



## THE CHURCH'S BEAUTIFICATION MOVEMENT, 1937–47

WHEN LeGrand Richards became the Church's Presiding Bishop in April 1938, he found that there were "very few ward buildings with shrubs or flowers around them. They thought the boys would destroy them." In Utah and Idaho, "many buildings had never been painted and . . . a lot of old dilapidated outhouses and chicken coops and fences and barns" near ward buildings caused some tourists to ask, "Is there something in the Mormon Church against the use of paint?" In a run-down ward building in Idaho, Bishop Richards asked the bishop, "Bishop, would you dare invite the girls of your ward to come here to a party in a party dress?" "No, I don't think so," the bishop replied. "Well, you fix it up," Bishop Richards said.<sup>1</sup> Because of an abundance of unattractive meetinghouses, the Church promoted a decade-long beautification movement starting in 1937 that generated much

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energy at all Church levels and produced improvements big and small. To spearhead the program, the Church created the Improvement and Beautification Committee. Initially it functioned under the Church Security or Welfare Committee, but it soon shifted to the Presiding Bishopric's Office.

For a decade, the program's two primary concerns were to have wards make their meetinghouses and grounds attractive and to motivate members to beautify their homes. The program sought to utilize unemployed and underemployed Church welfare recipients. It hoped to improve the image outsiders gained while visiting Mormon communities.<sup>2</sup> The program involved men, women, children, priesthood quorums, and every Church auxiliary—Sunday School, Primary, Relief Society, and the MIAs. Regularly it produced articles and before-and-after photographs in the Church section of the *Deseret News* and the *Improvement Era*, *Relief Society Magazine*, *Children's Friend*, and Presiding Bishopric's monthly *Progress of the Church*. It worked in cooperation with other community groups promoting beautification, especially with the Utah Centennial Commission. The Centennial Commission wanted Utah to look good for a World's Fair—type celebration planned for 1947 to celebrate the centennial of the pioneers' arrival in Utah.

## BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS UNDER WAY

Periodically, run-down urban and rural conditions prompted national and local groups to undertake improvement projects.<sup>3</sup> Agencies responsible for roads and highways, parks, forests, tourism, and urban renewal projects pushed such efforts. Nationally, women's groups, civic organizations, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, cities, counties, 4-H clubs, and others did the same. In Salt Lake City, municipal leaders made periodic attempts to better the city's physical appearance, and in 1936 those goals began anew, driven by groups such as the Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce, which took on the task of purifying the city's polluted air.<sup>4</sup> During the 1930s, Utah's state health inspectors promoted annual spring cleanup drives for sanitation purposes. In 1936, for example, they produced successful spring

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cleanups in forty Utah towns and cities. Just two months before the Church launched its program in June 1937, the Utah Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycee) conducted an annual cleanup drive involving more than fifty communities. The Jaycee campaign also prodded homeowners to “clean-up, paint-up, and cut down weeds.”<sup>5</sup>

### CONNECTION WITH THE WELFARE PROGRAM

In April 1936, the Church organized a centrally directed welfare program called the Church Security Plan. In 1937 that program, headed by the General Security Committee, launched a campaign to beautify Latter-day Saint buildings and grounds. That committee met weekly and included the First Presidency, Elders Melvin Ballard and Albert Bowen of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric—Sylvester Q. Cannon, David Asael Smith, and John Wells. Three subcommittees oversaw projects and industries, agriculture, and beautification. Highland Stake president Marvin O. Ashton chaired the beautification subcommittee.<sup>6</sup> The Church Security Plan was soon renamed the Church Welfare Plan.

### CONNECTION TO THE PLANNED 1947 PIONEER CENTENNIAL

This Church beautification effort linked directly with plans percolating in 1937 for a grandiose 1947 Mormon pioneer centennial commemoration. A Utah Trails Centennial Commission headed by President David O. McKay, counselor in the First Presidency, worked on centennial ideas and lobbied the state government to also participate. By June 1938, Governor Henry H. Blood had named one hundred men and women to a Utah Centennial Committee that was to design a plan to present to the governor and legislature by January 1939.<sup>7</sup> Then in 1939 the legislature funded and authorized a fifteen-person Utah Centennial Commission to voluntarily serve until the centennial. President David O. McKay was chairman; other members included Gus P. Backman from the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce

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*Marvin O. Ashton, chairman of Church Improvement and Beautification Committee (left). James M. Kirkham, secretary of Church Improvement and Beautification Committee (right). (Courtesy of Church History Library.)*

and former governor Charles R. Mabey.<sup>8</sup> The commission's charge was to create centennial activities to properly honor the pioneer arrivals and "portray fittingly the natural resources and scenic wonders of Utah, the prehistoric culture of the west, the development of irrigation, farming, mining, forestry, transportation, culture and the arts." Expecting thousands of tourists for the centennial, planners wanted Utah cleaned up and beautified by that time.<sup>9</sup>

Two contemporary World's Fairs, both expected to be tourist draws, influenced the planners. In San Francisco the Golden Gate International Exposition opened on February 18, 1939, and continued through October, with a repeat the next year. Among its features was a forty-nine-mile scenic drive so visitors could visit many of the city's major attractions and historic structures. Also, in April 1939 a World's Fair opened in New York City, the largest such fair to that point. With those fairs in mind, the Utah Centennial Commission proposed a World's Fair-caliber event for Utah for 1947, but with a unique twist. It would center in Salt Lake City but have as major

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“expositions” several scenic wonders throughout the state, such as Arches National Monument and the Bonneville Salt Flats. To ready Utah for the flood of tourists this “World’s Fair” would attract, the commission promoted beautifying campaigns.<sup>10</sup>

### CHURCH IMPROVEMENT AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

Gathered in the office of Presiding Bishopric counselor David A. Smith, the Church Improvement and Beautification Committee held its first meeting on May 27, 1937, with Marvin O. Ashton as chairman. Members included builder Howard J. McKean, Irving T. Nelson of a “special landscape committee,” and Church auxiliary representatives Jennie B. Knight (Relief Society), Mary R. Jack (Primary), Rose W. Bennett (YWMIA), Axel A. Madsen (YMMIA), and George A. Holt (Sunday School). This group’s task was to launch a vigorous program to beautify LDS meetinghouses and grounds. For buildings and maintenance, the Church already funded 60 percent of major projects, a major incentive for wards deciding to “spruce up.” These auxiliary representatives discussed how their groups could promote the cause. Chairman Ashton asked all of them to discuss the project with their general boards and return with their reactions.<sup>11</sup>

### LAUNCHING AND PROMOTING THE PROGRAM

Chairman Ashton announced the new “Church-wide Improvement Program” in the June *Improvement Era*. It was designed, he said, to (1) find work for unemployed men, (2) beautify Church property, (3) raise the standards of people in their lives, homes, and communities, (4) encourage industry, and (5) save the Church insurance liability. “The thing to be decidedly emphasized is to make use of those out of employment who are able to work,” he said. “There are wards where many people are on relief who could be doing something for what they receive but who are now in downright idleness. The slogan for our whole Church should be ‘Work for Everybody

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and Everybody Work.” “Let us banish from our communities discouragement and idleness,” he urged, “and put our Church buildings, inside and out, in the proper condition of repair and beautification.”<sup>12</sup>

He announced two contests as enticements. The first lasted until October 1937 to clean up meetinghouse grounds and paint, repair, and renovate Church *buildings*. The other ran from October 1937 to October 1938 to beautify meetinghouse *grounds*. Cash prizes were offered to first, second, and third place winners, and criteria for judging the contest were spelled out. Within weeks, however, the committee dropped the contests and cash prizes, deciding that awards for all rather than competition was the better approach.<sup>13</sup>

Immediately the committee launched a publicity campaign. In June they sent letters to newspapers in Utah, Idaho, and other western states where meetinghouses were located, asking them to publish articles about beautification projects. It also sent letters to lumber, hardware, and paint stores soliciting their cooperation. Early in July, local newspapers announced the Church’s beautification program. One newspaper praised the “generous offer of the First Presidency to provide material assistance from the general funds of the Church.”<sup>14</sup> July issues of the *Relief Society Magazine* and the *Children’s Friend* carried beautification articles. Throughout the year, committee members, by assignment, published beautification messages in the *Improvement Era* and the *Deseret News*.<sup>15</sup>

Committee member Howard McKean recommended that the committee “take a ward badly run down that needs a lot of work done, and under the committee’s direction it be beautified and the pictures before and after publicized throughout the Church showing what can be done.”<sup>16</sup> For that purpose, through regular and special visits, committee members inspected several meetinghouses along main highways into Utah that should be beautified and could be used as examples. But that raised questions about how much authority the committee had to ask wards to improve. It was determined that the committee could make suggestions and then let the

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Presiding Bishopric do the prodding. Committee records do not document what the targeted wards were asked to do or how well they responded.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the initial push coming from the top down, it is notable that General Authorities left a great deal of autonomy to the local wards, bishops, and members regarding what and how to beautify, including chapel planning and design. The Church provided 60 percent of funding for projects, but rather than mandate what improvements a ward should make, it asked wards to submit their own plans and estimates for approval by the Presiding Bishopric.

