

Mesquite and Sage: Spencer W. Kimball's Early Years

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For many of us the public image of President Spencer W. Kimball remains a fond memory: his diminutive five-foot six-inch form standing behind the massive Tabernacle podium; his cancer-stricken, gravely voice, struggling to be heard; his earnestness; his unquestioned gentleness and well-wishing. We also remember his occasional reveries. During these times, the cadence of his delivery might perceptibly change and his features soften. Usually, he would begin with a simple "I remember." What followed would be a memory of youth, when young Spencer was growing up in Thatcher, a turn-of-the-century, rural Mormon village situated in the Gila River valley in southeastern Arizona.

Such moments were not infrequent. During his forty-two-year ministry, Spencer W. Kimball spoke of his beginnings in many of his talks and sometimes in letters or published articles. When taken together, his statements provide something of an autobiography, a task that the indefatigable diarist never quite managed. While they do not provide a full and probing view of his youth, they give a glimpse into his early life and times. They also give us some insights into his preaching. While he was sometimes content simply to tell of a shaping event or describe a youthful scene, his sermons should "get people to doing things," and as a result his reminiscences were often designed, if only implicitly, to "deliver a message and teach a lesson."¹ But the warm and sober character of his memories also owed a great deal to President Kimball's own personality and to his early, cradling Mormon village. Here was a classic case of a dutiful son relishing and reflecting the values of his upbringing. He was, after all, very much a product of Thatcher, that frontier, firm-valued Mormon village planted amidst the desert lands of Arizona.

"Now and then, when the moment is right, some particular scent—perhaps only the green grass, or the smell of sage brought from a distance by a breeze—will take me back to the days of my youth in Arizona," President Kimball recalled in life's twilight.

There were evenings those many years ago, at about sunset, when I would walk in with the cows. Stopping by a tired old fence post, I would sometimes just stand silently in the mellow light and the fragrance of sunflowers and ask myself, "If you were going to create a world, what would it be like?" Now with a little thought the answer seems so natural: "Just like this one."²

Arizona was “earth and heaven to me.”³ Of course he had not forgotten how demanding its soil was. The land was “arid” and “dry”; but, withal, it his beloved homeland, filled with memories of “happy days.”⁴

With perhaps one exception, his earliest recollections began there. He vaguely recalled the trauma of vacating in 1898 the family’s small red brick home on Salt Lake City’s Fourth North and Third West streets.⁵ It was a drizzly April day, but the sky was not the only source of precipitation. “It was raining tears—great welling tears, that morning when my Pa and Ma and their six children left the sophisticated urban community of Salt Lake City for the great new land of the south.”⁶ The First Presidency had called Andrew Kimball, Spencer’s father, to preside over the St. Joseph stake, and dutifully the Kimball family started the long journey at the Denver and Rio Grande depot. It was a tree-day trip across the Rockies to Pueblo, Colorado, then south to Albuquerque and Deming, New Mexico, and finally west again to Thatcher. Three-year-old Spencer faintly remembered the excitement of their arrival. It seemed that the entire town had turned out to view its new stake president. To highlight their esteem, many Saints carried flowers in their hands. “Roses,” President Kimball later recalled, were in “great abundance.”⁷

Less than twenty years old, Thatcher still bore a frontier aspect. It was one of a string of Mormon communities founded along the banks of the Gila River during the 1880s, and upon the Kimball family’s arrival near the turn of the century, the settlement maintained its religious homogeneity.⁸ Named in honor of LDS Apostle Moses Thatcher, it was “almost entirely” Mormon.⁹ The widely diffused LDS ward had about a thousand members, or about 160 families, but the village proper had a population of less than 650.¹⁰ There were several small stores scattered throughout the village, wherever, as one local citizen remembered, “the owner decided was convenient.” If one emporium were closed, a shopper might follow Thatcher’s “footpaths through tangled mesquite, Johnson grass, tall weeds and corn to the other store-keeper’s house.” In addition to its several mercantile houses, the town had “a blacksmith shop, flour mill, saloon, and a school house.”¹¹

Two community buildings loomed large in Spencer’s later memories. The first was Robinson Hall. “I can remember going to the old Robinson Hall in Thatcher, Arizona, almost as early as I could walk,” he reminisced.

It was two blocks from our home, and we could walk to and from it, and we crossed the Union Canal time and again. This big Robinson Hall was a brick building of rectangular shape, and an all-purpose building for the community dances, for the Sunday School and Primary, for all /church services, for the funerals, for celebrations, and for everything that went on in our little rural town.¹²

There was also the multipurpose Allred Hall, located two blocks north of Robinson Hall on Main Street. This frame structure was also used for church meetings such as Sunday School and Primary. In addition it housed the Gila Academy, the meetings of the local Polysophical Society, and various community gatherings. It was here that Spencer was confirmed a member of the Church.¹³

No doubt Andrew Kimball and his "citified" family at first found their new Arizona homeland spare and taxing. During their first several months in Thatcher, the eight Kimballs rented a single-room house. Later they exchanged these lodgings for a small three-room adobe home whose roof often failed during an Arizona downpour. Outside their new residence, the family pitched a white tent (ironically christened "The White House") to provide expanded living space. Spencer recalled many times sleeping in the auxiliary quarters, though once the frightened youngster was awakened by the tent's collapse in a windstorm.

In order to sustain themselves, the family secured shortly after their arrival a ten-acre plot situated on the outskirts of the community. The land was untamed desert covered with mesquite bushes and chaparral. "How to get rid of them, how to clear the land—that was the question." Fortunately the seasoned settlers understand the newcomers' difficulty.

The first thing we knew, the brethren from Central Ward had come those several miles with their picks and shovels, their axes, and they began to help us clear our ten acres. They came from Layton Ward, and then they came from Pima Ward. They came before we knew it, almost. With the help of my father, who was a very excellent worker, and two sons who were older than I was, we soon had the place ready to plant.¹⁴

Eventually the family built and occupied yet another home on the southern edge of the village. From their new homesite, the family could view an expanse of farmland to the south and east: the family garden was positioned to the west. The little acreage had a typical configuration. Immediately behind the house, there was a well and a big wooden tank that stored water. A tool building was located there, too. Farther back, retreating successively to the south, were the woodpile, pigpens, corrals, haystacks, and the granary.¹⁵ A row of nearly planted cottonwoods provided shade, wood, and a shielding border from the rest of the community.¹⁶ The site became home:

It was the same red brick house through the days of security and the days of desolation, the same shelf-filled pantry, the same wood stove and water tank, the same parlor with its rag carpet and the same old clock ticking away the hours and days and years, but stability and sureness and peace were there, for Mother was there, and security was there, and the house breathed belongingness.¹⁷

Spencer's nostalgic memories provide no evidence that the home housed human foible and tension. The nearest thing to a breach of the Mormons' Word of Wisdom health code lay in his mother's "crust coffee" brew, which amounted to nothing more grave than burned bread scrapings added to a mixture of hot water and cream.¹⁸ The Kimballs framed and hung throughout their house inspirational mottoes, which might be either painted or embroidered.¹⁹ Such Victorian uplift was not simply cant. The family frequently had evening worship devotions,²⁰ eschewed negative comment toward LDS General Authorities, and met each morning and evening for prayer.

