. Johnson readily became a symbol of the movement. Her lively and emotional spar with Senator Orrin Hatch before a Senate subcommittee quickly polarized Church members, and many came to equate a pro-ERA stance with anti-Mormonism, and vice versa.⁵

The Forum had been organized in part because most of these women supported the ERA and wanted a vehicle for education and publicity concerning it. But all Forum members supported women's rights in general, and feeling remained friendly within the club. But the notable thing about the group was that it was composed of prominent Mormon women—many whose families had been members for generations, who had raised their children in the Church—and they

"special laws" and "specific legislation," but again warning that passage of the Amendment could lead to the diminuation of women's status and the nuclear family (in Sillitoe 1979, 12).

⁵ For a general history of the ERA, see Mary Frances Berry, *Why ERA Failed: Women's Rights and the Amending Process of the Constitution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Jane J. Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (University of Chicago Press, 1986); for a look at women who opposed the ERA, see Rebecca E. Klatch, *Women of the New Right* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). For Mormon perspectives, see Mary Lythgoe Bradford, "All On Fire: An Interview with Sonia Johnson," *DIALOGUE* 14 (Summer 1981): 52–58; Janet Thomas, "Barbara B. Smith: Woman for the World," *This People*, Summer 1980, 13–17; Lucinda A. Nightingale, "Susan Royslance: Mother Politician," *This People*, Summer 1980, 50–54; Mary L. Bradford, "Beverly Campbell: Dynamic Spokeswoman," *This People*, Summer 1980, 50–54; N. Eldon Tanner, "Happiness is Home Centered," *Ensign* 8 (June 1978): 2–5.

See also the "Front Page" sections of *Utah Holiday*, Mary Gaber, "Houston Wasn't Camelot—But There Was a Shining Moment," January 1978, 6–7; David Merrill, "Burying the Status of Women—Another Casualty of the IWY Wars," March 1978, 6–9; Karen F. Shepard, "Which Path for Women: The Noisy Highway or Tree-Lined Boulevard?" June 1978, 9–10; Linda Sillitoe, "The New Mormon Activists: Fighting the ERA in Virginia," March 1979, 12–14; and "Fear and Anger in Virginia: The New Mormon Activists, Part II," April 1979, 9–11.

were actively opposing a statement of the First Presidency. Church leaders undoubtedly believed their counsel and guidance was correct, and given the Church's emphasis on following authority, it is probable that they questioned these women's devotion to the Church and looked on them with suspicion.

All in all, eight Forum meetings dealt directly with ERA: four in 1978, two in 1979, two in 1980, and many others included the topic in passing. Jan Tyler gave a tribute to Alice Paul, a Quaker woman and the mother of ERA. Dixie Snow Huefner of Salt Lake City spoke on the making of the pamphlet "Another Mormon View of ERA," and Loneta Murphy outlined early Church support for women's rights in a talk entitled "An Historical Perspective of Equality in Utah." Sonia Johnson addressed the group twice, while Linda Sillitoe and Kathryn MacKay spoke of their experiences concerning the Johnson excommunication.

The general feeling throughout these discussions was that the ERA was the best way to bring equality to women in the United States. Further, these women felt the Amendment—and its underlying notion of equality under the law—to be in harmony with gospel principles. Indeed, they cited early Church leaders—both men and women—who supported women's suffrage at the turn of the century. Many of the older women's mothers had campaigned for the right of women to vote, presumably with Church approval, since in many cases their activities were supported by Church authorities and never questioned. Helen Stark remembers that her mother went door to door on behalf of the Relief Society to garner support for women's rights. So now, in the 1970s, when Church authorities seemed to turn sharply, to oppose an amendment that appeared to endorse genuine equality between men and women, Forum members could not understand or accept their reasoning. Convinced that equality was right and desirable, they intended to make themselves heard even if their actions were perceived as defiance. Sonia Johnson's crusade for the ERA had become her crusade against the Church. The Forum's support for Johnson—someone many feminists in the Church doubted was the best spokesperson for equal rights—only made the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum seem more radical and dangerous.