The committee needed beautification committees at the stake and ward levels, so it formulated and distributed organizing ideas and asked that such committees be assembled.<sup>18</sup> Stakes and wards responded well.

With First Presidency approval, the committee created a questionnaire and sent it to all bishops. Two pages long, it asked scores of questions about a ward's building, grounds, and custodian: when was the building built; what kind of construction; how many rooms; general condition of exterior masonry and cement work; was the water piped or irrigation water; did the meetinghouse have lavatories and plumbing; what kind of heating; what was the condition of furniture, carpets, roofs, and windows; what kind of soil was in the grounds, what trees and shrubs; what kind of walks, fences, parking, and outbuildings; was there a separate amusement hall; how long had the custodian served, what was his pay, and had he outside employment? The form also asked about the ward's employment situation, and, if the ward undertook an improvement program, did they have sufficient skilled unemployed members to help. Final questions dealt with what kind of improvements the bishop anticipated, cost estimates, how the ward would spend the Church's 60 percent share, and how the Beautification Committee could help with the project.<sup>19</sup>

In a July 1937 Church Security meeting, Brother Ashton, based on ward questionnaires that had been returned, said that most church buildings were in good shape but some needed "blasting."<sup>20</sup> One example of a completed questionnaire is that of Preston Idaho Fourth Ward bishop J. H.

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Larsen, who said that his building had ten rooms but needed an amusement hall. The building's side entrances needed repair, the lavatories were unfit to use, the walls needed plastering and cleaning and painting, the building had no curtains or carpets, and the roof and exterior needed paint. The bishop wanted to clean, paint, and remodel the chapel and classrooms, carpet all rooms, and install new seats on the stand in the chapel. He estimated the projects' costs at \$5,500.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of the year, the First Presidency wanted to know the Church's estimated 1938 beautification costs based on the returned questionnaires. Of 1,085 wards and branches contacted, 1,014 returned the questionnaires and in most cases provided photos, as requested, of the front and rear of the meetinghouses. First, the committee reassured the First Presidency that "our work must of necessity be one of encouraging and stimulating, not presuming to say how much a Ward should spend." Then they reported that in total the bishops requested \$353,082 for ward improvements, meaning the wards' 40 percent share would be \$141,249 and the Church's 60 percent share would be \$211,833. Not knowing how much the Church had at its disposal for the projects, the committee asked the First Presidency what the committee could tell wards to expect. The committee also recommended "that more men be available" to visit bishops and help them to plan and to supervise their improvement projects.<sup>22</sup>

### 1938: BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE EFFORTS

Early in 1938, the committee issued an eight-page brochure, *Our Churches Shall Be Beautiful*, to serve as a beautification primer for wards.<sup>23</sup> On the cover, a First Presidency message said that the appearance of the Saints' church and community buildings and homes should properly reflect the ideals and high standards of the faith, and stake presidents and bishops should see that this happened. The booklet explained that the Church would cover 60 percent of cash costs and that donated ward labor, materials, or cash could cover the other 40 percent. To form a ward beautification committee, wards should expand their security committees to include



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*Cleanup by Nibley Park Ward Primary boys. (Deseret News, Church section, August 7, 1937.)*

auxiliary representatives. “Bishop, investigate!” the pamphlet urged, which meant to survey what needed to be done and then to divide up the work. “Let us resolve that the old shabby church building shall disappear. . . . Let us raise the standard of our communities by beginning with the Church.” Listed were project ideas women and children could do. Pictures illustrated beautification results. A scriptural reminder, often repeated by the committee, underscored the importance of the program: “For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged. . . . Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments” (D&C 82:14).

To tie beautification to the pioneer centennial, the committee’s publicity frequently reminded that beautification “started with the arrival of Pioneers in Utah,” who labored to make the desert “blossom as a rose.”<sup>24</sup>

In April 1938, LeGrand Richards became the new Presiding Bishop. He chose beautification committee chairman Marvin O. Ashton as his first

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counselor and Joseph B. Wirthlin as second counselor. During 1938 the flow of beautification-related articles in Church publications continued. For example, a March *Improvement Era* article, “Clean-Up! Paint-Up! Rake-Up!,” told the YMMIA adult classes how to get involved.<sup>25</sup> The Church Security Program’s page in each Church section of the *Deseret News* regularly offered beautification advice. On September 24, for example, Mary R. Jack’s article “Children’s Part in Church Beautification” said that “up to June 1st of this year, 283 Primaries reported children taking part helping to clear the grounds of rock and weeds, raking and carrying off rubbish, mowing lawns, digging dandelions, sweeping walks, cleaning class rooms, dusting, washing curtains, and in innumerable ways helping to clear, to keep clean and to beautify meeting houses and grounds.”<sup>26</sup>

Early in 1939, the committee published a report about a 1938 St. George Temple beautification project for which members used local materials. Parowan members contributed evergreen trees valued at over \$1,400 and spent the equivalent of eighteen work days to find and dig up the trees in local canyons and transport them to and plant them on the temple grounds. Some Cedar City members even donated trees from their own yards.<sup>27</sup>

## 1939: DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE PRESIDING BISHOPRIC

In mid-1939, the Presiding Bishopric took over direction of the Church Improvement and Beautification Committee, which Bishop Ashton still headed. James M. Kirkham became the committee’s secretary, basically an executive secretary, and served as a prime voice, expert, and promoter for the beautification program.<sup>28</sup> Also in 1939, the Landscape Department of the Presiding Bishop’s Office was created to assist wards, stakes, and other units.<sup>29</sup> Sometime before November 1939, perhaps because of mounting beautification costs, the Church changed the cost share percentage with wards to fifty-fifty.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout 1939, the committee placed pictures and articles in the *Improvement Era* and *Progress of the Church*, praising beautification projects

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recently completed. One was the small Moreland Ward in Portland Stake that finished a beautiful chapel in six months by remodeling an older building.<sup>31</sup> Church headquarters, to set an example, beautified the grounds between the Church Office Building and the Hotel Utah and put new varnish on the Salt Lake Temple's doors, causing many to comment on the building's improved appearance. As of September of 1939, approximately 350,000 tourists had already visited Temple Square that year.<sup>32</sup>

The Grandview Ward chapel, dedicated on July 10, 1938, lacked landscaping, so members undertook a beautification program. With the help of some Church funding, they installed a watering system and planted donated shrubs, trees, lawn seed, and flowers. Thirty-seven men spread sixty-seven loads of mountain soil on the grounds in half a day. In less than a year members completed the landscaping.<sup>33</sup>

The Milton Ward of the Morgan Stake, noted a December 9 article, "takes a well-deserved place on the rapidly growing list of successes under the Church beautification program directed by the Presiding Bishopric." In 1930 the ward tore down its 1875 building and in subsequent years completed and paid for a new building. Then they landscaped the grounds and installed an attractive fence around the property.<sup>34</sup>

As 1939 ended, an article in the *Deseret News* reviewed the prior decade's chapel building and beautification efforts. That period witnessed a "progressive building program," the article said, matched in recent years by a strong beautification program by which "many wards have produced outstanding results to date."<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, many state organizations supporting beautification, led by the state agricultural extension service, began to unite and coordinate their efforts for an eight-year plan (preparing for the state's centennial), among them the Centennial Commission, the Farm Bureau, garden clubs, Utah's Nurserymen's Association, state highway people, the State Board of Health, and others.<sup>36</sup>

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### 1940: MANY NON-LDS ORGANIZATIONS PUSH BEAUTIFICATION

During 1940, many secular Utah organizations pushed beautification, encouraged by the state's Centennial Commission. On January 31, 1940, the Salt Lake County Beautification Committee, which Bishop Ashton chaired, held a "Beautification Fiesta" in the Salt Lake Tabernacle to raise funds and promote civic beautification. Local high school students provided musical numbers, and local businesses donated money in return for Fiesta tickets. The Fiesta's printed program included a logo that read, "Let's talk about BEAUTIFICATION until everyone is doing it," and this promotional statement: "One of the major projects to be put over by the STATE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION COMMITTEE this year, is to clean up, improve, and beautify our homes, public places and surroundings. . . . This Fiesta is the opening 'gun,' our start in a campaign to make every Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County citizen beautification minded."