We always had a big table for the breakfast meal because we had thirteen in our family, eleven children. They weren't all there at the same time, but we generally had a large group. At the table the chairs would all be placed with their backs to the table, and then we would all kneel down around and have our family prayer. And our parents always let us participate by taking turns so that we all knew how to pray.²¹

(While eleven children were born to Olive and Andrew, there were probably never more than nine children in the home at one time. One child was left buried in Salt Lake City, and the tenth died before the eleventh was born.)

The family hearth bespoke basic values. Living was parsimonious and communal, to be secured by godly labor. "There was little money and seldom enough to go around," Spencer recollected.

Going without and making do was our way of life. We learned to share: we shared the work: we shared joys and sorrows; we shared our food and our means. We had genuine concern for one another. Our daily prayers reminded us how dependent we are upon the Lord. We prayed and worked continually for our daily bread.²²

These rural, frontier values were a bequest of Spencer' devout parents, both of whom were a single generation removed from Mormonism's founding era. Olive was the daughter of Salt Lake City's Thirteenth Ward bishop, Edwin D. Woolley, while Andrew maintained the tradition of church service begun by his father, Heber C. Kimball, President Brigham Young's counselor. Together, the two exerted enormous influence on their son, who in later years spoke of them in glowing terms. His red-haired mother was a "wonderful" and "beautiful, little woman."²³ Spencer sensed that her domestic energy and ability helped make "ends meet," as her well-filled larder attested.²⁴ Musically gifted, she played the organ, sang for church gatherings,²⁵ and indelibly left her mark on the boy by sometimes humming such Church hymns as "Improve the Shining Moments" while she worked in the house.²⁶ Clearly, hers was a supportive and nurturing home. "From my infancy, every time I entered the house, I called, 'Mama,' over and over until I found her," Spencer recalled. "Totally satisfied in the security her presence afforded, I ran again to play. Just to know she was there! That was all."²⁷

Olive Kimball served as a counselor and later as president of the Thatcher Relief Society. Her duties often took her outside her home. She attended the usual array of early twentieth-century Relief Society meetings, sewed clothes for ailing neighbors, and consoled friends whose children had been taken in death.²⁸ “That’s the kind of home I was born in,” Spencer related, “one conducted by a woman who breathed service in all her actions.”²⁹

He etched his father in equally favorable terms, calling him “a handsome person; tall, with dark piercing eyes and a commanding appearance.” He carried a “radiant smile” that warmed those around him.³⁰ Spencer remembered him as fastidious, insisting that the Kimball home and yard must be clean and neat. “It just had to be that way.”³¹ His father also believed firmly in the virtues of resolution and independence. “He didn’t just tell others to be self-reliant,” Spencer remembered, “we were taught to exemplify it as a family. We raised almost all of our own food. He always wanted a garden—he wanted a garden to eat from and a garden to smell.”³²

Andrew Kimball presided over the St. Joseph stake for more than twenty-six years and, in the role of stake president, was Thatcher’s leading citizen. Spencer thought his father’s service exemplary.

I believe that father so ministered to his people that he fulfilled a blessing given him by President Joseph F. Smith, who promised that the people of the Gila Valley would “seek unto him as children to a parent.” Although I am sure I did not then fully appreciate his example, the standard he set was one worthy of any stake president.³³

Young Spencer was especially struck by his father’s charity and diligence.

There was also an informal side to Andrew Kimball. Previous to his Arizona appointment, he had served as missionary and later as president of the LDS Indian Territory Mission in Oklahoma. In the process, he had acquired the nick name among his close friends of “Cherokee Kimball.” He had also accrued a considerable collection of Indian souvenirs, pictures, and stories. “My first recollection was when we children used to gather around our father and implore him to sing us Indian songs and tell us Indian stories.”³⁴

Spencer Kimball’s universe was filled by myriad other people and events that shaped the perceptions of the sober-minded youth. Life’s lessons seemed everywhere present. There was, for instance, the neighbor who moved about the town for several days on crutches. “He was evasive when asked the cause of his misfortune,” Spencer reported, “but an eye witness told me, as he chuckled: ‘John stubbed his toe on a chair in the night and in his quick, fierce anger, he kicked the chair and broke his toe.’”³⁵

Nature was often a tutor. Little Spencer once noticed a hatching chick.

I picked up the cracked egg and thought I would help the little one. It must be very difficult for a tiny, weak little bird to work its own way out into the world. Perhaps it needed help. So I carefully picked off the shell, piece by

piece and soon there lay in my hand a little chick, but its struggles ceased and it died in my hand.

The boy sensed he had learned something valuable.

Why should . . . [the chick] die when the others which had no help were moving about with increased strength? Then I came to realize that I had not helped but had harmed the little one by pushing nature. I came to realize that the Lord knew what he was doing when he worked out his program for the birds and fish and animals and men.³⁶

The discovery of a town kleptomaniac was another incident that left an impression. For some time buggy whips, buggy robes, and an assortment of other articles had strangely disappeared. At last they were found cached beneath the floorboards of a neighbor's porch, which eventually elicited a young man's confession. "I remember how shocked we fellows were—how we pitied him because he had developed this terrible weakness."³⁷

The itinerant patent medicine salesman who periodically visited the village with his one-house enclosed hack embodied a different and perhaps less malevolent kind of human weakness. "He generally had special bottles of medicine, maybe a dollar a bottle, which would cure everything: constipation, liver disorders, headache, backache, stomach ulcers, appendicitis, ingrown toenails, summer complaints, heart failure, and all the other things."³⁸ Spencer failed to indicate if the Kimballs were paying customers.

The boy quickly learned that the annual Fourth of July horse races brought out the unseemly in some of his neighbors, "I noted that many of them had cigarettes in their lips and bottles in their pockets and some were ugly drunk . . . with bleary eyes and coarse talk and cursing." As the ponies were matched and sometimes even after the races began, someone might shout, " 'Fight! Fight! Fight!' " Soon "all the men and boys would gravitate to the fight area which was attended with blows and blood and curses and hatred." Spencer was nauseated by the repeated spectacle. "I made up my mind that I would drink the pink lemonade on the Fourth of July and watch the horses run, [but] that I never would drink liquor or swear or curse as did many of these fellows of this little town."³⁹

He was equally put off by the "great deal of drinking" that sometimes occurred at Church dances. In later years, he told the story, which may have been lifted from village lore, of a drunken young man who asked a popular girl to dance.