In the spring of 1979, Forum women, headed by Helen Stark, decided to take their grievances to President Spencer W. Kimball. An interesting series of letters resulted—not an exchange between the Forum members and the President of the Church, but between the women and Francis Gibbons, the secretary to the First Presidency. The first letter to President Kimball, dated 10 March 1979 begins as follows:

Dear President Kimball:

We speak for a sizeable minority of LDS women whose pain is so acute that they must try to be heard. Does the First Presidency really know of our plight? We cannot believe that anyone deliberately seeks to destroy us; nevertheless that is the signal we are receiving. We feel that we are the victims of a deliberate and punishing ultra-conservative squeeze to force us out of fellowship. In a classic example of guilt by association, Mormon feminists are being linked to the destruction of the family, homosexual marriages, and abortion. We are accused of rejecting family responsibility and of abandoning moral values. Women who work are publicly labeled as selfish and worldly. Suddenly many devoted Mormon women are being treated like apostates.

The letter goes on to list a number of incidents around the nation where Mormon women with feminist leanings had been discriminated against and then ends with this paragraph:

We desperately need to know whether, after serious consideration, soul-searching, and prayer, you indeed and in fact find us unworthy, a minority open to attack, and ultimately expendable. If not *can the word get out* that Mormon feminists are not to be subjected to intimidations, rejection for Church assignments, loss of employment, and psychological excommunication. Every difference of opinion or sincere question should not be answered with a threatening indictment of one's testimony. We are women who love the Lord, the Gospel, and the Church; we have served, tithed, and raised righteous children in Zion. We plead for the opportunity to continue to do so in an atmosphere of respect and justice. For decades we have been part of the solution, whatever the need has been; we are saddened to be now considered part of the problem.

The women received the following reply dated 28 March 1979:

Dear Sisters:

I have been asked to acknowledge your letter of March 28, 1979 to President Spencer W. Kimball, and to inquire, as a basis for considering it, whether you would have an objection if a copy of your letter were to be sent to your stake presidents for their comments.

The brethren also asked me to extend their best wishes to you.

Sincerely yours,
Francis M. Gibbons

The bureaucratic formality of Gibbons's reply was alienating. Devoid of any real warmth, its formal jargon and request for referral to stake authorities might be perceived as a threat. Rather than attempting to address the content of the women's letter, Gibbons only established a level of authority through which to communicate, perpetuating the same kind of impersonal authority that the women sought to bring to the prophet's attention.

Helen Stark, the primary author of the 10 March letter, wrote a response addressed to "Dear President Kimball"—disregarding the fact that Gibbons had written the response. Since Forum members feared repercussions and saw the harassment to be a universal problem in the

Church, Stark indicated in the initial paragraph of the 14 April letter that "we see no advantage in zeroing in on our particular stake presidents." She went on to explain:

We are not radical feminists. But we have a real fear that in today's climate our credibility and present contributions could be jeopardized by a confrontation with our beloved and respected stake presidents. We realize that you have many demands on your time and judgment. We assure you of our devotion to you personally as well as to your great calling, which must weigh heavily. We appreciate your concern for all of us, and we are sorry to add to your burdens.

Nevertheless, our letter came to you privately out of pain of some sincere daughters of Zion. We *do not* wish to involve other authority figures. If you do not consider our plight merits further action on your part, at least we have spoken what we feel to be our truth and you have heard.

Sincerely,
Helen C. Stark

Despite her claim to sincerity, some elements of the letter were clearly overdone considering Helen Stark's talent as a writer. It may be that their stake presidents were "beloved and respected," but it seems just as possible, given their confrontational attitude toward Church leaders, that the women looked upon them as part of the problem—that is, the male-oriented bureaucracy of the Church. The women were trying to be civil about the whole issue, though, and their willingness to open the dialogue with the brethren is certain.

Again Gibbons responded, on 25 April 1979, that he had been asked to address the charge that Church leaders had been persecuting feminists. Again, rather than respond to the content of the letter, Gibbons resorted to Church protocol by asking whether copies of the letter could be sent to appropriate stake presidents, with names of the signers left off "to avoid any hint of 'confrontation.'" Using the same kind of distant language, he closed with "President Kimball again asked me to extend his best wishes to you." One wonders whether President Kimball—if he ever saw the letters—truly thought that familiarizing the appropriate stake presidents with the women's grievances would stop the discrimination.