The Utah Landscape Improvement Committee, formed in 1938, cooperated with numerous state organizations by 1940, which shows how extensive the movement was statewide. These included:

- Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees)
- Farm Bureau
- Future Farmers of Utah
- US Forest Service
- Utah Federated Women's Clubs
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- *Salt Lake Tribune*
- American Legion
- Utah elementary and secondary schools
- Catholic Church
- Brigham Young University
- State Board of Health
- Southern Civic Clubs
- Northern Civic Clubs

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- Presbyterian Church
- Utah Nurseryman's Association
- Salt Lake Council of Women
- State Rural Service
- Utah State Agricultural College Extension Service
- Utah Highway Commission<sup>37</sup>

An April 1940 *Relief Society Magazine* editorial noted the “vigor with which both state and Church are conducting improvement and beautification campaigns.” It said that plans for 1947 called for a gigantic statewide celebration, “but in order that our highways, our homes, and our cities be equally attractive, and reflect a refined and cultured people, the Utah Centennial Beautification Committee is enthusiastically laying the ground work for an extensive beautification program.” The Church, the editorial assured, is working in close cooperation with the Centennial Committee.<sup>38</sup> That same month the Salt Lake City Jaycees sponsored a cleanup drive called “Reside in Pride.” Their campaign, supported by the Centennial Commission, involved school children and asked home owners and business owners to clean up and paint.<sup>39</sup>

### THE MOVEMENT IN HIGH GEAR IN 1940

Church beautification promotions brought results. By January 1940, most stakes and wards had beautification committees, and during the year wards and stakes submitted 150 landscape plans to Church headquarters.<sup>40</sup> All that year Church publications promoted beautification and cited examples of what members were accomplishing.

The Church committee's beautification announcements by then followed a calendar cycle. During springtime, the push was for postwinter cleanups, pruning, and planting, including lawns. Summer encouragements dealt with outdoor and indoor construction, repairing, painting, and thorough cleaning of buildings. Fall focuses were on postsummer cleanups, planting of shrubs and trees, and planning for winter indoor improvements. For example, regarding “the importance of a fall clean-up” the *Relief Society*

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*Magazine's* October 1940 issue warned that "during the summer months there has been an accumulation of trash, waste and debris in many places. Weeds and other growths should be removed and burned. All the breeding and hibernating places of insects should be destroyed before fall and winter storms come."<sup>41</sup> Winter counsel dealt with keeping local committees organized, thorough inspections of buildings, pruning, drafting plans for the next year, and submitting applications to the Church for landscaping and improvement expenditures.

Church periodicals continued to feature beautification examples. January 1940's *Progress of the Church* posted photographs of men on a truck with shovels and women serving lunch outside a ward building, and an accompanying article told about members beautifying the grounds for the Shelley Idaho Stake Tabernacle. In the spring of 1939, according to the article, about two hundred members brought their teams, trucks, and tractors with which they leveled and prepared the grounds and installed a sprinkler system.<sup>42</sup> In another January article, custodian Robert C. Marchant of the Yalecrest Ward told how he landscaped a plot north of the chapel's east wing, measuring seventy by one hundred and ten feet, that had been a weed patch and dumping area. In the fall of 1938, the bishop decided that area should be planted with flowers, so Brother Marchant cleared, plowed, and fertilized the soil. He bought \$2.10 worth of flower seeds, nursing some starts in the boiler room that winter. In the spring he planted and transplanted. By mid-June, the different colored flowers began to bloom and his carefully designed color scheme emerged.<sup>43</sup>

From Duchesne County in Utah's hinterlands came a remarkable story of students beautifying their newly built seminary building, for which funds had run out before it could be painted, furnished, and landscaped. The stake was unable to help, so Altamont Seminary teacher Walter Kerksiek turned to the Church Beautification Committee for assistance. Learning that his 40 percent share of costs could be in labor, he rallied the students. Students planned exterior and interior improvements. They needed lawns, flowers, bulbs, a fence, sidewalk, and shrubbery outside, and electrical fixtures,

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drapes, curtains, and shades inside. Tables and a desk needed painting. By summer of 1937, they received Church approval. A contractor donated time and oversaw seminary boys who poured seven hundred square feet of cement walks around the building. Because it was too late to seed a lawn, that fall they planted bulbs—tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils—and applied three coats of paint to the building and roof. In November they painted the interior. Students selected colors for the curtains and drapes and stains for the woodwork. They became so invested in the project that when it was finished, seminary attendance went up and increased respect for the building was evident.<sup>44</sup>

Seminary teacher Kersiek, as bishop of the Mount Emmons Ward, also led a campaign to beautify its chapel and grounds. When he started, “people had disrespect for the buildings and grounds. Cars were parked anywhere.” Rooms were dirty, and weeds grew around the chapel. Bishop Kersiek made beautification plans and motivated ward members to get involved. “We had the deacons plant lawn under supervision and they also



*Chapel project in Wayne Stake. (Deseret News, Church section, December 21, 1940.)*



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dug the holes and carried water for the shrubs we planted. The Relief Society and the young girls of the town planted the flowering plants. We had as high as thirty women and girls on their knees sorting out plants.” “It just thrills me to note the change in attitude,” the bishop said. “They are proud of the church and what it stands for, where before they were ashamed of the place and many showed disgust.” In fact, “the spirit of reverence has changed so much that my wife and I can’t get over it.” And the beautifying became contagious. In their poor community, many homes were log houses, some with dirt floors. “During the last summer” the bishop reported, “six homes were painted that have stood for years and never been painted before. Three fences were torn down (barb wire) and picket fences put in their places and painted white.”<sup>45</sup>

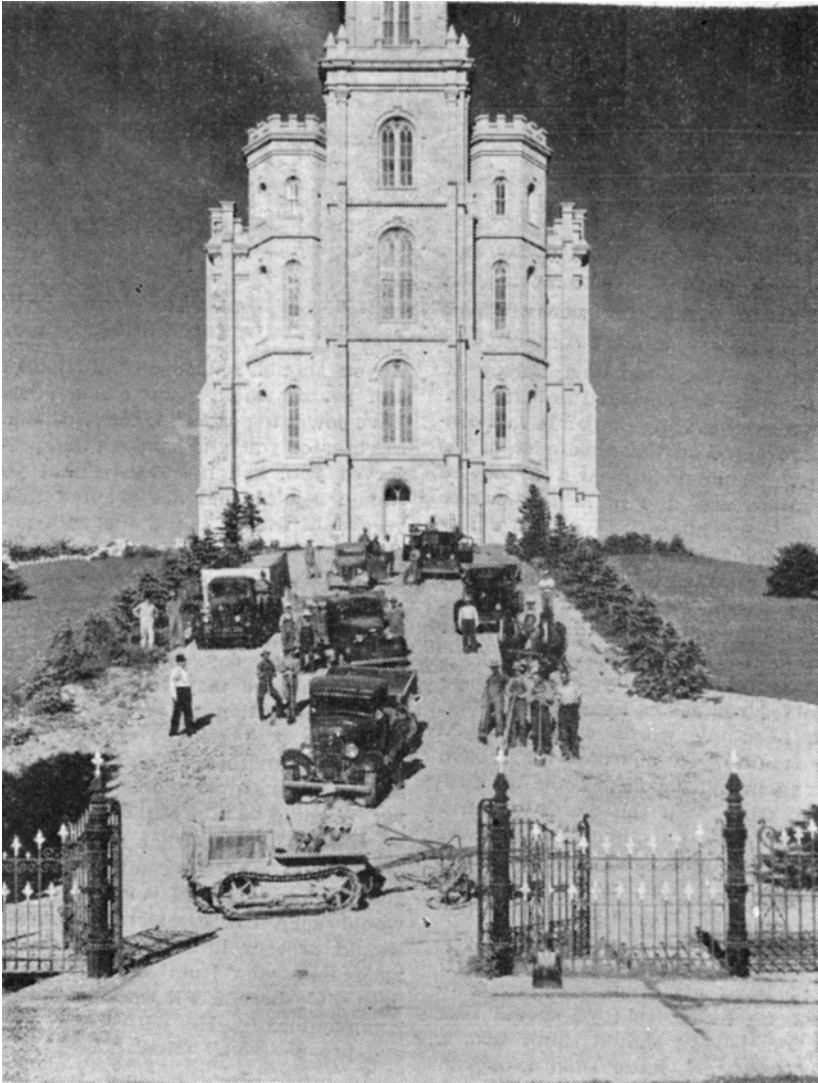
As the 1930s ended, unemployment numbers were dropping. Perhaps for that reason, Church beautification releases rarely mentioned the movement’s purpose to engage the unemployed. However, the March 1940 *Progress of the Church* did make note of it in an article titled “Welfare Labor in Beautification Programs,” which reminded stake presidencies and bishoprics “that where able-bodied men are receiving welfare assistance and the local groups are unable to provide other work for them in exchange for the assistance rendered, that they be assigned to assist in the beautification programs in either public or private projects under the direction of the Beautification Committees of the ward or stake.” A Church welfare project that spring improved the east entrance to the Manti Temple grounds. Stakes in the temple district provided work crews and trucks to haul soil. After removing steps and a retaining wall, the approach was resloped, which required one-hundred-thousand yards of soil and an enormous amount of cement and stone to be hauled one and a half miles.<sup>46</sup>