"No sir, I don't know you," she declined.

"Go to Hell then," was his reply.

"She told her three big brothers who were there that night," Spencer recounted, "and so they had called him outside and took off their coats and rolled up their sleeves and said, 'Now you apologize to that girl!'"

"He came back to her and said, 'I came back to tell you you don't have to go where I told you to; I have made other arrangements with your brothers.'"⁴⁰

The excitement and spectacle of the burning of Robinson Hall must have been one of the most dramatic memories of his youth. "We had no fire department," he recalled, "but all men and their sons rushed across the town at the earliest call of 'fire.'" Soon the fire fighters were organized into a frantically energized line, scooping buckets of water from the Union Canal and passing them quickly to the fire several city blocks away. "Many buckets of water were thrown on the fire, but the fire was gaining and finally the walls stood out as blackened sentinels and we returned to our homes saddened and defeated."⁴¹ Even in defeat, the incident taught a lesson about togetherness in shared turmoil.

The citizens of Thatcher learned firsthand of the fragility of their environment and the exploitative nature of some "special interests." The mines upriver in Clifton and Morenci for a period dumped their tailings in the San Francisco River, a tributary to the Gila. "The hard clay came in our irrigation water . . . and coated our farmlands, our productive acres, with a hard layer . . . almost like cement and crops could not push their blades out through it." Spencer and his family were not taken in by the laissez-faire slogans of the mine owners. "Freedom for whom?" he asked in disgust.⁴² Eventually the controversy was settled favorably to the settlers by litigation.

The Arizona setting was harsh enough without such systematic and intentional despoliation. Drinking water had to be raised from wells that might descend fifty feet into the ground. As one empty bucket went down, another, filled by the circular motion of a long rope, ascended. Spencer thought the water "cool and pleasant," but in fact it was potentially dangerous. The wells were left open and therefore were easily susceptible to falling animals and other contamination. Seepage from nearby corrals and latrines posed a further danger. Moreover, the settlers unknowingly shared their germs. On a hot day, customers visiting one of Thatcher's retail stories could step to the rear and drink water from a universally used dipper, a practice that was even more common during community-wide celebrations such as the Fourth of July. The cost of such unsanitary practices was terrifyingly high. "I remember when I was little," President Kimball later noted, "that there were many funerals."⁴³

Unhealthy water was not the only bane. During the summer, flies were "so thick you could hardly see out of the screen door in the evening." Typhoid fever was particularly rampant. Local medical services were woefully inadequate to meet these challenges. "There were no hospitals, no nurses, and no trained people except the country doctor who had more than he could ever do."⁴⁴ With little other recourse, settlers learned when an epidemic struck to flee with their ill children to the mountains around

Thatcher. There, “there were no flies, no sour milk, no heat and many babies’ lives were saved.”⁴⁵ Gradually, as Spencer assumed manhood, conditions greatly improved. “From gunnysack-covered outdoor coolers on which water was poured frequently to iceboxes where a dime’s or quarter’s worth of ice would keep sweet the milk and some of the food. . . . Later came a windmill to pump the water into a closed tank from a closed well. . . . Then glory be, a public water program piped from a protected spring or deep well right into our home, and lifesaving trips to the mountain were more rare, burials farther separated, sick beds reduced and pollution stopped.”⁴⁶

At times the settlers must have thought the elements unrelenting and without scruple. Subjected to southern Arizona’s blistering heat, crops might fail in two weeks without water. And there never seemed enough water. “Around the table, we talked of water, irrigation, crops, floods, hot, dry weeks, and cloudless skies,” Spencer recalled. “We used to look for clouds somewhat as did Elijah and his people after the three-year drought. . . . We learned to pray for rain—we always prayed for rain.”⁴⁷ But the heavens were capricious. The late summer rains were often cloudbursts that filled the dry washes and roared against the settlers’ precarious brush and rock dams sundering them, and leaving the canals empty and the land dry. “It seemed that nearly every time there was a storm, instead of getting the benefit of the storm, we got drier country because the dam was broken.”⁴⁸

But the men and women of the community were not passive in their extremity. After the collapse of the diversion system, the cry would be raised: “Everybody to the upper part of the valley to rebuild the dam!” The water had to be captured before it roared past them to the sea. While Spencer himself was too young to join the older boys and men, the able-bodied men of the village rushed to the headwaters, where they worked in the flood, “hauling brush and trees, rocks and dirt.” “Horses floundered and were sometimes drowned and men had narrow escapes.” In later years, the community learned to build more substantial “sausage dams,” with wire mesh enclosures to hold the rocks in place. Still later, they made concrete dams complete with spillover aprons that prevented washouts.⁴⁹

Work was as inherent a part of everyday life as the natural movement of the sun overhead. At the age of five or six, Spencer was deputized to gather eggs shortly before sundown. “It was no small job for a boy to find the hidden nests of eggs,” he reminisced. Lugging his “rather large bucket,” he scoured the premises each evening. Eggs might be found in the barn, the granary, the buggy shed, woodpile, or even hidden among the uncut shoots of grass.⁵⁰ While still a youngster, he was also assigned to work the family “lizard.” This homemade contraption was fashioned from a Y-shaped tree limb and, when hitched to the mare, was used to ferry a barrel of water. Spencer’s job was to harness the horse to the lizard and walk her to the “big

ditch”—the Union Canal which ran a block below the Kimball home. Using a bucket he would scoop water from the canal and pour it into the barrel. Then he would take his precious bounty back home to water the roses and violets and small shrubs. The task helped give him a reverence for the life-giving fluid. “Water was like liquid gold,” he came to believe, “so reservoirs became the warp and woof of the fabric of my life.”⁵¹

There were odd jobs around town, too. When the family made an improvised icebox to store its perishables, Spencer was given the ongoing assignment to transport a dime’s or quarter’s worth of ice from the creamery home in his red wagon. He was also frequently dispatched to the Claridge and Hunt store to fetch mail or buy coal oil. The latter he carried in a gallon can with a potato jammed on the spout to prevent spillage. In order to hasten his errands, at times he took a shortcut down through an excavation that was destined to house the new church building. But when weeds began to grow large and thick and he saw several skunks lurking about, he learned to bypass the spot entirely. “I had no interest in skunks as pets or as companions,” he recalled.⁵²

In addition to fueling the family’s coal oil lamps, Spencer also had the responsibility, along with his sisters, of cleaning soot from the lamp chimneys with newspapers and cleaning, cutting, and trimming the wicks. “Then we would fill the lamps with the new oil, and when darkness came and the chores were done and the supper was out of the way, we gathered around the table to get our lessons. The lamps were lighted, [and] we had sufficient light for every use.”⁵³

