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*Richard E. Turley Jr. (Contributor) , Brittany A. Chapman*

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## From Reader Review Women of Faith in the Latter Days: Volume One, 1775-1820 for online ebook

### Michelle Llewellyn says

For a condensed version of this forthcoming series I would also suggest *Women of Character: Profiles of 100 Prominent LDS Women* but if you're looking for more details into the fascinating lives of such women as Eliza R. Snow, Emma Smith and Mary Fielding Smith, I'd recommend these books. Filled with detailed information, including rare letters and journal entries, you'll come to know these women like members of your own family.

How refreshing to see certain facts in church history, so long obscured, brought forth and made clear. For example, who knew that Eliza R. Snow, famous poetess and second Relief Society President, was a plural wife to the Prophet Joseph? Born in 1804 her sealing date is recorded for June 1842 which puts her at age 38. Imagine having to wait that long for the opportunity to marry!

As a fan of the series *A Banner is Unfurled* I was delighted find a chapter on Julia Hills Johnson-the courageous woman who birthed sixteen children and joined the church against her husband's wishes. These are just a few of the many examples of inspiring stories to be found in this first volume. Like other reviewers, I too look forward to next book in this series.

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### Melanie says

3.5 stars. I read this little by little, over the course of many months. Each chapter gives an overview of the life of the woman of focus and then provides excerpts from her own words - diaries, letters, autobiographical sketches, etc. I especially enjoyed the candor of some of the profiles. All were women of faith but some complained, were unhappy in their marriages, disliked other women in their communities. I don't "like" any of these negative things, but it is refreshing to get a more nuanced, more real picture of life during the early days of the church.

While there were profiles of some very well-known women (Lucy Mack Smith, Mary Fielding Smith), I appreciated that most of these women are not the ones we hear about over and over. I would love for more of these stories to become better known as we talk about the women of the church.

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### Deb says

This book reflects my family heritage as well as my spiritual heritage. I had heard these types of stories all my life, but have never before internalized the magnitude of these women's sacrifices and trials. I am in awe. They went through so much suffering and yet retained their trust and faith in the Lord. I love how many of these chapters were written by descendants of these women.

Many lessons can be learned from these women's lives. This book is more than historical. These women are worth emulating.

Will women today, who have such relatively easy lives, who so quickly and easily leave the church and abandon eternal truths and the fellowship of members and sometimes family over uncomfortable issues, with

a lack of faith, patience, and trust, feel comfortable in the eternities with these stalwart women? I wonder. It isn't easy, and maybe isn't supposed to be easy, but I want to endure and be like these faithful women.

I read the longer, e-version of this book which includes the bonus chapters. It was a little exhausting to read all at once, but it was my choice to keep reading. I might have been content with the shorter version or at least taking more time to read it. The perfect book to read near Pioneer Day.

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### **Allyson says**

This was a great book, though a little bit of a difficult read. Only because each chapter is a biography of a faithful woman, so it's very historical. Which is what I like, but I could only read one or two chapters at a time and then had to read something else. It is amazing to learn what early pioneer women went through and I did find it interesting as I read about each one of them. One of the chapters was one of my ancestors! They did have amazing faith and I remind myself many times that I know why I wasn't born a pioneer! I do look forward to reading vol. II one of these days...

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### **Emily says**

We currently seem to be in a Church history renaissance with the advent of the amazing Joseph Smith Papers Project ([josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)), the growing popularity of various websites focused on Mormon history (check out [keepapitchinin.org](http://keepapitchinin.org) and [juvenileinstructor.org](http://juvenileinstructor.org) for a start), and the Church's publication and wide distribution of the new *Daughters in My Kingdom* book. The *Women of Faith in the Latter Days* series is an important and valuable addition to this drive to flesh out a fuller history of the Church in this dispensation.

I grew up in the Church, graduated from four years of seminary, took college-level courses on Church history and attended Institute classes, and unfortunately came away with an impression of the history of the Church that was mostly male-centric. Aside from Emma Smith, Eliza R. Snow's music, or a few oft-repeated, faith-promoting stories (you know the ones: Mary Fielding Smith crossing the plains shortly after Hyrum's death, Amanda Smith acting on revelation to know how to heal her son's hip which had been destroyed at the Haun's Mill Massacre, young Caroline and Mary Elizabeth Rollins risking their lives to save some of the printed pages for the Book of Commandments from the mob) I didn't have a strong picture of the faithful women who made up approximately half of the members of the Church in its early days, and to my shame, I didn't even notice how much was missing. This book, the first in a projected series of seven, opened my eyes to many strong, faithful women from the early 1800s, and I can't wait to learn more.