The Primary developed a clever springtime poem for children: “Get a rake, a garden make, and find good seeds to sow, pull a weed, plant a seed, and watch the flowers grow.”<sup>47</sup>

During April 1940 general conference, Elder Stephen L Richards delivered a major beautification address entitled “Beautification Plan a Tribute



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*Manti Temple grounds welfare beautification project. (Deseret News, Church section, June 15, 1940.)*

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to the Pioneers,” which became a Church Beautification Committee pamphlet. While nature is beautiful, he observed, “What a strange paradox it seems that civilization should be so unbeautiful.” Almost all people “are sensitive to color, to form and symmetry, so that good architecture and good landscaping with trees, flowers, shrubs and lawns have a very appreciable effect, even though sometimes unconsciously, upon all persons.” He also observed that “every dirty, unkept, unpainted, and shabby home; every unsightly outbuilding; every old corral and fallen fence; every scraggly dead tree; every barren and forbidding school house and church and courthouse with broken windows, curled shingles and other evidences of neglect; every littered and weedy vacant lot, street and highway is a definite liability.”<sup>48</sup>

In May the Church committee restructured ward beautification operations and called for specific assignments for specific quorums and auxiliaries. High priests, for example, were assigned to remove fire hazards and see that chapels were painted inside and out. Relief Society sisters were to keep the building’s interior clean, including floors, carpets, curtains, and the sacrament service.<sup>49</sup>

Beautification concerns led to a historic meeting in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on October 3, 1940. That day the First Presidency and Presiding Bishopric met with bishoprics—all of the Church’s bishoprics were invited—in the largest-ever gathering of bishoprics, with 1,068 wards represented. There, the Church Beautification Committee presented illustrated talks about the upkeep, renovation, and landscaping of Church buildings.<sup>50</sup>

That month the committee reported that during the previous twelve months, “real progress has been made.”<sup>51</sup> In a unique beautification project, a new stake in Riverside, California, transformed five hundred five- and ten-gallon paint cans into nicely painted trash cans for stake families.<sup>52</sup> A November article praised the Salt Lake City Tenth Ward, where behind their chapel ward members transformed a sunken vacant lot covered with weeds into a raised, paved recreation spot with a massive fireplace at one end for outdoor cooking and campfire suppers. “As far as possible the labor was

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furnished by men in the ward, many of them working under the Church Welfare Plan.”<sup>53</sup>

A Union Ward beautification project involved cleaning, painting, and remodeling the ward building; improving drainage, parking, and landscaping; installing a new roof; and repairing and painting interior rooms. A Wayne Stake project became a model effort that the Beautification Committee often referred to. In that stake every chapel and building became “immaculately” clean and in perfect repair, with grounds newly landscaped. A year earlier those chapels and buildings were “badly run down, clumsily patched in many places, not patched at all in others, unpainted, and generally in very bad condition.” Nine tons of paint were used.<sup>54</sup>

At the end of the year, the committee issued a warning about cleaning up fire hazards in light of the Syracuse Ward chapel in the North Davis Stake, which had recently burned to the ground. They also sent out an assurance from the state tax commission that beautification improvements would not increase property taxes, a fear many homeowners felt when considering home improvements.<sup>55</sup>

### 1941: A NEW EMPHASIS ON HOME BEAUTIFICATION

With chapel upgrades going so well, the Church expanded its program to include members' homes. In March 1941, committee secretary Kirkham made a major announcement that in anticipation of the centennial, “members have been asked to beautify their homes,” not only because “thousands of people are coming to our State and will visit our homes and surroundings,” but also because “this beautification program is a good thing to do for our own benefit and pleasure.” To help encourage home beautifying, he said, the committee had created an awards program and a one hundred-point scorecard. Each home achieving at least seventy points would receive an award from the Presiding Bishop's Office. Wards were to select awards committees from among their beautification committee members, who

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then would use the two-page scorecard (with detailed instructions for each category) and award beautification points.<sup>56</sup> Categories were:

- Clean-up 20 points
- Condition of Buildings 20 points
- Landscape Principles 30 points
- Care During the Season 10 points
- Condition of Lawn 10 points
- Importance of Trees 10 points

In the Church Archives are copies of a “First Year 1941 Award in the L.D.S. Church Program of Home Beautification,” along with similar ones for 1942, 1943, and 1944.<sup>57</sup>

In line with the Centennial Commission’s program, Deseret Stake in Millard County set out to beautify Church properties in March and April. James Kirkham, along with the stake beautification chairman, visited all

The Church Beautification Program



Paint, grass and trees  
add to the beauty of any  
home. Even the most  
modest cottage can be  
improved by the plant-  
ing of a few shrubs.

Clean Up  
Fix Up  
Paint Up  
And Plant

*For The Centennial*

*Beautification ad, Deseret News, March 15, 1941.*

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the wards to help them plan. He told them that “the Church will give all the paint necessary to beautify church properties, and each ward is to put it on,” inside and out.<sup>58</sup> However, a paint shortage developed by summer. “If there is any one thing we need in Sevier County more than another it is paint,” Sevier Stake president Irvin Warnock informed the Presiding Bishopric in August 1941. His people needed paint for homes, fences, barns, outbuildings, and meetinghouses. He asked if ward and stake orders could be pooled in order to get cost reductions “either directly from the factory or thru your office.”<sup>59</sup> What answer he received is not known.

### 1942–45: WORLD WAR II DISRUPTS BEAUTIFICATION

The United States formally entered World War II in December 1941. A Church editorial from 1946 said in retrospect that “at the time this country entered the war the Church had in full swing a program for improving, remodeling, repairing, beautifying and landscaping of all ward and stake property. Of necessity the wartime restrictions brought a curtailment to this program, and only needed maintenance was carried out during the past few years.”<sup>60</sup> In March 1942, the committee admitted, “Because of war activities, conditions are changing so rapidly that it is difficult at this time to work out in detail a Beautification Program for the coming year.” During 1942, the Church’s beautification messages emphasized the need to keep morale up through beautiful homes, good health through cleanliness, and thorough cleanups “reaching every nook and corner” to improve the house and yard and to find salvage items to donate.<sup>61</sup>

Some ward beautifying continued to take place. As one example, that spring seventy-five members from two Salt Lake wards, mostly young people, spent an afternoon and evening raking debris from the grounds around their common meetinghouse and removing rocks in buckets and wheelbarrows. Older men leveled the ground and prepared it for a lawn. They could not do extensive planting of trees and shrubbery, only annual flowers.<sup>62</sup>

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War shut down the state's Centennial Commission. It had met regularly from September 1939 to November 1940, then intermittently until June 5, 1942, when Utah's Governor Maw deactivated it for the war's duration.<sup>63</sup> However, the retiring commission expressed hope that the beautification part of the program could continue, carried forward by the LDS Church, the Agricultural College, and civic and women's groups.<sup>64</sup>

On December 7, 1942, the War Production Board in Salt Lake City wrote an urgent appeal to the Presiding Bishopric, which was soon passed along to ward bishops. The message requested "that all tin cans, fats and greases, rags, rubber, scrap iron and steel be collected for the government." Instructions called for tin cans to be taken by children to school on specific days, fats and greases to be taken to any butcher for four cents a pound, and rags, rubber, scrap iron, and steel to be sold to any junk dealer.<sup>65</sup>

In March 1943, the Church committee announced a clean-up and conservation program to focus on maintaining property, gardening, salvaging war materials, eliminating fire hazards, promoting tire safety (cleaning up glass fragments, nails, and debris from streets, alleys, driveways, and yards), promoting sanitation to protect health, and beautifying with materials and labor at hand.<sup>66</sup> A year later, in March and April 1944, the *Relief Society Magazine* published articles about home gardens and growing roses. That May, James Kirkham repeated in a *Church News* article several standard admonitions about beautifying chapels and homes and urged ward committees and bishoprics to conduct clean-up programs outside and inside meetinghouses.<sup>67</sup>