As he grew older, there were more arduous tasks. He was commissioned to slop the hogs, which at one time numbered as many as fifty, “some big, some little, all sizes.” The animals repeatedly tried the boy’s patience. “They kept getting out of the pen,” he remembered. They “always knew where the holes were in the fence.” Worse, the hogs often breached community decorum and social position by wandering into the bishop’s yard. Spencer had to retrieve them, apologize, and then find and fix the fence holes. In a few days the ritual would begin anew.⁵⁴

The growing boy also served as the family drover, herding the cows to and from the pasture each day. “It was quite a job, but I found it interesting to drive those cows down this long lane. When we would walk in the soft dirt the cool dust would work up through my toes and I always enjoyed that sensation.” But there were perils to the task. Occasionally the animals fed too heartily on the alfalfa and became bloated, which caused Spencer’s two older brothers to accuse him of malfeasance. To save the cows, a knife was stuck through the stomach wall to relieve pressure. The resulting odor, both during the operation and in the days that followed, was “very bad.” “We had all these and many more experiences all of which were very normal to a farm.”⁵⁵

He took part in the family's haying, assuming ever-larger tasks as he grew. First his father secured for him a bantam pitchfork, probably more to introduce him to the ritual of haying than as a device for actual production.⁵⁶ Next he helped sharpen the mowing machine's numerous knives. While his older brothers held the blades to the grindstone, Spencer stood and turned the wheel. Often he worked until his back and legs ached and his hands were blistered. "I was glad when I was older and could sit on the seat and hold the knives against the stone while someone else turned the stone."⁵⁷ He also hitched the horses to the machine and occasionally helped "drop" the hay as others lifted it onto the wagon.

He was not above using religious compliance to avoid labor. Once he and his brothers harvested hay on the day scheduled for Primary.

When it got about 2 o'clock and the bell rang way off in the country nearly a mile or two miles away, I said to the boys, "I have got to go to Primary." They said. "You aren't going to any Primary today." I knew their thoughts were very definite so I watched my opportunity and slipped down off the wagon . . . and was across the field and half way to the Primary before they knew I was gone.⁵⁸

Spencer had "much to do" which an orchard planted on their ten-acre tract. For one thing, he aided in the spacing and planting if the seedlings. "I found that . . . I could sight those trees so that they were in total and perfect alignment. I was proud of the praise that I got from my father for being able to do that."⁵⁹ As the trees matured, he found the peaches and other fruit to be "large and luscious," but also requiring "much hard work for little boys."⁶⁰ The orchard provided an opportunity for Spencer to show his pluck. Once while they were irrigating the orchard, Andrew Kimball jokingly asked his eager and sober-minded son to dam the stream with manure. Not understanding his father's intended humor, or for that matter the difficulty of the task, Spencer immediately tried to comply.

I began to vigorously shovel the manure to dam off the water but soon found that the pulverized manure was all floating down through the orchard, which is, of course, exactly what my father wanted to happen. Soon I saw that I could never get a dam across the flood with just the pulverized manure, so I acted upon the thought to drive down a few pegs across the stream and get some boards to hold the manure and hold back the flow. I had no trouble then completing a dam across the stream.⁶¹

There were moments of crisis. Once the boy returned from school to find one of the horses tangled in the wire fence. Its shoulder was badly torn; a six-inch piece of flesh and hide hung exposed from the wound.

I shall never forget that day. . . . What could I do? There was no veterinary in the town, my father was away, the neighbor men were at work, and perhaps none of the boys in the area could do any better than I could do and time was

of the essence. . . . With the help of my sister. . . . I washed the wound with hot soapy water, spread over the gash some of the common liniment we always had for our animals and with a large needle through his sensitive flesh and skin, he jumped back and struck at me with his front feet and bit me on the arm. . . . I [then] put a noose on his lower lip with a stick in it and twisted his lip so that his attention was turned to his lip agony while I could sew up the gash and get the wound fixed. . . . In and out, I pushed the needle through the quivering flesh until the edges of the would were tied tight together.

The wound healed and the horse lived, though Spencer wondered if the animal saw him as his tormentor rather than his savior.⁶²

Rural life in Thatcher required care and parsimony. The boy labored tirelessly straightening old nails and fence staples, uncoiling used wire, and recycling old posts. "Nothing was wasted or thrown away."⁶³

We milked the cows and drank and sold the milk. We ate the clabber, churned the cream and fed to our pigs the sour milk and the clabber left over. The horses and cows and pigs accumulated what seemed to me an exorbitant amount of drippings. This was not wasted. With a large square scraper and a well-trained team, I cleaned corrals and piled up the manure which seasoned and finally we scraped it out into the orchard where it was spread near the roots of the orchard trees.⁶⁴

Spencer could not always understand his father's standards. Andrew required that the surrey be washed. "Why wash the buggy?" the boy inquired. "It'll just get dirty and dusty again after the first mile or two." But the youngster's questions had on effect. And when the surrey was repainted, there could be no smudges or crooked lines. At his father's urging, he whitewashed the fence and covered the rose trellis with a coat of green paint. He also painted the barn, the granary, and the harness shed. "He insisted that everything be neat and clean and in good repair around the house and around the farm."⁶⁵

There is evidence that during his boyhood Spencer did not entirely relish his arduous routines. Many years later he wondered, perhaps with intended irony, whether his older brothers hadn't taken the easy jobs, leaving the more difficult ones to their younger sibling.⁶⁶ Still, as an adult he had no regrets. I "worked hard and I am very proud of it," he declared. "It made me strong."⁶⁷ And upon reaching maturity, he understood the wisdom of even his father's rigor.

Little did I know as a boy that daily chores in the garden, feeding the cattle, carrying the water, chopping the wood, mending fences, and all the labor of a small farm was an important part of sending down roots, before being called on to send out branches. I'm so grateful that my parents understood the relationship between roots and branches.⁶⁸

There were other perspectives on the value of this labor. "We knew we were taming the Arizona desert," he later acknowledged, "But had I been

wiser then, I would have realized that we were taming ourselves, too. Honest toil in subduing sagebrush, taming deserts, channeling rivers, helps to take the wildness out of man's environment but also out of him.”⁶⁹

Growing up in Thatcher was not all work. Between jobs during the hot summer afternoons, the boys frequently took a “dip” in a nearby swimming hole in the canal.⁷⁰ With few other available community attractions, Spencer and his young friends found the daily arrival of the railroad train exciting. As they waited for the engine to come “around the bend,” the boys balanced themselves on the tracks, seeing how far they might walk before losing their equilibrium. Sometimes the sport was expanded to include fence beams.⁷¹ The daily train gained added allure from traveling Indians, who in exchange for allowing the railroad company transit across their reservation, rode *carte blanche* on the train’s flatcars and boxcars. “Whole families were there,” Spencer recalled,

the women with their long, full, bright colored calico skirts, their long hair and their sack waists very full . . . [draping] over their hips and full enough that they could project their infants up under the sack for the feeding. The men, too, were interesting. They generally wore their hair long, near their shoulders, and . . . [had] bright colored bands around their foreheads and no hats.⁷²