Each chapter is devoted to an individual woman who was born between 1775 and 1820 and begins with a brief biographical sketch covering the basic outline of her life. The bulk of each chapter describes that woman's "life experiences," often in her own words from letters or journals. I was struck over and over by the heart-wrenching devastation of children's deaths. Elizabeth Harrison Goddard, for example, saw eight of her thirteen children die before they reached adulthood. While crossing the plains, she recorded: "In July the Cholera broke out in our Camp when our daughter Eliza was seised [sic] with it afterwards our eldest son George was attacked and then our little Henry about 3 years old who did not live many hours. The others lingered, George seemed to improve and would be dressed to go and see some children baptized, but I think he took cold and had a relapse and we had to part with him..." Describing the death of a daughter, Elizabeth said, "My dear little girl Betsy took sick and died. She was about 4 years old. She wanted to live and said

Mama make me well I want to go to the Valley, but she went into convulsions and died. Thus I had to lay another of my dear ones away. My husband would not allow me to go and see her consigned to Mother Earth, For I was not well and the weather very cold.” Similar sad stories are told by many of these women.

I was intrigued by the women's reactions to plural marriage. Many of them talked of “giving [their] husband” another wife and were frank about the difficulties of living a polygamous life. Polygamy was described as “the great test of Mary Isabella Horne's spiritual persistence.” She wrote of this trial in the third-person: “Plural marriage destroys the oneness [of marriage] of course. Mrs. Horne had lived for 28 years with her husband, before he entered into polygamy; she said and re-iterated; no one can ever feel the full weight of the curse till she enters into polygamy; it is a great trial of feelings, but not of faith.' It is a great trial, no one would deny that; but she was willing because it was a duty her religion demanded.” Patty Bartlett Sessions chronicles the difficulties a second wife, Rosilla, caused in her family, turning her husband against Patty and refusing to contribute to the household work until finally leaving the Saints, obtaining a divorce and marrying outside the Church. Eliza Roxcy Snow was sealed as a plural wife to both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young.

While I enjoyed learning more about women whose names I knew, like Eliza Roxcy Snow and Lucy Mack Smith, I was thrilled to learn about women I'd never heard of before. Maria Jackson Normington Parker was a survivor of the Martin Handcart Company. Belinda Marden Pratt was Parley P. Pratt's sixth wife. Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball was a staunch suffragist acquainted with Susan B. Anthony and other women's rights activists of the time. Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson was sister to Mary Fielding Smith and was also sealed to Hyrum Smith as a plural wife becoming her sister's sister-wife as well. At the age of sixty-six, Desideria Quintanar de Yanez was the first Mexican woman baptized into the Church and maintained her faith until her death with only minimal contact with other members of the Church.

The women I met in these pages are inspiring. They suffered trials and persecution and adversity that is all but beyond my imagination and maintained their faith with grace and strength. I look forward to meeting more women like them in the subsequent volumes, which can't be published fast enough for me!

Don't miss the 17 bonus chapters that are available with the ebook version or online here (<http://deseretbook.com/Women-Faith-La...>). And make sure you check out the website for the series: [www.lds-womenoffaith.com](http://www.lds-womenoffaith.com). You can even submit proposals for women you'd like to see covered in upcoming editions. The deadline for Volume Two (1821-1845) has already passed, but you have until June to submit a chapter for Volume Three (1846-1870)!

For more book reviews, come visit my blog, [Build Enough Bookshelves](#).

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### **Lori Voshall says**

As a historian, student of Mormonism and a genealogist looking for clues about my family's past, this book was a treasure. Not only did it give me insight into the lives of women newly converted to the new faith of Mormonism, it also gave me a whole chapter on one of my ancestors---something that was almost painfully joyful for me to read. Very few of my female ancestors wrote down anything due to illiteracy or just because there were so many other tasks to be done. I am eagerly awaiting the next volume, and I have to say that I am glad that someone has finally realized how important these stories are to the telling of the complete story of the Mormons and their migrations.

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## **Megan says**

Each chapter focuses on one woman, a woman born in or before 1820 that was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Inspiring, fascinating.

Each chapter was submitted by a different author and there were definitely some authors I preferred, but all in all, it was really interesting.

This will be a 7-volume set--each volume covering women born in a set period, ending with those born in 1970. Anyone can submit a proposal for a chapter, this is the website: <http://www.ldswomenoffaith.org/>

This was recommended to me as a good companion to Daughters in My Kingdom. I'm looking forward for the next volume to come out.