The issue finally came to a head on 12 May 1979. The Forum had scheduled a meeting in the Alice Louise Reynolds Room at the Harold B. Lee Library at BYU, where they had been meeting for several months. Many of the Forum members had been responsible for naming the sixth floor conference room after Reynolds, for raising funds to have her portrait painted and hung there, and for planning and participating in the dedication ceremony, where Reba Keele gave a moving tribute to Professor Reynolds. The room was an appropriate place to meet.

The Forum's announced topics for that May were Jan Tyler and Loneta Murphy's report on the National Women's Party commemoration in Washington, D.C., and also an update on the status of the Equal Rights Amendment. The meeting, topic, time, and place were all announced in the Provo *Daily Herald*. All interested were invited to attend. The day before the meeting, Algie Ballif got a phone call from Marilyn Arnold, professor of English at BYU and then special administrative assistant to President Dallin Oaks. Ballif recalled that

she [Arnold] said, "Algie, I have been asked by President Oaks to call you and tell you that it will not be possible for you to use the Alice Louise Reynolds Memorial Room because of the subject matter which covers a description of the National Organization of Women and various other ERA ideas by these two women as it was so publicized in the *Daily Herald*." Of course, I was taken aback and almost shocked by it. But I accepted her kindness. She was most gracious, and I had a feeling that it was most difficult for her to tell me this. I told her of our predicament in a very careful way. But it was the beginning of a problem we had felt could never happen—but it did. We notified the women who were in charge of the meeting, and they were most kind and helpful and sympathetic and they went to work finding another place for the meeting. (n.d.)

The women were outraged and felt betrayed. They were being banished from the campus, forbidden to meet in the very room that bore the same name as their organization. The meeting was hastily moved to the Provo Public Library, where attendance was heavy (Murphy n.d.). They were told they could use the Reynolds room if they consented not to discuss the ERA, but on principle they began meeting in the Provo High School cafeteria and choral rooms or Provo City Hall. Algie wrote:

After that, it became very difficult for us to even consider going to the Alice Louise Reynolds Room because invariably the Equal Rights Amendment was mentioned with dignity, with respect, and with a degree of conversion on the part of some and questioning on the part of those who were not in favor of the passage of the Amendment. . . . an awareness that the attenders of the meetings understood and respected, because in our society which is a democracy our decisions should be openly arrived at. (Ballif n.d.)

On 18 May, six days after their ouster, the women wrote again to President Kimball asking, perhaps with understated sarcasm, that the letter be sent to "assorted stake presidents, including some in Florida, Nevada, and Virginia." It is interesting that the women now submitted to communicating with the prophet through established and impersonal hierarchical channels—never meeting face to face and feeling each other's spirits—one of the inevitable problems of a large, fast-growing organization. The following paragraph ends the letter:

Our decision to write to you stems, in part, from advice often put forth in Relief Society lessons: In the event of great anxiety, seek counsel from wise and understanding authority figures. This sharing eventually, with God's guidance, leads to a positive resolution. At this time we need to have faith in the validity of our own feelings, or to be shown empathetically why we are in error. As we now fall back on our own resources for solutions, these words come to mind: "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child."

Where once these women appealed to authority by asking to be under a "fatherly wing," their imagery now switches gender with an image of a nurturing, understanding parent—a mother—who will accept them as they are instead of one who will transform them from ugly ducklings into beautiful swans.

Gibbons's 23 May letter to Helen Stark states that it is not possible to send the Forum's letter to assorted stake presidents and again asks "whether you and the other sisters who signed your original letter would have an objection if copies of your letter (without signatures, if so desired) were to be sent to your stake presidents." Gibbons closes the letter, "President Kimball again asked me to extend his best wishes to you."

The final letter in the correspondence is an angry, caustic letter from Helen Stark, dated 30 November 1979, which begins:

Dear Brethren:

One of the criticisms leveled against Sonia Johnson is that she erred in going public with her concerns. She should have taken her complaints directly to the Church Authorities. As one of the group of women who tried to do just that, I report with pain that this does not work. We now possess a six-letter file of correspondence, the official response of which is to belittle our plight and to suggest we be dealt with by our various Stake Presidents, some of whom we now consider to be harsh and rigid men.

So, humiliated and frustrated, we have been tempted to go public ourselves with our little sheaf of correspondence. In fact, we went so far as to share it anonymously for the article in the Sept. 1979 issue of *Utah Holiday*. We think the tone of these letters points up the heavy-handed hierarchical attitude which is alienating many Mormon women.