Like other boys in the village, Spencer learned to make his own whistles, flippers, balls, and slings. Slings were crafted from an elliptical, two-inch piece of leather to which a long thong was attached on each end. Spencer learned to swing the device around his head with great momentum. When the desired speed was reached, he would turn loose one of the thongs and the rock which had been lodged in the leather pouch would sail to its destination. “I was a pretty good shot,” he bragged. “I could hit a post at fifty yards’ distance or . . . hit the trunk of a tree.”⁷³

There was time for team sports. When the boys began to play baseball, they pooled resources and purchased a bat, ball, and a catcher’s mitt. Other paraphernalia were sparse, with the players using rocks for base markers.⁷⁴ At first the boys’ basketball games were equally primitive, played on dirt courts during twenty-minute recesses or after school. Later the Thatcher young men formally organized themselves into a community basketball team. Spencer and his comrades purchased their own equipment, traveled in privately furnished two-horse, white-top buggies, and paid for their meals and when necessary their lodging. Subsequently an instructor was appointed to accompany them.⁷⁵ These makeshift conditions occasionally worked to their advantage. Playing their local games in the basement of the church meeting hall, the team used the arena’s low ceiling and several on-the-floor obstructions to advantage. High school opponents and even a visiting team from the University of Arizona fell to the talent of the Thatcher team and to its home field handicap.⁷⁶

The boy also had a quieter side. From earliest childhood, he enjoyed music. "I was always interested in the singing of . . . songs," he recalled, "and I generally raised my voice and sang lustily."⁷⁷ Church hymns such as "O Galilee! Sweet Galilee!"⁷⁸ and "What Shall the Harvest Be?" were particular favorites. The latter he especially liked because it provided an opportunity to sing in parts. He also took to the piano, but not solely for reasons of melody. His father excused him from chores when practicing, and Spencer found the arrangement much to his benefit. When the southern Arizona sun became too unmerciful and his tasks too burdensome, he retreated to the relatively cool family parlor where the piano was positioned. "I was glad to practice the piano," he said without guile.⁷⁹

He also took to books. He read *Black Beauty*, *Beautiful Joe*, and other stories that inspired him with "a desire to be kind to animals." He reread many times *Ben Hur* and called it a "great story." *Robinson Crusoe* "stirred" his imagination, while he felt "perfect empathy" for Chief Tamenund, the forlorn survivor of James Fenimore Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans*. *The Last Days of Pompeii* had such an enduring effect that the book provided the text for several apostolic sermons pronounced a half century later. Spencer Kimball was clearly drawn to didacticism. He read from the *Youth's Companion* and his father's bound *Juvenile Instructor* volumes, finding "much pleasure" in the articles and serialized stories.⁸⁰ Spencer's reading stood him in good stead as he went to school. Thatcher's elementary and middle grades were housed in "a 'T' shaped building, one room added to the other without a common door." The oddly configured building sat "in the center of a large dry lot, which was either muddy or dusty. . . . The [school's] old unpainted wood toilets were at the end of the playground," while a hand-pump well could be reached by walking a few steps outside the building. Usually, however, the Thatcher "marms" maintained a more convenient water supply, a partially filled bucket with a common dipper hanging at its side.⁸¹

Attendance was irregular, often spaced between the frequent demands of the Thatcher farms. Many students "dropped out"; those who remained might be rough-boned and barely manageable teenagers occupying a position in the third or fourth grade. Spencer attested that efforts to maintain discipline could be colorful. "Our lady teacher had come to the end of her patience and had notified the principal some blocks away. My blood curdled and my breath stopped as the tall man came in with the leather strap, pulled the surly youth from his two-seater wood desk and 'laid it on' with vengeance."⁸² Normally, decorum could be maintained by less violent means. Vexing students might be compelled to stand in a corner with their faces toward the wall, sit on a dunce chair in the front of the class, or remain after school to write phrases like "I WILL BE GOOD" or "I WILL

NOT MAKE NOISE AGAIN" a hundred times on the blackboard. Spencer was not immune to such penalties. "I have a vague memory of having suffered some of these milder punishments myself" he admitted.⁸³

Nor was he free from another endemic problem afflicting schoolboys. He found himself attracted to his teacher, Ettie Lee, who later secured fortune and fame as a California real estate investor and benefactress. "My memory goes back and I seem to remember this lovely young woman at the desk, waiting for us at the door or watching us on the playground. She was always immaculately dressed and groomed. She was impressive. I secretly wished I were older or she younger."⁸⁴

Some evidence remains of Spencer's school achievements. He received recognition for his Arbor Day essay, and Miss Ettie granted him a certificate of award for punctuality and attendance covering a five-month span. But of far greater significance was his eighth grade diploma.

Well do I remember the days and weeks of preparation. Our clothes were mended and pressed, our shoes shined and the girls had new dresses and we were thrilled beyond expression. I think perhaps that no school honor has ever meant so much to me as that 8th grade diploma. In those days conditions were different. . . . [Students] entered school later, made less progress and naturally completed their work at a later age. In fact some of the 8th grade graduates were 18 and 19 and 20 and some were immediately married as soon as they completed the grades. . . . Eighth Grade exercises.⁸⁵

Spencer set himself apart by continuing his education at the LDS church-operated Gila Academy, which provided a secondary or high school curriculum. Each September, Church leaders vigorously campaigned to persuade students to enroll at Gila, but usually with limited success. "Very few could be induced to go on into High School and college," Spencer remembered. "The few of us who continued . . . were considered quite ambitious."⁸⁶

At the time, Gila Academy may have been the largest educational institution in Arizona Territory,⁸⁷ and its advanced classes brought "the thrill that comes from new truths learned." There was time also for youthful pranks. Spencer recalled the stuffing of the piano on April Fools' Day and the surreptitious mixing of hydrogen sulfide and then "sitting innocently in class while its nauseating fumes filtered up through the rooms."⁸⁸ The four-year educational exercises was capped by the Academy's commencement exercises, which were "tremendously important to us." They meant "the fulfillment of some of our dreams, the completion of a four year project, the conclusion of an epoch in our lives in which were joy and sorrow, disappointments and crowning achievements."⁸⁹

