

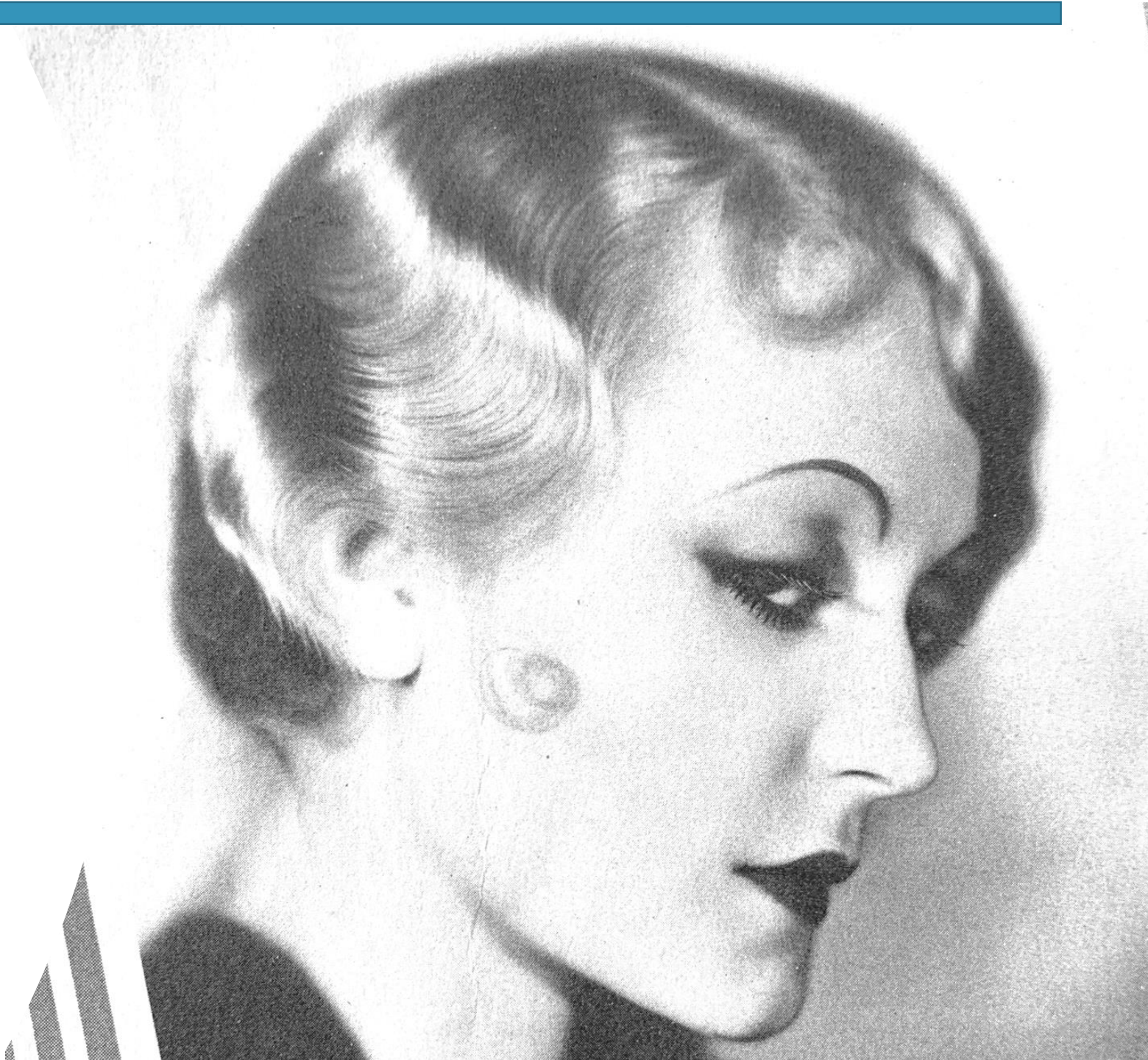
# BEAUTY & BRAINS

The Empowerment Influence of  
Women-Owned Beauty Shops  
in Rural Utah

**LISA MICHELE CHURCH**

Utah State History Conference

**September, 2020**





# Why study women-owned beauty shops?

- The women owners are entrepreneurial heroes
- Beauty shops were social heart of rural communities
- This profession was an economic engine for women
- It was an early career which was family-friendly
- The work involved creative and service aspects





Martha Matilda Harper  
(1857–1950)



Madam C.J. Walker  
(1867–1919)

Women who  
began the  
modern  
hair salon  
industry





**The Gibson Girl**  
– an idealized woman popular during 1890-1910



**Louise Brooks (1906-1985)**  
Flapper and Jazz Age icon

Can a  
hair style  
be a  
political  
statement?

# Why leave home to get your hair styled?



New Styles

New Products

Social benefits

Pampering

# THE EMPOWERMENT INFLUENCE

-- a career where you can be your own boss

From 1880 to 1920 only about 12% of women were employed and most were clerks, salespeople, teachers, or typists.

**THEY WERE WORKING FOR OTHERS.**

After World War One women had different options due in part to:

- 1) new time-saving home appliances
- 2) fewer children/children in public school full-time
- 3) Increased urban living/apartments

**WOMEN HAD MORE TIME TO WORK & SPEND TIME OUTSIDE THE HOME.**

However society wasn't ready for them to enter certain professions in large numbers, so they invented their own new industry!



## ONE OF UTAH'S EARLIEST FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

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- One example is Edith Harris from St. George, who started working as a "marcellist" in the 1926 when she was 20 years old. She earned \$12 per week in 1929 and her sister, Evelyn, earned \$8 per week. Edith and Evelyn opened their own shops –Dixie Beauty Shoppe and Moderne Beauty Salon.
- Edith exemplifies the experience of young women in rural Utah in the 1920s – a third generation of pioneers who needed greater economic security in the remote towns with marginal agricultural industry. Edith's mom told her "Don't depend on a man for your financial security!"