Communication is cut off. We are presumed to have nothing of merit to say.

Guardedly,
Helen C. Stark

In the September 1979 *Utah Holiday*, Linda Sillitoe focuses on this exchange:

A group of faithful, mature women who raised children and grandchildren in the LDS church, contributing significant time and money to the culture, have been particularly pained by their sudden alienation on this issue (having supported the ERA as "good Mormons" for 30 years). Carefully drawing up a letter for President Kimball's eyes alone, they intricately planned for it to be hand-delivered to him. The letter was intercepted and answered by Francis Gibbons,

secretary to the First Presidency (two desks removed from Kimball, with Arthur Haycock, Kimball's personal secretary, in between). A [half] dozen letters have now traveled between the women and Church headquarters, but each of the letters has been answered by Gibbons and the suspicion is sharp that the man they support as prophet has seen none of them.

Sonia Johnson was excommunicated from the Church on 6 December 1979. The night of her Church court, several Forum members attended a vigil held in her honor in Salt Lake City, where Loneta Murphy addressed the crowd.

The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum continued to hold its monthly meetings focused on gender issues and Mormonism. A transcript of a 30 September 1980 Forum meeting poignantly illustrates the group's shared sense of sisterhood. About twenty attended, including two men. Mary Bradford, then editor of *DIALOGUE*, requested that the group meet to generate ideas for the tenth anniversary of the first women's issue of the journal—also known as the “pink *DIALOGUE*.” The edited introduction to the transcript describes it as a “happening: a sense of bonding and trust [which] generated deep sharing. So much pain surfaced that almost everyone present was deeply moved.” It also described the year 1980 as being “in many ways a crisis year for women. As a result of an ecclesiastic directive, the LDS sisterhood appeared to be split into two hostile camps—those snugly within the framework, and those who felt confused, angry, and outside.” Many of these women saw themselves as unique, outside the pale, and in many ways in confrontation with more orthodox Mormon women. So sensitive was this particular Forum meeting that it was stipulated that “until 1986 no part of THIS MATERIAL MAY BE USED OR QUOTED WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE SPEAKER OR SPEAKERS” (Transcript 1980). In fact, Bradford intended to publish the edited transcript in *DIALOGUE* but pulled it at the last minute because some participants did not want their names published (Bradford 1989).

Helen Stark introduced the program and asked for a few minutes of silence “as the Quakers often do, . . . that in this silence we can be guided to speak our truth wisely and lovingly” (Transcript 1980). Everyone who wanted had a turn to speak. Almost all expressed love for the group and for the opportunity to meet together. Many reflected on their heritage, their roots in Mormonism and the strength it gave them. Some bore testimony in nontraditional ways. Others related the changes in their spirituality over the years. Some expressed disillusionment and disbelief, and one woman even read the letter she was planning to send to her bishop requesting excommunication. Some expressed concern over the radical and questionable tactics of those working to pass

the ERA. One told of being given a temple recommend and then of having it revoked because of her support of the ERA. One talked of the devastation caused by the IWY meeting.

One woman, a professor, expressed her anger and frustration about the ignorance and lack of sensitivity among Church members. "I am concerned," she said, "that a 'fine young priesthood holder' can raise his hand and seriously say, 'since we know blacks and women aren't as good at their jobs as white men, aren't we justified in not hiring them?'"

When we are told that the reason Relief Society isn't succeeding is because we're failing as individuals, that is called by psychologists "blaming the victim." It's a common event, and we're doing it all the time to women, to singles, to questioners. When millions are spent on Reader's Digest ads that say that Mormon women are cherished and armored and (trapped) on a pedestal . . . I wonder about my tithing. One of the most touching experiences of the awful IWY experience in Utah came when I went into the hall of the Salt Palace, having been just told by a woman with garment lines under her blouse that the state would be better if people like me left it. I was hurt, disillusioned, and heartsick. (Transcript 1980)

She then told of a woman down the hall at the convention, not a member of the Church, who threw her arms around her and said, "I haven't been able to do anything these last few days but to think how painful this must be for you."