It was not, however an academic career that would distinguish the young man. From Spencer's youth, his father sensed an unusual spiritual dimension in his son. He once told a neighbor, "Spencer is an exceptional boy. He

always [has] tried to mind me, whatever I ask him to do. I have dedicated him to be one of the mouthpieces of the Lord—the Lord willing. . . . I have dedicated him to the service of God, and he will become a mighty man in the Church.”⁹⁰ From his earliest youth, he seemed drawn to church activity. At first church attendance was simply a family routine that bestowed security. “Mother always took me with her,” he explained. “Those warm afternoons I soon became drowsy and leaned over on her lap to sleep. I may not have learned much from the sermons, but I learned the habit of ‘going to meeting.’”⁹¹ As he grew older, he remembered himself “distressed” at critics who questioned the validity of testimonies expressed at the monthly fast and testimony meeting (“‘Why does Brother Doe declare with such definiteness that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and that this is the Church and kingdom of God? I doubt if they know any more about it than I do’”).⁹² He, himself, seemed to enjoy these meetings as well as the regimen of others. On the Sabbath there were Sunday School and sacrament meeting. On Monday he attended Primary exercises and, when he had reached twelve years of age, priesthood meeting. Wednesday afternoon brought “Religion Classes,” when “some good, sweet sister came in [to our school] give us a little spiritual training.”⁹³

In 1902, when Spencer was seven years old, the Saints of Thatcher broke ground for their new ward and stake building. He remembered donating a child’s trove: nickels and dimes totaling two dollars.⁹⁴ When the concrete building was complete, it had two large rectangular rooms, one for worship and a basement for recreation and classes. “I remember we had wires strung across the building and cloth curtains between the classes. We could hear something of every class that was going on and even sometimes see, if the lights were just right.” He especially recalled gathering around the building’s potbellied stove to hear the lessons of two deacons’ instructors, Orville Allen and LeRoi C. Snow. The latter intrigued the boys with “stories of the Red Sea, and the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel, and Jerusalem where he had been.”⁹⁵

One of the boy’s priesthood duties was the collection of in-kind fast offerings to aid the needy. Andrew afforded him the family buggy. “My responsibility included that part of the town in which I lived,” he reported, “but it was quite a long walk to the homes, and a sack of flour or a bottle of fruit or vegetables or bread became quite heavy as it accumulated. So the buggy was very comfortable and functional.”⁹⁶

Sometimes Spencer traveled with his father across the expansive St. Joseph Stake to attend meeting. “No one needed to tell me what a stake was,” he said.

I learned about it as I rode with my father in the buggy to the far-flung wards which extended [three-hundred and fifty miles] from Globe and St. David,

Arizona, to the border of Mexico at Douglas and Bisbee, and a little water at Virden, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas—two nations three states, and seven counties.⁹⁷

When he was ten years old, Spencer was accorded a much longer excursion by his father. As director of the Arizona Eastern Railroad, Andrew had at his disposal passes that permitted the father and son to travel to California en route to Utah to attend the LDS general conference. The boy was “thrilled” by the conference discourses of his uncle, President Joseph F. Smith, and by the other General Authorities. I “took their warnings seriously, even as a young man.”⁹⁸ While in Salt Lake City, Andrew ushered the boy into President Smith’s office. Though undoubtedly impressed by the opportunity of shaking hands with the President of the Church, Spencer appeared more struck by his father’s obvious pleasure in the company of his son. “He introduced me to all of his family as though he were the proudest man in the world. And yet I was just one of the children. . . . It gave me a lift such as few things would ever do.”⁹⁹

The boy slowly internalized the things that make men and women Mormons. As mother and son walked the dusty road to the bishop’s house, she patiently told of the need to take tithing eggs to the bishop. “The bishop receives the tithing for Heavenly Father,” she explained. “You remember every evening when you bring in the eggs, I have you count them out. The first one goes in the small basket and the next nine go in the large basket.”¹⁰⁰ His father taught the same principle by providing Spencer surplus potatoes, which he and his sister cleaned and sold for two dollars to the Brinkerhoff Hotel.

As we showed the money to Pa, he asked, “What are you going to do with it?” We indicated we would divide it before buying some ice cream, popcorn, and candy. Then he questioned, “What about your tithing?” We had earned so little money that we had quite forgotten our lesson with eggs, but he outlined it for us again. Afterward, we went through the orchard and climbed through a hole in our wire fence to take our ten cents each to the bishop, and he gave us a receipt.¹⁰¹

In contrast, his decision to maintain the health standards of the Word of Wisdom came without direct parental counsel.

As I was out alone, milking the cows, or putting up the hay, I had time to think. I mulled it over in my mind and made this decision: “I, Spencer Kimball, will never touch tobacco. I will never drink coffee, nor will I ever touch tea—not because I can explain why I shouldn’t, except that the Lord said not to.

The boy’s vows remained sacrosanct. “There were many temptations that came along,” he conceded, “but I did not even analyze it. . . . I [had] made up my mind that I would not.”¹⁰²

He buttressed his outward religious observance by scripture reading. Attending a Sunday evening stake conference session where Susa Young Gates, President Young's daughter, spoke on the virtues of Bible reading, the fourteen-year-old young man was both troubled and impressed. Sister Gates concluded her remarks by asking the congregation of a thousand Saints how many had read the book from cover to cover. Only five or six timid hands went up. "It seemed that some of them were trying to explain: 'We haven't read it through but we have done much studying of parts of it.' I was shocked."¹⁰³

Sister Gates' remarks (and the paltry response of the local Saints) galvanized him. He had, of course, read simplified, picture-laden Bible stories from his youth. But until now the actual Old and New Testaments had seemed too intimidating.

From that meeting I went to my home a block away, took the Bible from the shelf and climbed the stairs to my room in the attic of the house. I struck a match and lighted the coal oil lamp and began my intriguing exploratory journey into this great adventure through Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and on and on, night after night, by the flickering light of a glass lamp.¹⁰⁴

He confessed there were some "reading nights" when "I was thought to be asleep."¹⁰⁵ However his family knew enough of his activity for some to be critical. His older brothers asked why he didn't read something that he could understand. Still, he continued, "I found that there were certain parts that were not especially interesting to me, but when I had read the 66 books and 1,189 chapters and 1,519 pages, I had a glowing satisfaction that I had made a goal."¹⁰⁶ His prodigious reading had required about a year.

