

For Release:

Contact: Mike Hooper
Communications Manager
Harold B. Lee Library
Brigham Young University
Mike_hooper@byu.edu
(801) 422-6687

New Special Collections Exhibition in Lee Library

The L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History present their new exhibition, "To Tell the Tale: Preserving the Lives of Mormon Women."

The exhibition will be located in the Special Collections gallery on the first level of the Harold B. Lee Library from January 21 through June 1, 2004.

For almost two centuries LDS women around the world have recorded their life's events in diaries, letters, poetry, oral histories, photographs and other forms. BYU's Special Collections has preserved materials and the Smith Institute's Women's History Initiative has laid scholarly historical groundwork for a sample of displayed artifacts.

"To Tell the Tale" highlights how women have preserved their experiences as sisters, mothers, Relief Society members, missionaries, artists, educators, politicians and writers – at home, in the community and abroad. The exhibition's documents and artifacts provide insight into the faith, struggles, triumphs and daily living of these LDS women.

"This exhibit represents the vast resources available to better understand our past, our LDS community and ourselves, and encourages all women to preserve their lives for future generations," says Smith Institute research historian and co-curator, Jennifer Reeder.

One of the preserved artifacts is a diary from Inez Knight, among the first single sister missionaries in the Church. During her mission in England in 1898 she recounts urging the other missionaries to discontinue referring to their weekly formal gatherings as "priesthood meetings" and use a more non-gendered name.

Elaine Cannon's old typewriter is also included in the exhibition. The former syndicated columnist for the *Deseret News* and Young Women's General President died in 2003. Some of her books and newspaper articles will be displayed.

The exhibition opens to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Eliza R. Snow's birthday, a central figure in 19th century Mormonism and influential women's leader in the Church. One of Snow's many accomplishments was recording the minutes during the original Relief Society meetings in Nauvoo in 1842.

Exhibition lecturer, Carol Cornwall Madsen, says, "Women have long been recognized as preservers, determined to find ways to hold on to the past and link it to the present and future." These many sources of preserved thoughts and ideas have generated scholarly studies of LDS women's roles and responsibilities in recent decades, and have inspired Mormon leaders, such as President Spencer W. Kimball, to remark, "Someday, when the whole story of this and previous dispensations is told, it will be filled with courageous stories of our women, of their wisdom and their devotion, their courage."

The Lee Library invites everyone – students, faculty and the public – to visit the exhibit.