Late in 1944, Governor Maw reactivated the state Centennial Commission, which resumed its meetings on November 24. War continued, but with 1947 barely three years away, the Commission had planning to do. Hopes for a World's Fair-type celebration then seemed shaky.<sup>68</sup>

## 1945 AND THE WAR'S END

In March 1945, with the centennial only two years away and war still on, Governor Maw announced that war would not blot out the centennial,

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though it might restrict the celebration. War or not, beautification plans must be ready if manpower and materials became available. "The State must take on a holiday attire," he reminded. "There is nothing in war's demands that requires broken-down fences, filthy corrals, dilapidated outbuildings or unpainted houses," so "let Utah, then, dress up in honor of her pioneer founders."<sup>69</sup>

At the behest of the Church Beautification Committee, Salt Lake mayor Earl J. Glade published a beautification appeal in the May 1945 *Relief Society Magazine* titled "He's Coming Home, Let's Spruce Up!" The war in Europe had nearly ended, so he urged city and state residents to create a "brilliant homecoming" for the returning troops by dressing up parking areas, walks, and roofs; cutting down aged and decaying trees; applying fresh paint; and cleaning alleys. Businesses and industry were encouraged to dress up too, by creating new store fronts, display windows, interiors, and improved signs. "Down with shacks and dumps!" he urged; "Out with rubbish and junk." He called for improved highways, parks, and cemeteries.<sup>70</sup>

May 8 was V-E (Victory in Europe) Day, but Pacific warfare continued until mid-August. In August, Union Pacific Railroad general manager Randall L. Jones felt that the "most serious" cleanup problem in Utah was vacant lots, the "dumping grounds filled with rubbish and breeding grounds for mice, rats, flies, and weed."<sup>71</sup> That same month, referring to dilapidated "leaning-Tower-of-Pisa cow barns and sheds," Church beautification chair, Bishop Ashton, encouraged members to "fix it or burn it."<sup>72</sup> Owners should ask of their buildings, "Is it worth saving?" If not, they should be torn down or burned before the centennial. He penned a poem called "Fix It or Burn It" that reads in part:

The chimney needs fixing, the roof cries for paint  
The way the porch wobbles, would make one turn faint.  
The screens all are sagging the door knobs are gone,  
The flowers are dying, and look at the lawn.  
From basement to attic, it all looks the same.  
If the thing's not worth saving, then give it the flame.



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. . . Now Utah is planning a big National Show.  
In the year forty-seven, you surely all know.  
Let's fix-up and clean-up and burn-up a bit  
And make all our homes and our premises fit.  
. . . So let's show the traveler a much better view.  
Fix it or burn it—Yes, it means you!

When the war ended, and with the centennial so near at hand, the commission reduced plans from a World's Fair with crowds of tourists, and planned instead for a celebration designed for Utahns. Both the Church committee and the Centennial Commission recommitted to beautifying Utah in time for the revised celebration.<sup>73</sup>

### 1946: THE STATE'S BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM TAKES PRIORITY

In February 1946, the resurgent Centennial Commission established a Department on Beautification, with Donald P. Lloyd as chairman. From then until July 1947, his department directed beautification work in Utah, with the Church program following its lead.<sup>74</sup> Five committees composed the state committee: Clean-up, Paint-Up, Fix-Up; Publicity and Public Relations; Planning and Zoning; Landscaping; and Parks and Recreation. In February, Utah's communities were each asked to organize five such committees.<sup>75</sup> Mayors and town presidents responded, creating in Utah a total of 141 committees with a membership of 1,300.<sup>76</sup>

In March 1946, Governor Maw gave a "green light" to the centennial by making \$150,000 available for the Centennial Commission until the legislature provided more. Of that total, set amounts were earmarked, with \$15,000 going to beautification.<sup>77</sup> On April 3, 1946, by governor's proclamation, a statewide "Clean-up, Paint-Up, Fix-Up" campaign began. Designed to stimulate civic pride, beautify the state, safeguard health, and create long-term planning, it pushed communities to take action. The Church urged stake and ward authorities to cooperate in the state's activities.<sup>78</sup> At



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fifty-four local meetings held in 1946, the state "Clean-Up, Paint-Up, Fix-Up" Committee promoted spring cleanup campaigns to improve parks, clean and improve roads and sidewalks, upgrade personal property, plant trees, and eradicate weeds.<sup>79</sup>

A summer campaign focused on improving hotels, motels, and restaurants in cooperation with the state Department of Health. For community committee projects the state committee obtained paint from the War Assets Administration and through wholesale purchases. Autumn saw pushes for painting, cleaning ditches, planning for winter, and removing rubbish. In winter the committees concentrated on pruning and removing trees, demolishing unused sheds and outbuildings, repairing and rebuilding fences, and removing trash. The local committees directed attention to improving such municipal properties as city entrances, main streets, and public parks and grounds. The state committee arranged for landscape architects and organizations, helped by cooperating nurseries, to visit one hundred communities and give lectures, slide presentations, and demonstrations regarding shrubs, trees, planting, and pruning.<sup>80</sup>

On November 16, 1946, sponsored by the Utah Beautification Committee, a statewide conference took place at the Newhouse Hotel in Salt Lake City. There, two nationally recognized city planners trained and encouraged three hundred and fifty local beautification committee members (two counties were not represented). As a follow-up, regional conferences were held in seven parts of the state.<sup>81</sup> Beaver City's cleanup became a year-end success story. "During the fall many muddy, ungraveled streets were resurfaced with gravel hauled from the city pits two miles south of the city. Unsightly shrubs and brush were removed, new bridges and culverts installed, and larger ditches straightened and deepened." This work was done in cooperation with the centennial "beautification spirit."<sup>82</sup>

Nationally, Sears Roebuck and Company sponsored prizes for clean-ups each year, and for Utah in 1946 the town of Hinckley won the state sweepstakes award of \$200 and a trophy, one of eight regional trophies, and

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a county award of \$100. The Hon Cropper home in Hinckley won \$125 for individual home improvements.<sup>83</sup>

### 1946: THE CHURCH'S BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS CONTINUE

War had reduced meetinghouse improvements to only essential maintenance, so when the war ended the Church announced in January 1946 a new twofold beautification program to bring stake, ward, and mission buildings up to a high standard of appearance and keep them that way. War restrictions and manpower shortages had taken their toll: "Many ward buildings need repairs, new roofs, better heating equipment, new furnishings," the announcement noted: "Floors need attention. Many buildings need to be cleaned and renovated and painted inside and out to preserve property and to improve its appearance, class rooms added and other improvements to meet recent and changing conditions. These and others will be part of program that'll be carried out." Henceforth, stake building supervisors, by then an official position, would inspect all buildings and equipment at regular intervals and report what work needed to be done. Under this program, maintenance and conservation would be continuous, with wards helping to fund the improvements.<sup>84</sup>

Bishops learned in February 1946 that they should give each quorum a specific building or grounds beautification assignment because so much work was needed. One ward identified twenty-seven different projects to be considered.<sup>85</sup> In March the Church committee promoted a "1946 push 1947" effort that focused on Church properties, while the Centennial Committee directed home beautification and public projects. Saints were to cooperate with community committees, they advised, and "help put over the 1947 celebration."<sup>86</sup>

For ward buildings the committee promoted a four-part attack: cleanup, repairs, painting, and beautifying. They provided to-do lists for each part. Repairs, for example, included roofs, toilets, steps, chairs, benches, pews, light fixtures, walks, fences, gates, screens, glass, plaster, locks, floors, and