There were other signs of his serious-mindedness. He was distressed when some of his comrades tried to kill birds with their "flippers."¹⁰⁷ Nor could he understand the destructiveness of the Thatcher boys who wantonly slashed watermelons in a neighbor's patch. "I could never understand setting fire to things or breaking windows or tearing rugs or any of the mean tricks that were destructive in nature."¹⁰⁸ Sometimes he walked several blocks to school with William, a boy who apparently had been stricken with poliomyelitis. "How I ached for him when I had such strong straight legs and he with bent and crippled ones, gave such great exertion to cover the distance."¹⁰⁹

At an unusually early age he embarked on "adult" things. He logged some of his "experiences" in an occasional diary when ten years old.¹¹⁰ At about the same time, he embarked on a multiyear memorization program. Thinking the long hours spent on a three-legged milking stool personally unproductive, he at first used his milking time to memorize familiar hymns. Then during the next several years, he worked on the LDS Articles of Faith and the Ten Commandments. "I typed them up on cards and took

them out with me where I milked and repeated them over and over until I knew them by heart.” Later, as his proselyting mission approached, he followed the same procedure to memorize scriptural texts.¹¹¹

Perhaps some of his early maturity came from experiencing early and poignant sorrow. He vividly recalled being called out of school because Bishop Moody wished to talk with the Kimball children at the family home. We “all came wonder-eyed out of [our] class rooms and converged and ran home fearing the worst. It was the worst. Gathering us all in his big loving arms, our bishop whispered softly, ‘Children, your mama is dead.’”¹¹² She and Andrew had gone to Salt Lake City in the hopes of a successful corrective surgery. “It was a great shock and a great sorrow to us. I remember very well going up to the side of the street and weeping my little heart out. I was eleven, weeping and saying, ‘Mother, Mother, Mother.’”¹¹³ For some time thereafter, whenever Spencer entered the home, he remembered silently crying out for his mother, but “there were only mocking echoes of emptiness.”¹¹⁴

After Olive’s death, the family again on other occasions experienced “anguish, terror, fear, hopelessness.” Andrew was away when two-year-old Rachel became ill and began literally to choke for breath. Gordon, an elder brother, helplessly held her in a chair, while Spencer and the other children stood nearby, “frightened and praying and weeping.”

In terror, we watched the little body fight valiantly for air and life, then suddenly relax completely. The hard-fought battle was over. She had lost. Our older brother seemed to be reluctant to admit it was over. He held her for awhile, hoping hopelessly. And while we children convulsively held to each other in this traumatic experience, he tenderly carried the little lifeless body to the bed and covered it with a sheet and there welled up in our hearts an almost uncontrollable anguish and a dark void and deep emptiness.¹¹⁵

Spencer himself was not immune to severe illness. When ten years old, he recalled that he had “difficulty with my face and was healed.”¹¹⁶ The problem was later diagnosed as Bell’s palsy. More serious, four years later he experienced a high fever and debilitating dizziness that sent him to bed holding both sides of his head. It was typhoid, the scourge that took so many frontier lives. For a while the boy struggled for life.¹¹⁷ “My country doctor was devoted and attentive,” he recollected, “but he had few and limited facilities and possibly too little knowledge. Well do I remember the long starvation period, the pain the agonies and distresses of those many weeks which would seemingly never end. But I was one of the fortunate ones—I lived.”¹¹⁸

He lived, in fact, to venture to Missouri for his proselyting mission and then briefly to college before his further education was interrupted by World War I. He married and after several years settled in nearby Safford, the main non-Mormon town on the Gila strip. There he served in church

callings and pursued a business career until his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1943. This Churchwide ministry occupied the rest of his life, but rural, Arizona Mormonism never left him. For one thing, in later years he wondered about the adequacy of his formative experiences. "No one would ever have thought that some day I would be . . . the President of the Church," he once offered candidly. "When they saw me pitching hay as a little fellow with a small fork . . . or when I was digging ditches or planting trees, or any other thing, no one would ever have dreamed that someday I would be in this position."¹¹⁹ At other times, he thought there might be an explanation for his call. "The intellectuals did not dominate the Church in numbers," he concluded. "The great men were few. There were many, many common people in the Church, untrained unschooled. . . . Maybe the Lord in getting this group needed one that was extremely common [to lead them]."¹²⁰

Self-deprecation and modesty were traits of the man, but his self-assessment was accurate in at least one thing. He maintained a warm rapport with his fellow Saints, in part because, no matter where he traveled, Thatcher was near at hand. If his memories were a gauge, it stood for such human universals as cooperation and neighborliness, frugality and order, sacrifice and self-mastery, learning and growth, and struggle and joy. In short, it embodied for him the virtues and rewards of right living. No wonder in later years he kept alive that boyhood memory of resting on a Thatcher fence post, catching the hint of sage in the air, and averring that his world, if he should create one, might be "just like this one."¹²¹

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1. Spencer W. Kimball to Frank C. Kimball, 15 March 1963, and Spencer W. Kimball to Guy Anderson, 19 March 1968, photocopies in Edward Kimball Collection, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Kimball Collection). This material, generously made available to me by Edward L. Kimball, gathers together many full and partial transcripts of President Kimball's sermons and addresses. In addition, the Library-Archives of the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives) as an extensive and chronologically arranged collection of Kimball material.

2. Spencer W. Kimball, "The False Gods We Worship," *Ensign* 6 (June 1976): 3.

3. Spencer W. Kimball, "Elder Spencer W. Kimball Recalls Early Days, Noble Character, of 'This Great Lady': Address Delivered at Los Angeles Tribune Dinner Honoring Ettie Lee, Founder of Boys Homes-Farms," *California Intermountain News*, 2 December 1965, 4.

4. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Manchester England Area Conference 1976, 30.

5. The present-day address of the dwelling, which still stands, is 365 West 500 North, Salt Lake City.
6. Kimball, "This Great Lady," 4.
7. Spencer W. Kimball, address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, Tamaron, Colorado, 13 July 1978.
8. James H. McClintock, *Mormon Settlement in Arizona* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Manufacturing Stationers, 1921), 241-77.
9. Spencer W. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," *Ensign* 8 (May 1978): 46.
10. *Census Reports, Volume I, Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900, Population Part 1* (Washington, D.C.: United States Census Office, 1901), 64; see also Wayne Stout, *A History of Thatcher, Arizona* (Salt Lake City: Author, 1975), 20.
11. Kimball, "This Great Lady," 4-5.
12. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 46.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Spencer W. Kimball, "Loving One Another," *Ensign* 6 (November 1976): 127; Kimball, address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention.
15. Spencer W. Kimball, "I Learned the Law of Tithing," *The Friend* 1 (January 1971): 34.
16. Spencer W. Kimball, "Stand by Your Guns," unused draft of address prepared for Expo '74, Spokane, Washington, 24 July 1974, 7, Kimball Collection.
17. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1963, 35.
18. Kimball, address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, 3.
19. Kimball, in Conference Report October 1963, 34.
20. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 47; Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Houston Texas Area Conference 1979, 2; Spencer W. Kimball, in Quarterly Meeting of the Twelve, 8 March 1967, 1, Kimball Collection.
21. Spencer W. Kimball, address delivered at the youth fireside of the Woods Cross Region, 28 August 1977, 3, Kimball Collection.
22. Spencer W. Kimball, "Follow the Fundamentals," *Ensign* 11 (May 1981): 79.
23. Kimball, in Conference Report, Houston Texas Area Conference 1979, 1.
24. Kimball, "Loving One Another," 127.
25. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 47.
26. Spencer W. Kimball, "Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action," *Ensign* 7 (November 1977): 76.
27. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1963, 34-35.
28. Kimball, "A Vision of Visiting Teaching," *Ensign* 8 (June 1978): 24.
29. Spencer W. Kimball, "Relief Society: Its Promise and Potential," *Ensign* 6 (March 1976): 4.
30. Spencer W. Kimball, in Quarterly Meeting of the Council of the Twelve, 10 April 1957, 1, Kimball Collection.
31. Spencer W. Kimball, "Applying the Principles of Welfare Services," *Ensign* 9 (May 1979): 100.
32. *Ibid.*, 99.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Spencer W. Kimball, *Lamanite Prophecies Fulfilled*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year (Provo, 13 April 1965), 2.
35. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, April 1955, 94.
36. Spencer W. Kimball, "Timing," 1, Kimball Collection.