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## **Ruth says**

I did enjoy this, but it wasn't the kind of book I could lose myself in. The format wasn't the best for me. Sometimes it was repetitive, going over the same events in both the "biographical sketch" and the "life experiences". So I would just read a chapter at a time, in between other books I was reading. I enjoyed the journal entries, letters, and autobiographies that gave us a glimpse into these women's lives. They weren't perfect, and that's good, because it helped me relate to them. Their faith was inspiring.

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## **Amber says**

I had originally gotten this book because of a reference in the book "The Beginning of Better Days." What I expected to get from this book was not what I ended up getting. I got so much more, and I realized that despite the different times and circumstances, the women faced the same things we are facing. So grateful for their examples and I hope I can learn from them.

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## **Rachel says**

I learned many great things while reading this book. My favorite is this little poem, written by Melissa Morgan Dodge, who is a distant relative of mine:

I see the little birds with ease  
Fly over the hills and lofty trees.  
Could I but fly as well as they  
I'd quickly come and talk with thee.

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## **Rosa says**

I've read several of these stories multiple times, it never ceases to amaze me of the impact of ordinary lives and what I believe to be the power of ordinary faith. I loved the reflections of how these women could see the signatures of God in their lives. I believe that even more so women must be willing to recognize and act according to their faith. These inspirational stories teach us that we don't need to be "more than ourselves" to make a difference within our sphere of influence. Overwhelming gratitude for this volume of work.

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## **BHodges says**

This book is a full-throated effort to bring greater equality to the telling of Mormon history. Each chapter essay in the book tells the story of a woman who joined the Latter-day Saint movement. The book touches on a number of sensitive topics including plural marriage (polygamy) and the performance of blessings by women. It is heartening to see such historical transparency in a book published by Deseret Book.

At the same time, a number of contributors take an overly-devotional approach, flattening some of the women represented here into one-dimensional reflections of contemporary LDS concerns. This is partly due to some of the contributors being amateur historians as opposed to trained practitioners.

It remains to be seen how many of the stories told here will be integrated into the Church's official manuals and instructional materials, but there is much here that could enrich the understanding of contemporary practicing Mormons. At the same time, scholars of religion can learn much about the views of past Mormon women here, but they might learn just as much about the concerns and perspectives of the present-day Mormon women and men who wrote pieces for the collection, selecting and interpreting the experiences of past Latter-day Saint women.

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## **Summer Meyers says**

When I first started reading I was a little disappointed in the format. I was expecting a little more of a narrative and the "biographical sketch" and then "life experiences" that each chapter was sectioned out, I thought, at first, was a little redundant. Once I got over it, I was swept away by these women's lives.

It was truly amazing.

You would expect that reading about husbands being murdered, children freezing to death after being driven from their homes, sickness, lack of food, lack of money, just general poverty would wear you down as a reader. I felt so strangely uplifted after each chapter and I can only attribute it to these powerful and stalwart women who lead their families often with little or no help. There is a happy determination in accomplishing what needs to be done, and these women's recordings of their trials are always written with a fervent testimony of how God has so obviously not forsaken them. To a mother in the 21st century, its mind boggling. Frequently I would set it down and say, "That's ridiculous. How can they be so grateful for one bag of cornmeal when their whole life is crumbling around them? This reaction does not make sense!" I was inspired over and over by their complete faith and.... gratitude.

They were all just so grateful for the most meager of mercies.

I should feel rebuked at my own selfish and "murmuring" ways, but instead I feel renewed and have found a sincere desire to be better. This wasn't a guilt trip book---look, see? they had it a whole lot worse than you---it was a powerful testimony of the resiliency of women who put their faith in God. These women can be found today. It was hopeful.

Here are a few quotes that I loved. There were honestly too many to write out...

I see the little birds with ease  
Fly over the hills and lofty trees.  
Could I but fly as well as they  
I [would] quickly come and talk with thee.  
-Melissa Dodge pg 28

[Ann Marsh Abbott] wrote, "I consider it one of the greatest blessings that the Lord ever bestowed upon me that I have the privilege of embracing the true and everlasting gospel the Mormon doctrine." Despite the adversity that came with life in the Church, the restored gospel was nonetheless one of her "greatest blessings."

Difficult things did not negate blessings; perhaps they illuminated them. Ann saw purpose in affliction, believing that we must "be tried and proved in all things.". The testing, trying, and proving of mortality never come easily, but Ann understood they had meaning. Those experiences continued to strengthen her, and she remained faithful to the end.