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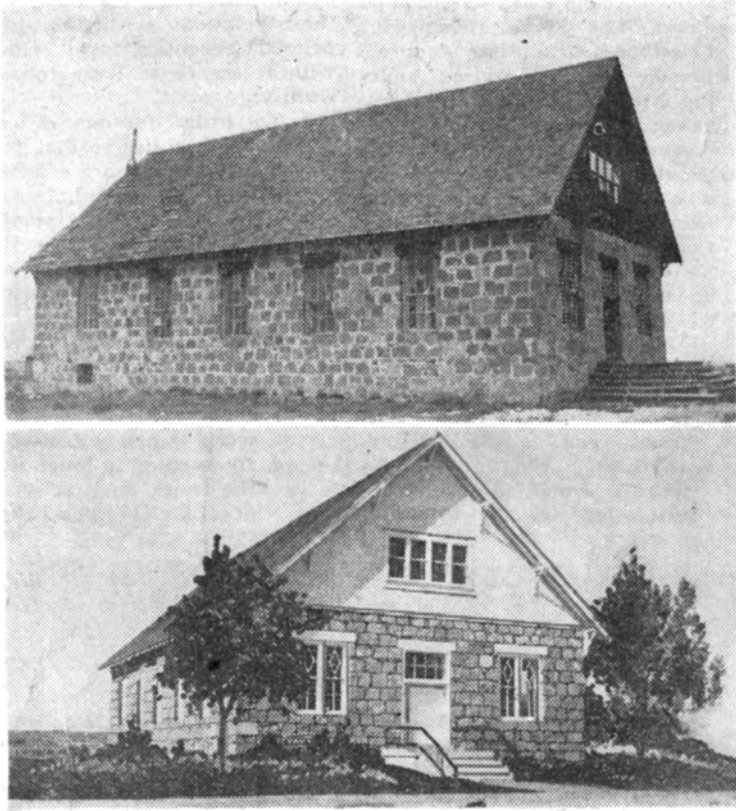
equipment. Because "desired material may not be available," some work might be delayed but "there need be no delay, however, on the clean up program."<sup>87</sup>

President McKay, chair of Utah's Centennial Commission, focused his April 1946 general conference remarks on the approaching centennial.<sup>88</sup> Under normal conditions, he said, the centennial exposition would invite people to behold the wonders of Utah, see the achievements of the people, and participate in various festivals and entertainments. Original plans called for a wagon train reenactment from Winter Quarters and a reenactment of the Mormon Battalion march. But the war halted planning, and when planning resumed it was too late to build roads to Utah's scenic attractions and improve parks adequately. And "due to the housing shortage, and the inability of the commission to assure comfortable accommodations for the hundreds of thousands of tourists who could be induced to visit us next year, it has been thought advisable to approach our celebration from a different angle."

Instead, the celebration would be "by and for the people of Utah, and Utahns in nearby western states." Preparations were under way, President McKay said, for the presentation of historical pageants; musical, dramatic, and educational programs; and athletic attractions. But, he reminded, "There is one important feature of the celebration which was not discontinued during the war, the duty of making the state more attractive." He urged homeowners to "all join in the campaign . . . to paint houses, fences, barns, and other buildings and to maintain a general atmosphere of tidiness and neatness about the homes, barns, and corrals." Then he proposed that Utah Saints consider a second type of beautification campaign, one to eradicate vices and bad influences.<sup>89</sup>

A mid-April report said that the Church Beautification Committee and the centennial "statewide clean-up organization" were in "perfect coordination" in their cleanup activities in preparation for the centennial.<sup>90</sup> Late in April the Presiding Bishopric explained that new government restrictions forbade new building projects and repairs on buildings "without specific

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*Before and after beautification, Ioka Chapel, Roosevelt Stake. (Church News, January 5, 1946.)*

authorization.” The maximum allowable expenditure for churches, schools, and hospitals “used exclusively for charitable purposes” was \$1,000. But, “without application” and with no limit on expenditures, the Church was permitted to do “repainting, repapering, sanding floors, repairing sidewalks, fences, bridges, wells, irrigation and drainage ditches, roads and streets, and repairing of existing mechanical equipment where no change in structure is made.” Likewise, “there was no government rule or regulation preventing us from cleaning up our buildings and grounds, removing all trash, weeds,

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ashes, etc. or cleaning inside and outside of all buildings from basement to attic.”<sup>91</sup>

On October 7, Bishop Ashton died. Presiding Bishop Richards made Bishop Wirthlin his first counselor and Thorpe B. Isaacson his second counselor. By then Utah and the Church had but one more spring season before the centennial. “The time is short, materials are scarce, and many beautification projects will be incomplete by next summer,” the Presiding Bishopric said, but they called for “beautification landscaping” wherever possible.<sup>92</sup>

### 1947: THE CENTENNIAL

The first six months of 1947 saw a flurry of final cleanup and beautification projects throughout Utah. With time running out, Utah communities received instructions in December 1946 for a statewide “face lifting” program.<sup>93</sup> The state’s Beautification Department sent communities a manual that called for as many as twenty special committees (inspection, fire prevention, vacant lots, schools, streets and alleys, front and back yards, dilapidated buildings and signs, and so forth). Using the slogan “The Time is Now! Plan—Beautify!” the manual suggested cleanup drives of at least two weeks duration with day one assigned to a parade, day two to safety, day three to repairs, and the other days similarly assigned.<sup>94</sup>

Cities and counties responded. Moab, for example, cleaned up between February 23 and 28, 1947, using block captains, city trucks to haul away trash and debris, high school students who agreed to be hired to help out, and cash prizes for the best improvements.<sup>95</sup> Millard County conducted a two-week campaign from April 21 to May 3 with weekdays in turn devoted to safety, weed eradication, front yards, pickups, flowers and gardens, vacant lots, painting, health, businesses, and so on, culminating with a community dance and crowning of the county’s centennial queen.<sup>96</sup> During those two weeks, ten evergreens, forty-four shrubs, and a lawn were planted at the Hinckley elementary school and high school, LDS Primary children planted shrubs around the Hinckley chapel, and the local newspaper

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described specific improvements made by ten homeowners in the nearby town of Sutherland.<sup>97</sup>

Although scaled down from the World's Fair-type commemoration that had been envisioned, grand and extended centennial celebrations filled the summer of 1947.<sup>98</sup> A Centennial Exposition at the state fairgrounds stayed open for four months, and more than a half million people visited.<sup>99</sup> The Utah Symphony Orchestra and Opera traveled the state and gave performances, and four companies of college actors presented plays statewide. The Church resurrected a pageant performed in 1930 for the Church's centennial, "Messages of the Ages," which in 1947 was performed twenty-five times in Salt Lake City.<sup>100</sup>

June centennial events included the Holiday on Ice; MIA drama, dance, and music festivals; a concert at Brigham Young University by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra; an NCAA track-and-field meet; a Tabernacle Choir concert with a New York Metropolitan Opera baritone as soloist; a national horse show with the Jerry Colonna Exposition; and tennis Clay Court Championships.

During July, the centennial month, Utah had Independence Day celebrations, Western Motor Boat Championships, a Wild Animal Circus, and a Tabernacle Choir concert with another Metropolitan opera star, and hosted the National Governors' Conference. From July 19 to 24, Gene Austry and his Madison Square Garden Rodeo performed in Ogden.

Four days, July 21–24, marked the climax of the centennial. On July 21 the Broadway-caliber *Promised Valley* show opened in the University of Utah stadium, with production costs of \$150,000 and featuring *Oklahoma* star Alfred Drake. During seventeen performances it drew 104,000 spectators.<sup>101</sup> On July 22 the Sons of the Utah Pioneers car caravan reenactment of the pioneer trek arrived in Salt Lake City to great fanfare. They had left Nauvoo on July 14, their cars decorated with plywood oxen cutouts and white canvas wagon tops. On the actual centennial day, July 24, the magnificent This Is the Place Monument, sixty feet wide and eighty-four feet high, was unveiled near the mouth of Emigration Canyon, and fifty thousand people attended its three

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dedications. Nighttime Pioneer Day parades with sixty lighted floats took place, in addition to the release of a Utah pioneer centennial postage stamp and receptions for surviving pre-1869 pioneers. Church President George A. Smith's picture appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. An unprecedented 183,000 July visitors to Temple Square broke all existing records.<sup>102</sup> In August a professional football game between the Chicago Rockets and the Brooklyn Dodgers (football team) and race-car speed-record attempts at the Bonneville Salt Flats concluded the centennial events.

#### END OF THE BEAUTIFICATION CAMPAIGN

With centennial events well under way, the Church Beautification Committee disbanded, ending a busy decade of work. What results had they produced? Through articles, press releases, surveys, correspondence, speeches, conferences, and personal visits, Bishop Ashton, James Kirkham, and other committee members had created workable programs. Their directives had generated stake and ward beautification committees and prodded bishops to plan, apply for Church funds, and undertake improvement projects. As a result, untold thousands of repairs, upgrades, and landscape projects improved hundreds of chapels and grounds and enhanced thousands of individual homes. Thus, the Church's program met its goal to help improve Utah's appearance for the centennial. Church efforts supplemented and sometimes prodded efforts by the Utah Centennial Commission and other organizations promoting Utah's beautification.