37. Spencer W. Kimball in Conference Report, April 1974, 128.
38. Spencer W. Kimball, address delivered at BYU Ten Stake Fireside, 26 September 1971, typescript, 9, LDS Church Archives.
39. Kimball, in Conference Report, April 1974, 127.
40. Spencer W. Kimball, address delivered at Brigham Young University Student Leadership Conference.
Sun Valley, Idaho, September 1958, transcript, 10, Kimball Collection.
41. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 46.
42. Spencer W. Kimball, "Stand by Your Guns," address delivered at Utah State University Institute of Religion, 14 October 1966, 8, Kimball Collection.
43. Kimball, "A Vision of Visiting Teaching," 24; Kimball, "Stand by Your Guns," 11.
44. Kimball, "A Vision of Visiting Teaching," 24.
45. Kimball, "Stand by Your Guns," 12.
46. *Ibid.*, 13.
47. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1969, 19; Kimball, in Conference Report, Manchester England Area Conference 1976, 30.
48. Kimball, in Conference Report, Manchester England Area Conference 1976, 30.
49. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1969, 19–20; Kimball, in Conference Report, Manchester England Area Conference 1976, 30.
50. Kimball, "Timing," 1; Kimball, "I Learned the Law of Tithing," 34.
51. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1969, 19; Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 46.
52. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 46; Spencer W. Kimball, "The Oils of Righteousness," address delivered at BYU Stake Conference, 13 January 1957, typescript, 3, LDS Church Archives.
53. Kimball, "The Oils of Righteousness," 3.
54. Kimball, address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, 3.
55. *Ibid.*, 3–4.
56. *Ibid.*, 3.
57. Kimball, excerpt from untitled sermon, n.p., Kimball Collection.
58. Kimball, address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, 4.
59. *Ibid.*, 3.
60. Kimball, "I Learned the Law of Tithing," 35.
61. Kimball, "Stand by Your Guns," 7–8.
62. The anecdote is told in an otherwise untitled Kimball letter to "My dear John," n.d., Kimball Collection.
63. Kimball, "Stand by Your Guns," 6–7; Kimball, address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, 3.
64. Kimball, "Stand by Your Guns," 6–7.
65. Spencer W. Kimball, "On My Honor," in *Speeches of the Year*, 1978 (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 9.
66. Kimball, "Applying the Principles of Welfare Services," 99.
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68. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Fruit of Our Welfare Services Labors," *Ensign* 8 (November 1978): 75.
69. Spencer W. Kimball, "Listen to the Prophets," *Ensign* 8 (May 1978): 78.
70. Kimball, address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, 4.
71. Spencer W. Kimball, "Integrity in Insurance," address delivered at Beneficial Life Conference, Mexico City, 9 July 1970, 1, Kimball Collection.

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73. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 47; Spencer W. Kimball, "The Davids and the Goliaths," *Ensign* 4 (November 1974): 81.
74. Kimball, excerpt from untitled sermon, Kimball Collection.
75. Ibid.
76. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 47.
77. Ibid.
78. Kimball, in Conference Report, April 1961, 77; Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 47.
79. Kimball, an address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, 5.
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81. Kimball, "This Great Lady," 8.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Spencer W. Kimball, Commencement Address (Eden, Arizona, Eighth Grade and Ft. Thomas, Arizona, High School), 1935, 1, Kimball Collection.
86. Spencer W. Kimball, "Honor," an address delivered at Ricks College, 27 September 1965, 35, Kimball Collection; Kimball, Commencement Address, 1.
87. Kimball, "This Great Lady," 4.
88. Spencer W. Kimball, Commencement Address (Virden, New Mexico, High School), 20 May 1932, 1, Kimball Collection.
89. Ibid.
90. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1943, 17.
91. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1944, 43.
92. Ibid.
93. Spencer W. Kimball, "Circle of Exaltation," an address delivered at Brigham Young University, 28 June 1968, 1, LDS Church Archives.
94. Kimball, "Strengthening the Family—The Basic Unit of the Church," 46.
95. Ibid., 46–47.
96. Spencer W. Kimball, "To Bear the Priesthood Worthily," *Ensign* 5 (May 1975): 79.
97. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Image of a Stake," an address delivered at Regional Representatives Seminar, 4 October 1973, 1, Kimball Collection.
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99. Kimball, in Conference Report, Houston Texas Area Conference 1979, 2.
100. Spencer W. Kimball, "He Did It with All His Heart, and Prospered," *Ensign* 11 (March 1981): 4.
101. Kimball, "I Learned the Law of Tithing," 35.
102. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Stockholm Sweden Area Conference 1974, 86.
103. Kimball, "What I Read as a Boy," 508.
104. Spencer W. Kimball to "My Dear Young Brothers," 6 January 1958, Kimball Collection; Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Seoul Korea Area Conference 1975, 27–28.
105. Kimball, "What I Read as a Boy," 508.
106. Kimball, in Conference Report, April 1974, 126–27.

107. Spencer W. Kimball, "Fundamental Principles to Ponder and Live." *Ensign* 8 (November 1978): 44.
108. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1974, 118.
109. Spencer W. Kimball. "Hope and Encouragement for Cancer Cure." *Relief Society Magazine* 55 (April 1969): 246.
110. Spencer W. Kimball, "So Many Kinds of Voices," an address delivered in Long Beach, California, 9 April 1978, 1, Kimball Collection.
111. Spencer W. Kimball, an address delivered at San Diego North Stake Lamanite Conference. 3 May 1975, 5, Kimball Collection.
112. Spencer W. Kimball, "No Greater Call," an address delivered at Sunday School Conference, 1 October 1967, 2, Kimball Collection
113. Kimball, an address delivered at Beneficial Life Convention, 6.
114. Kimball, in Conference Report, October 1963, 35.
115. Kimball, "Hope and Encouragement for Cancer Cure," 244-45.
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119. Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report. Johannesburg South Africa Area Conference 1978, 8.
120. Spencer W. Kimball, Remarks at Quarterly Meeting of the Council of the Twelve, 8 March 1967, transcript, 1, Kimball Collection.
121. Kimball, "The False Gods We Worship." 3.