-pg 18

And I verily believe that George thought as he said that it would kill Mother. I told him if our joining the Mormons would kill her she would have to die, that I was fully convinced that the doctrine of the Latter Day Saints was the truth and that it was my duty to embrace it, that I should do so and leave Mother in the hands of God.

...

My trouble and anxiety in regard to Mother and all else swallowed up in Heavenly Peace. Soon after this Mother returned home and was taken sick. I was somewhat fearful that brother's prediction would be verified. She was confined to her bed for two or three weeks; but the Lord raised her up for a better end. When she began to recover she began searching the bible for scripture to confound our faith, but instead of that she converted herself to the truth and the ensuing summer she obeyed the gospel herself.

-Eliza Dana Gibbs pg 34-35

There are times when it seems as though every power were exerted to discourage me in what I believe to be the path of duty. And were it not that my confidence is in God and my faith firmly stayed upon the Mighty One of Jacob, I am sure I would shrink and fall beneath the burden that is upon me. I embraced the religion of the Latter-day Saints because my judgment was convinced that it was necessary for my salvation, and for this reason I now cling to it...Yet amid my trials I am happy and feel assured that my Maker will provide for me, and in his own due time gather me with His people...I trust that you, my dear parents, will at some future time be induced to cast your lot with the Saints. If this desire of my heart could be fulfilled I would experience a joy which words would fail to express. I still trust in God, knowing that He will do all things for the best.

-Lydia Goldthwaite Knight pg 154

I do not wonder that a beautiful flower garden should remind you of heaven--every perfection of beauty is heavenly. Those who have by the power of vision, beheld the flowers in the upper state of existence, tell us, that the flowers here, however beautiful they seem to us, will hardly bear comparison with the exceedingly



beautiful, and exquisitely fragrant blossoms in that more perfect world. The thought of a perfect state of existence where every thing is clothed with perfect beauty and perfect beings enjoy it, is, of itself, almost enchanting; and the tangible reality of all this is certainly before us--it is what we are living for, and it is surely worth all the toil, privation, suffering and sacrifice to which mortality is subject. When you stroll among flowers and admire them. Just say to yourself, 'if I am faithful I shall inherit a kingdom and mansion of greater beauty and liveliness than can be represented in this fallen state.'

-Eliza Roxcy Snow pg 399

You say Mr. Lightner is gone. We do not know what is for the best, but Father does; and what we have no power to control, we have only to submit into His hands, and He is sure to manage in that way that will result in the most possible good. The saying that "the darkest hour is just before day" is frequently a truthful one when applied to human life. The more we cultivate a trust and confidence in God, the more we shall divest ourselves of corroding anxiety. To review our past lives and refresh our recollections with the many times when the Lord in tender mercy has protected, and guided us to our salvation, has a tendency to inspire unshaken confidence in His special care.

His love in times past, forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last, in trouble to sink;  
Each sweet ebenezer I have in review,  
Confirms His good pleasure, to help me quite through.

-Eliza Roxcy Snow pg 403-404

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## **Cathy says**

This book is a collection of stories about women who were pretty amazing! These women all have at least one thing in common, they were all faithful women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). There are small biographies and life stories of 35 women in this book, each written by a different author. Women such as Emma Smith, Amanda Barnes Smith, Patty Sessions, Eliza R Snow, and many more. There are quite a few women in this book that I have heard of, but still quite a lot that I never have heard of. As I've been reading this book, I have been truly amazed at the depth of their faith through their seriously trying circumstances. I love that they've tried to include an actual photo of every woman. I love that they are planning to do 7 volumes and include women of faith born up through 1970. That's quite an ambitious project. I think there is a lot of things we can learn from these amazing women, I truly hope that I am smart enough to learn from them myself!

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## **Erika B. (SOS BOOKS) says**

A good documentation of the early pioneer women of the LDS faith! I was amazed at what these women went through! Having multiple children die and having babies in wagons. Some sold all they had just to buy oxen or pay off mobsters that were persecuting them! I can honestly say I would not have been a good pioneer woman! But I totally respect these women that pioneered this faith and this country! I loved the journal entries and the written letters in this book because it brought these ladies to life for me!

"Sunday Dec 22nd...My mind seems to have lost its peculiar enjoyment that it used to possess without an abiding pleasure. I feel in a measure to have lost the charm of existence for a season but I hope it is but for a season as I know that if this work is of God I have an important part to act if he spares my life, but for the

present I breathe in an atmosphere of uncertainty as it were." -Martha Spence Heywood 1812-1873

See very relatable!

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