Through three Depression years, four war years, and three postwar years the Church expended hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund chapel and grounds improvements. Wards paid their 40 percent and then 50 percent shares of costs through the members' donated materials and money and the labor provided by thousands of children, youth, women, and men. Unknown numbers of unemployed Church members receiving Church welfare assistance worked on the ward projects. Because of the LDS beautification program, a generation of Latter-day Saints became educated about

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and perhaps conditioned to the importance of having well-maintained meetinghouses and homes.

Bishops' reports indicate that when buildings and grounds looked good, members enjoyed coming to church more; and where members helped to beautify chapel and grounds, reverence increased and sacrament meeting attendance rose. Lake View Ward bishop August L. Johnson, for example, said beautification produced increased sacrament meeting attendance and reverence. When members "step in the church on a nice soft carpet, instead of on old boards," he said, "they want to whisper instead of shout."<sup>103</sup> A Granger Ward bishop attributed "increased attendance at practically all meetings . . . almost directly to the chapel beautification program."<sup>104</sup> After the Church campaign started, James Kirkham noted in early 1941, "Many reports have come to us which very definitely prove that the cleanliness and beauty, the appearance of the chapel, do have an influence on Church attendance."<sup>105</sup>

Once the centennial ended, institutional interest in church, home, and community beautification faded and programs folded. A June 1948 Presiding Bishopric letter responding to an Idaho ward custodian seeking beautification guidelines explained that "we did have, at one time, a Beautification committee, which directed this program with regard to the homes and public places, but since the centennial we have only worked with the church property" and even for it "we have not been sending out any material for Beautification programs." The letter then acknowledged that "at the present time the Beautification Program is at a standstill."<sup>106</sup> Through subsequent decades, while the Church's policies for meetinghouse construction and maintenance have passed through several phases, the Church has issued an occasional beautification reminder.<sup>107</sup> But no major crusade has ever again materialized.



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NOTES

1. LeGrand Richards, interviewed by William G. Hartley, March 1, 1974, typescript, 17–19, Church Oral History Program, copy in Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. With cleaner, more beautiful chapels and better looking homes, Church leaders probably believed that members would become more refined, more middle-class Americans, which would also improve the image of the Church for proselytizing reasons.
3. Thomas Alexander, "Sylvester Q. Cannon and the Revival of Environmental Consciousness in the Mormon Community," *Environmental History* 3, no. 4 (October 1998): 488–507.
4. The Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce, headed by Cornelia S. Lund and Alice Merrill Horne, launched a vigorous campaign in 1936 to clean the city's air with the intent of having tourism replace industry and manufacturing as the city's primary economic source. Ted Moore, "Democratizing the Air: The Salt Lake Women's Chamber of Commerce and Air Pollution, 1936–1945," *Environmental History* 12, no. 1 (January 2007): 80–106.
5. "Local Organization in Each Town Will Beautify Homes," *Murray Eagle*, April 22, 1937.
6. *Addresses Delivered at a Special Meeting*, July 2, 1937, Church History Library.
7. "Centennial Program For 1947 Planned," *Moab Times Independent*, June 3, 1938.
8. Gov. Herbert B. Maw, "Are We Getting Ready for the 1947 One-Hundredth Anniversary Program?" *Relief Society Magazine*, March 1945, 136.
9. Utah Centennial Commission (1947), Agency History, Item #180, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City.
10. Maw, "Are We Getting Ready."
11. Church Improvement and Beautification Committee, minutes, ca 1920–1949, in Presiding Bishopric Files, Church History Library. The committee is cited hereafter as CIBC.
12. Marvin O. Ashton, "A Thousand Wards Join the Church-Wide Improvement Procession," *Improvement Era*, June 1937, 348–49.

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13. The Church offered a hundred-dollar cash prize to the most improved building in each stake, fifty dollars for second and twenty-five dollars for third, with special awards for seminary buildings and mission homes.
14. M. O. Ashton, "L.D.S. Church Outlines Beautification Program," *Murray Eagle*, July 8, 1937.
15. See Mary R. Jack, "Opportunities for the Child in Beautification," *Deseret News*, Church section, August 7, 1937; and Annie Wells Cannon, "A Lilac Tree for Every Church Yard," *Deseret News*, Church section, September 11, 1937.
16. CIBC, minutes, May 27, 1937.
17. CIBC, minutes, June 9, July 21, and October 11, 1937.
18. CIBC, minutes, October 4, 11, and 18, 1937.
19. Clifton Ward, Oneida Stake, Bishop's Report to the Church Improvement and Beautification Committee, June 28, 1937, in CIBC Files.
20. "Addresses Delivered at a Special Meeting," July 2, 1937, Church History Library.
21. Preston Fourth Ward, Bishop's Report to the Church Improvement and Beautification Committee, 1937, in CIBC Files.
22. Church Improvement and Beautification Committee to the First Presidency, December 16, 1937, in CIBC files.
23. *Our Churches Shall Be Beautiful* (Salt Lake City: Improvement and Beautification Committee of the Church Security Program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1938), 1.
24. The "blossom as the rose" phrase comes from Isaiah 35:1. The March 1938 *Relief Society Magazine* quoted Brigham Young: "Beautify your gardens, your houses, your farms; beautify the city." See also "Beautification Program Started with the Arrival of Pioneers in Utah," *Deseret News*, Church section, March 9, 1940, which carried April 14, 1861, quote by pioneer Church leader Daniel H. Wells, and James M. Kirkham's "Home and Community Beautification Was the Pride of the Pioneers," *Improvement Era*, August 1940, 450.
25. "Clean-Up! Paint-Up! Rake-Up!" *Improvement Era*, March 1938, 179.
26. Mary R. Jack, "Children's Part in Church Beautification," *Deseret News*, Church section, September 24, 1938. The August 1938 issue of *Progress of the Church*

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included before and after pictures of a beautified chapel. In the September issue Idaho Primary boys with shovels were pictured in front of a church.

27. "Beautification at St. George Temple," *Deseret News*, Church section, January 14, 1939.
28. CIBC Minutes, August 18, 1939. James Mercer Kirkham (1873–1957) began full-time work for the Presiding Bishopric after filling a genealogical mission in Europe in 1937. He had been a Lehi businessman and newspaper publisher, Genealogical Society director, *Church News* assistant general manager, and mission president (1934–37). See El Moine W. Kirkham booklet *James Mercer Kirkham: Highlights of His Successful Life* (1961).
29. "Beautification Landscaping Essential," *Church News*, November 9, 1946.
30. A report about the Grandview Ward said the Church paid 50 percent of landscaping costs; see "Successful Beautification Program Follows Construction of Grandview Ward Chapel," *Deseret News*, Church section, November 25, 1939. An undated form with Presiding Bishopric 1940 materials says the Presiding Bishop's office participated in 50 percent of the cost of a renovation program and 50 percent of landscaping expenses except for soil.
31. "Welfare Project Provides Beautiful Chapel," *Progress of the Church*, January 1939.
32. "Beauty Lends Interest to Temple Block," *Deseret News*, Church section, September 23, 1939.
33. "Successful Beautification Program."
34. "Milton Ward Members United Through Successful Building and Beautification Campaign," *Deseret News*, Church section, December 9, 1939.
35. "Churches Improved During Decade through Progressive Architecture, Beautification," *Deseret News*, Church section, December 16, 1939. Members of the beautification committee then were Clyde Edmunds of the General Church Security committee; Oscar A. Kirkham, Jennie B. Knight, Relief Society; Axel A. Madsen, YMMIA; Rose Bennett, YWMIA; Mary Jack, Primary; George A. Holt, Sunday School; Irving T. Nelson, Church landscape architect; and Howard J. McKean, building committee.
36. "County Agent Column: General Clean-Up Plan," *Millard County Chronicle*, February 16, 1939.

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37. "Organizations Pledge to Support Landscaping," 1940, CIBC.
38. "Editorial: Beautification," *Relief Society Magazine*, April 1940, 254–55.
39. "Salt Lakers Join JayCee Drive," *Deseret News*, April 13, 1940, 7.
40. "Beautification Committee Explains Procedure in Improvement Campaigns," *Deseret News*, Church section, January 27, 1940; James Kirkham, "Women's Part in the Church Beautification Program," *Relief Society Magazine*, March 1941, 209–10.
41. "Importance of a Fall Clean-up in Beautification Program," *Relief Society Magazine*, October 1940, 701–2.
42. "Beautification Program Activities," *Progress of the Church*, January 1940.
43. Robert C. Marchant, "Flowers in Church Beautification," *Deseret News*, Church section, January 20, 1940.
44. Walter Kersiek, "Students Figure in Beautification Program at Altamont Seminary," *Deseret News*, Church section, February 24, 1940; see also clipping from *Week Day Religious Education*, CIBC.
45. Bishop Walter Kersiek to Irving Nelson, Presiding Bishop's Office, September 19, 1940, CIBC.
46. "Church Welfare Project Improves Manti Temple Grounds," *Deseret News*, Church section, June 29, 1940.
47. "Now Is the Time to Beautify," *Progress of the Church*, April 1940.
48. Apostle Stephen L. Richards, conference address, April 7, 1940, "The Beautification Plan: A Tribute to the Pioneers," *Deseret News*, Church section, April 27, 1940.
49. "A Division of Responsibility for Beautification Work," *Progress of the Church*, May 1940.
50. "Special Meeting for All Bishopricks October 3," *Improvement Era*, October 1940, 616, and "Righteous Living Keynote of October Conference," *Improvement Era*, November 1940, 670.
51. "Zion Must Be Beautiful," *Progress of the Church*, October 1940.
52. "Novel Beautification Aid in Riverside," *Improvement Era*, October 1940, 603.
53. "Unusual Beautification Project," *Deseret News*, Church section, November 16, 1940.