The difficult history of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum illustrates the dilemma of women torn between loyalty to a church and heritage they loved, on one hand, and devotion to the cause of equality for women on the other. It is not difficult to comprehend their anger at the Church they loved. As an institution, it refused to acknowledge their point of view on issues important to them. Right or wrong, they felt abandoned by the Church that had carried them through so much and to which they had devoted so much. The Forum women experienced real pain, emotional turmoil, and frustration. The "us against them" mentality was just as strong for them as for those leaders or orthodox women who were suspicious of them. Fear too was exhibited by those on both sides of the spectrum—fear the institutional Church had of the radical results social change might bring, and the opposite fear these women had that such change would not occur. Battle lines were drawn quickly and rigidly and thus decreased the constructive diversity of opinion that might have led to compromise and understanding.

Yet at the same time—and perhaps because they perceived a common foe—they delighted in and drew tremendous sustenance from like-minded sisters with whom they could share their feelings. It was

an exciting and rejuvenating era, one which stimulated thought and action among men and women.

Motivated by their experiences in the women's movement, Forum women sought out in the Church the same kind of sharing and honest reevaluation of women's roles that existed nationally. While some women officially or unofficially separated themselves from the Church, many still wanted and needed to talk about the issues with those who could empathize. Also, as time went on, many interested non-Mormons began to participate in the Forum. Considering themselves to be an important chapter in Church history of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Forum members deposited their records in the University of Utah archives (rather than the BYU archives, a result of the ALR Room experience).⁶

A group such as the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum is not unique in either our national or our religious culture. Women in general and Mormon women in particular have always sought other women for support and nurturing. Women have placed great importance on friendships and opportunities to learn and express feelings and ideas, whether in formal or informal settings. And it is significant that these women decided to transform a rather tame (though by no means unimportant or unintellectual) ladies' literary club into a feminist consciousness-raising group, the catalyst in part being the swirling controversy concerning women and the Church.

Where is the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum today? The Forum still meets the second Saturday of every month at two o'clock in the afternoon in the Provo Municipal Building, except during the summer when they have only a June tea. In January 1984, the group not only dropped "Women's" from its title but changed the name to the Algie Ballif Forum, representing an appropriate passing of the candle to another great woman, who died that year, whose memory was still fresh in the minds of the members. The Algie Ballif Forum retains elements of the old ALR Women's Forum—participants still discuss topics of social interest and controversy—but meetings seem to lack some of the "fire," for lack of a better word, some of the urgency and excitement at being involved in issues of social importance. As one

⁶ The Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum Collection contains the exchange of letters between the women and Everett L. Cooley (assistant director for Special Collections, University of Utah Archives) negotiating the donation of the collection. See also the transcript of an interview with Helen Candland Stark by Amy Bentley for the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, LDS Family Life Oral History Project (BYU), for Stark's version of the ouster and subsequent negotiation for the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum Collection.

ALR charter member expressed to me, "I no longer attend the meetings because I've found other ways to experience that same kind of communal sister support" (Keele 1988). But the meetings are still well attended by both Mormon and non-Mormon women, and some men, I'm happy to report. The Forum members are concerned, however, that younger women are not joining the ranks to take the place of the older ones. They wonder about the future of the Algje Ballif Forum and hope that it continues after they are unable to carry it on.

I see two main sets of questions when considering the legacy of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum. First: In our era, thought to be by some "post-feminist," have we transcended the need for genders to meet separately? Have we lost the desire to grapple with issues of social importance, and if so, is that a strength or a sickness? Is it time to do away with separatism and decide that the only way we can confront discrimination and misunderstanding between genders is by integrating all aspects of life? My response is yes and no.

Although in many ways, differences between male and female roles have decreased, women have not lost the need to meet together, although some may think the urgency has lessened. Women today meet together formally and informally, struggling to define themselves and deal with the same sorts of questions, whether at an Exponent retreat, a professional women's society, a high school sleep-over, a Relief Society homemaking meeting, or a scholarly conference on feminism.

Although there have always been Mormon women, progressive in their respective eras, who have thought, written about, and acted on their strongly held beliefs concerning the place of women in the Church (the founders of *Exponent II* come to mind), the women's movement within mainstream Mormonism has only recently gained a solid and respectable foothold. Because of the conservative nature of contemporary Mormonism, the feminist movement within the Church is progressing a decade or two behind the rest of American feminism, in part because the growth of Mormon feminism has had to proceed without the blessing of the established Church organization for women, the Relief Society. Although it fulfills many needs for many women, generally Relief Society rewards consensus and cheerful acceptance of prescribed duties of women as outlined by Church leaders—not diversity of opinion, anger, or despair.

