

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **A FIGURATIVE SWAP MEET**

I come from a long line of good mothers, a strong chain I hope to add to and pass on to my children. My great grandmother, Alta Marilla Johnson Erickson Howard, recently passed away at 105 years of age. She was one of the first female missionaries to serve a full-time mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (referred to hereafter as the Church), 85 years ago in New York City. Her first marriage ended in divorce, so she worked as a hairdresser to support her three daughters. She lived in her own home in Richfield, Utah, until her death and contributed to Utah Historical Society publications through the years. As one of the few people who had the distinction of living in three different centuries, she witnessed phenomenal events and many changes in her life and the lives of her posterity.

My great grandmother, who outlived all three of her daughters, taught them to be self-sufficient women and nurturing mothers, regardless of circumstances. Her middle daughter was my grandmother, Maude Ilene Erickson Clark. Maude had a strong desire to stay home and raise her children, in part because of the situation in which her mother found herself, having to work to sup-