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54. "Union Ward Workson Beautification," *Deseret News*, Church section, December 14, 1940; "Wayne Stake Beautification," *Deseret News*, Church section, December 21, 1940; the report of nine tons of paint is in "Commence Work on Beautification Church Edifaces," *Millard County Chronicle*, April 3, 1941.
55. "Beautification Will Not Increase Taxes," and "Could This Have Been Your Chapel?" *Progress of the Church*, November 1940.
56. James M. Kirkham, "Clean-Up Fix-Up Paint-Up and Plant for the Centennial," *Deseret News*, Church section, March 15, 1941.
57. CIBC. Further research might show if the home awards program continued after 1944.
58. "Commence Work on Beautification of Church Edifices," *Millard County Chronicle*, April 3, 1941.
59. Irvin Warnock, Sevier Stake President, to the Presiding Bishopric, August 31, 1941, CIBC.
60. "New Two-Fold Beautification Program Will Be Church-Wide," *Church News*, January 5, 1946.
61. "Beautification Program as an Aid to Morale," *Progress of the Church*, February 1942; "Clean-Up To Receive Most Stress: Beautification of Homes, Churches to Continue," *Deseret News*, Church section, March 28, 1942. In the May 1942 *Relief Society Magazine*, James Kirkham named four "Weapons Women May Use" to help secure victory for the democracies: promoting good health, growing victory gardens, cleaning homes and surroundings, and salvaging materials needed by the war effort.
62. "Clean-Up Drive Made by S. L. Ward," *Deseret News*, May 2, 1942.
63. Centennial Commission Reports, Utah State Archives.
64. Centennial Commission, minutes, June 5, 1942, in Centennial Commission (1947) Minutes, 1939-48, Utah State Archives.
65. "Bishops Should Urge Cooperation in Government Salvage Drive," *Progress of the Church*, January 1943.
66. "Clean-up and Conservation Program for 1943," *Progress of the Church*, March 1943. These instructions were repeated in "Church Clean-up Drive: Suggestions Given for Spring Campaign," *Church News*, Church section, April 3, 1943. After

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August 1943, the *Progress of the Church* ceased publication, replaced by an expanded Church section of the *Deseret News* (later called *Church News*).

67. James M. Kirkham, "Church Stresses Beautifying Homes, Chapels," *Church News*, May 27, 1944.
68. Maw, "Are We Getting Ready."
69. Maw, "Are We Getting Ready."
70. Mayor Earl J. Glade, "He's Coming Home, Let's Spruce Up!" *Relief Society Magazine*, May 1945, 282–83.
71. Randall L. Jones, "The Vacant Lot—Something Must Be Done about It," *Relief Society Magazine*, August 1945, 465–67.
72. Marvin O. Ashton, "Fix It or Burn It," *Improvement Era*, August 1945, 446–47.
73. As explained in David O. McKay, "The Utah Centennial," Sunday morning session of conference, *Church News*, April 13, 1946.
74. "Beautification Urged by Leaders," *Church News*, March 9, 1949.
75. "Communities Requested to Name Committees for Beautification Program," *Murray Eagle*, February 7, 1946.
76. Final Report of the Utah Centennial Committee for Beautification, 1947, Centennial Commission (1947) Reports, Utah State Archives, 55.
77. "Centennial Gets Green Light," *Murray Eagle*, March 21, 1946.
78. "Statewide Cleanup Pushed," *Davis County Clipper*, April 12, 1946.
79. Department on Beautification Final Report, 1947, in Centennial Commission 1947 Reports, Utah State Archives, 57.
80. Department on Beautification Final Report.
81. Department on Beautification Final Report. The planners were Carl Feiss of Denver and L. Deming Tipton of San Francisco. Feiss criticized the highway from Ogden to Salt Lake City for a lack of planning that made it a "hodgepodge of signs and uncontrolled building which has wrecked the efficiency of the road and spoiled the beautiful scenery of the mountains and the valleys." See an account of the meeting in "Utahns Vow Support to Beautification," *Deseret News*, November 18, 1946.
82. "Beaver City Cleans Up For Centennial," *Murray Eagle*, December 19, 1946.

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83. "Hinckley Wins State Awards for Clean-Up," *Millard County Chronicle*, August 28, 1947.
84. "New Two-Fold Beautification Program."
85. "On Beautifying Our Surroundings," *Church News*, February 23, 1946.
86. "Church Program for Improvement and Beautification," *Church News*, March 16, 1946.
87. "Church Program for Improvement and Beautification" and "Suggestions on Beautification Made from Presiding Bishop's Office," *Church News*, March 30, 1946.
88. McKay, "The Utah Centennial."
89. McKay, "The Utah Centennial." In line with President McKay's suggestion, Salt Lake City's police chief asked the city council to revoke the licensing of card playing tables and marble games in the city's taverns. The city had granted ninety-one licenses for card tables to fifteen establishments, earning \$3,600 in fees. The police chief said revocations would help control gambling during the Centennial. The city council concurred with his request. See "Police Chief Opens Drive on Gambling, Marble Games, Card Tables to Be Cleared Out," *Deseret News*, August 8, 1946, 1.
90. "Statewide Cleanup Rushed," *Davis County Clipper*, April 12, 1946.
91. "Presiding Bishopric Endorse 'Clean-up' for Centennial," *Church News*, April 27, 1946.
92. "Beautification Landscaping Essential," *Church News*, November 9, 1946.
93. Editorial, "Will 'Dress Up' Utah," *Murray Eagle*, December 6, 1945.
94. J. B. Carlos, comp. and ed., Utah Centennial Commission Beautification Department, *Working Manual*, Utah Centennial Commission, 1946, CHL, 31-50.
95. "Centennial Clean-up Campaign For Next Week Mapped; All Citizens Urged to Join the Drive," *Moab Times Independent*, February 20, 1947.
96. "Communities Join Forces to Clean up and Beautify," *Millard County Chronicle*, April 17, 1947.
97. In 1949, the Presiding Bishopric urged ward bishops and stake building supervisors, using ward organizations, to devote a "day or two" to repair, clean, paint, and plant but not do major landscaping or painting projects; "Beautification Urged by

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- Leaders,” *Church News*, March 9, 1949; “Planting Done at Hinckley Schools” and “Sutherland Tells of Beautification,” *Millard County Chronicle*, April 24, 1947.
98. General Report 1947 Utah Centennial Commission, 1948, Utah State Archives. The summary of Centennial events given here is drawn from weekly listings of the upcoming Centennial events posted in local newspapers in June, July, and August.
99. “Exposition Attendance High,” *Davis County Clipper*, September 19, 1947.
100. “Centennial Pageant Ends, Is Seen by 130,000 in 25 Nights,” *Deseret News*, June 7, 1947.
101. “Promised Valley Success,” *Tooele County Chronicle*, August 22, 1947.
102. “Monument Attracts Visitors,” *Davis County Clipper*, August 15, 1947.
103. “Lake View Ward Writes Page of Success in History of Church Beautification Program,” *Deseret News*, Church section, November 18, 1939, 5.
104. “Chapel Beautification Increases Attendance,” *Deseret News*, Church section, October 21, 1939.
105. James M. Kirkham, “The Value of Appearances,” *Improvement Era*, February 1941, 82, 120–21.
106. Presiding Bishopric to Ernest Blaser, Rexburg, Idaho, June 14, 1948, CIBC.
107. During the 1970s, President Spencer W. Kimball, in several major addresses, urged members to beautify church buildings, homes, and communities. See *Ensign*, May 1975, 4–5; November 1975, 4–6; May 1976, 124–25; November 1977, 4; and November 1979, 4.