In this relatively early stage of debate, Mormon feminism seems to consist of two main schools of thought. The first is a more mystical feminism, celebrating a Mother in Heaven, women holding the priesthood, spiritual gifts of prophecy and healing, and great women in Mormon history. This mystical feminism welcomes the idea of Woman

as closer to nature, whose essence is unique from Man. The other school of Mormon feminist thought, though interested in these ideas, concentrates on structural issues of inequality in the Church and seeks change primarily through established channels. It sees itself as more rational, less emotional than the mystical feminism. For "the rationalists," the idea of "woman as nature" carries an implicit inferiority to men. In both camps, though, patriarchy is the problem to be reckoned with, and both actively work to enlighten Mormon women and men to effect change. No matter what the orientation, Mormon feminism is made up of individuals whose personal, heart-felt experiences have persuaded them to enter into the dialogue of the feminist community. With this intense personal experience at its base, Mormon feminism will continue to evolve in both breadth and depth.⁷

Although it is primarily women who are entering into the Mormon feminist dialogue, many men are also actively taking part. The inclusion of men should be a welcome addition. Female-exclusive groups are important, but if we truly want to dispel all myths and misconceptions about each other, much can be accomplished by including both men and women in as many ways as possible. I find male friends to be concerned with gender issues, for they too are interested in and affected by the current reordering of social roles and practices.

This leads me to my second question: How do younger women feel about gender issues? Because mothers and older sisters have forged the way, do women in their twenties feel a need to discuss feminist issues and meet together as women with similar concerns? Some younger women undoubtedly do not feel the need to think about feminist issues. Either they are simply not interested, or they take for granted the multitude of choices open to them. Many do find it easier to "focus," to direct their energies—as men have been culturally conditioned to do—toward one project, be it career, school, or some other type of self-improvement. They do not seem to feel the need to be everything to everyone all at once in typical female fashion, as Mary Bradford feels women of her generation do (Bradford 1989).

However, until we resolve the "binding paradox" described by Lawrence Foster (1979), the dual role models of the strong self-sufficient pioneer women and the passive Victorian lady, there will always be frustrated and overextended Mormon women who seek strength in meeting together. Our role models are fundamentally at odds with each other. However, fewer *younger* Mormon women may feel this "binding paradox." Many women I have talked with say they did not begin

⁷ I am indebted to Dorice Elliott for her insights on contemporary Mormon feminism.

to feel dissonance until they were older, married, and had children; the many obligations of their new situation forced them to rethink their lives and social roles, something they felt no need to do when single and childless. Many single women confronted feminist issues only when they passed their early twenties or felt the strains of divorce.

Perhaps the world has moved beyond the women's liberation movement of the 1970s, and women must deal with other more pressing issues—such as staying afloat in today's tight economy. Working outside the home, for instance, is most often now a necessity rather than a luxury to debate about. Feminism in the nineties must be put into a larger context: that of control and authority—who has it, who wants it, and who needs it—and the phenomenon of a large, conservative institution faced with an expanding and diversifying population in the modern world. Not only must the Church confront issues of gender, but other issues that could challenge its way of defining and delegating authority: a soaring world population with serious effects on the environment and adequate food supplies, the dramatic political upheaval occurring on nearly every continent, and a growing non-English speaking, non-Anglo membership that soon will be in the majority. Change comes at a dizzying pace. It will be both exciting and disturbing to see what the twenty-first century brings.

Although there is no catalyst today like the Equal Rights Amendment struggle that brought the ALR women together in the 1970s, women, including younger women, are meeting together in small numbers; there is a void to be filled. Many younger Mormon women do want to discuss feminism with reference to Mormonism. The Mormon Women's Forum established in Salt Lake City in 1988—ten years to the month from the establishment of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum—is one such proof that younger women want to be involved in feminist discourse. The monthly newsletter it publishes is a version of *Exponent II* aimed at a younger, more frustrated female audience. Both the newsletter and Forum meetings address the issues the Reynolds Forum took up: women and the priesthood, Mother in Heaven, equality of the sexes in all facets of life. These once rather shocking topics are discussed with more openness and acceptance than they were a decade ago; there is not the subversive air in these meetings that some of the Reynolds women noticed. Younger women (and some men, too) are attending the meetings in substantial numbers, discussing these ideas for the first time. In April of 1989, the new Forum invited Jan Tyler to speak on the history of the IWY convention and the Reynold's Forum.

The old guard Alice Louise Reynolds Women are delighted by these generations of women's groups. "I can die now and feel someone's

picking up the reins," one remarked (Tyler 1989). It remains to be seen, however, what kinds of institutional obstacles these groups will face when they gain a substantial following. There is evidence already of suppression by authorities (Beddinger 1989). As Mormon feminism continues to grow in both size and strength, it is likely that the dialectic of Church suppression of Mormon feminists will once again occur as it did with the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum.

Helen Stark, now nearing ninety, wrote me a letter in which she asked might not a better title for this article be "Who Will Comfort the Motherless Children?" I sense that even in the twilight of her life, she still feels alienated in the Church because she is a feminist and wonders if women like her will ever find solace and comfort within the Church fold. Perhaps, but perhaps not. Maybe it is time for all Latter-day Saints to rethink these questions, find ways to comfort each other, and then look outward to all the children of the world who need comfort. I admire and appreciate the legacy of women like those in the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum, a whole host of past and present sisters from whom I can draw inspiration when I too feel like a motherless child.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unless otherwise noted, all manuscripts and letters are in the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum Collection, University Archives, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. The author would like to thank the numerous people whose comments and criticisms helped in the preparation of this article.

Ballif, Algje. "A Report on the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum." N.d.

Beddinger, Janelle. "Forum Gives Voice to Mormon Women." *Ogden Standard Examiner*, 7 Sept. 1989, D-1.

Bradford, Mary Lythgoe. Conversation with the author 28 March 1989, Arlington, Virginia. Notes in author's possession.

———. "Focus." *Exponent II* 14, no. 4 (1989): 7.

Committee for BYU meeting. Letter to Congressman Gunn McKay. N.d.

Foster, Lawrence. "From Frontier Activism to Neo-Victorian Domesticity: Mormon Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979): 3-21.

Gibbons, Francis M. Letters to the Sisters, 28 March, 25 April, 23 May 1979. In "The Kimball Letters."

Huefner, Dixie Snow. "Church and Politics at the Utah IWY Conference." *DIALOGUE* 11 (Spring 1978): 58-75.

Kadar, Nancy. Conversation with the author, 8 March 1989, Oakton, Virginia. Notes in author's possession.

Keele, Reba. Conversation with the author, 26 February 1988, Provo, Utah. Notes in the author's possession.

- Murphy, Loneta. "Ouster From the Alice Louise Reynolds Room." N.d.
- . "Synopsis of Meetings." N.d.
- Peterson, Esther Eggertsen. Conversation with the author, 7 March 1989. Notes in author's possession.
- Porter, LuRee. Interview with the author, 9 March 1988, St. George, Utah. Notes in author's possession.
- Sillitoe, Linda. "Women Scorned: Inside Utah's IWY Conference." *Utah Holiday*, August 1977, 26, 28, 63, 69.
- . "A Foot in Both Camps: An Interview with Jan Tyler." *Sunstone* 3 (Jan-Feb. 1978): 11-14.
- . "'Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.'" *Utah Holiday*, Sept. 1979, 12.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "Beauty, the Beast and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Stress in Jacksonian America." *American Quarterly* 23 (Oct. 1971): 562-84.
- . "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth Century America." *Signs* 1 (Autumn 1975): 1-25.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll, and Charles Rosenberg. "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Women and Her Role in Nineteenth Century America." *Journal of American History* 60 (Sept. 1973): 332-56.
- Stark, Helen C. Synopsis of 21 January and 18 February 1978 meetings.
- . Report on the 29 March 1978 meeting of the ALRWF.
- . Letters to President Spencer W. Kimball, 10 March, 14 April, and 18 May 1979. In "The Kimball Letters."
- . Letter to the Brethren, 30 November 1979. In "The Kimball Letters."
- . Conversation with the author, 15 August 1988, Provo, Utah. Notes in author's possession.
- Taylor, Anna. "Report on Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum." N.d.
- Taylor, Fern. "Format of Meetings." N.d.
- Transcript of the 30 September 1980 meeting of the Alice Louise Reynolds Women's Forum.
- Tyler, Jan. Phone conversation with the author, 3 April 1989. Notes in author's possession.
- Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-74.