Edith Harris fixed her whole family's hair styles!



# WHY CHOOSE TO OPEN A BEAUTY SALON IN THE 1920s–1930s?



Edith and Evelyn with their beautiful waves!



Beauty Magazine Model

- 5,000 shops in 1920 grew to 40,000 shops in 1930 in US
- Hair styling produced steady income with repeat customers
- Low barriers to entry - small up-front investment for shop rental, tools, sinks, supplies
- New equipment sometimes provided free as promotions

**ON TREND:** 1920s flapper styles; 1930s movies established hair color trends – especially platinum blonde; 20<sup>th</sup> century movie magazines and women’s magazines helped popularize the beauty culture industry

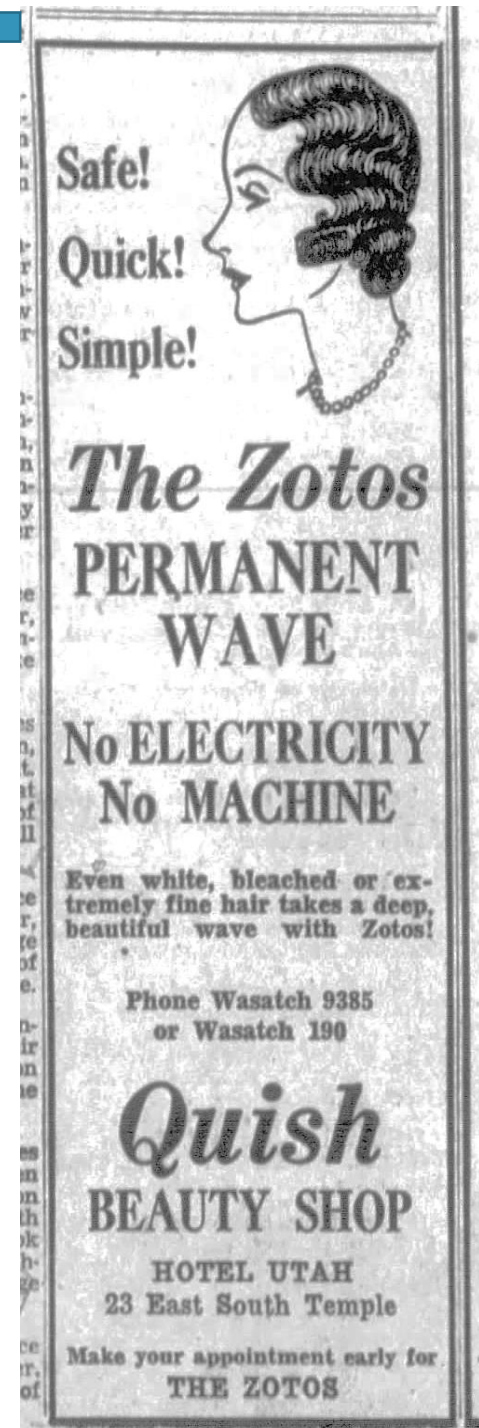
# How did women learn 'beauty culture' skills?




ENROLL NOW  
at the  
**QUISH**  
SCHOOL OF BEAUTY  
CULTURE  
"The Best in the West"  
THIRD FLOOR  
EZRA THOMPSON BLDG.  
Write or Phone for Information  
Catalogue on Request  
**Wasatch-7560**  
FREE MARCELS

Alice Quish (1868–1954) was Utah's pioneer in beauty culture education, operating a school in downtown Salt Lake for at least 20 years, training hundreds of women beauty operators.

*"The school is equipped with every type of electrical devices and all the improved accessories that have been approved by the beautifications trade throughout the world...The Quish school is known as the leading efficient beauty school of this region...Through this training young women are provided with an excellent and economical opportunity to enter into a life work that is every day becoming more popular and highly remunerative."* November 11, 1948 Davis County Clipper



Safe!  
Quick!  
Simple!



**The Zotos**  
PERMANENT  
WAVE

No ELECTRICITY  
No MACHINE

Even white, bleached or extremely fine hair takes a deep, beautiful wave with Zotos!

Phone Wasatch 9385  
or Wasatch 190

**Quish**  
BEAUTY SHOP

HOTEL UTAH  
23 East South Temple

Make your appointment early for  
**THE ZOTOS**



# BEAUTICIANS BECAME THE SOCIAL HEART OF THEIR COMMUNITY



## *ST. GEORGE AS AN EXAMPLE:*

- 1926 Edith and Evelyn Harris started Dixie Beauty Shoppe
- 1929 Lida Prince and Jetta Snow operated Vogue Beauty Parlor until 1940s
- 1930s Deloris Sullivan took over Moderne Beauty Salon from Edith Harris
- 1940s Della Maggard operated Della's Beauty Salon with Ruby Seegmiller
- *They were all active in BPW and Chamber of Commerce Auxiliary*

Girls Wishing to be  
**BEAUTIFUL**

Make your appointments now for

**Thanksgiving  
Holidays**

We are prepared to give you  
the very latest in care of  
your skin.

*Licensed Cosmeticians*

**Edith and EvaLyn Harris**

**BEAUTY SHOPS NOTICE**

The three beauty shops in St. George will close for a Thanksgiving holiday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Nov. 25, 26 and 27.

Beginning immediately, all shops will open at 10 a. m., daily.

Della's Beauty Shop,  
Moderne Beauty Salon,  
Vogue Beauty Parlor.

**Dixie Beauty Salon**

*will open in*

**St. George, Thursday, August 22**

With the best and most modern equipment. The Dixie Beauty Salon is at your service.

We have installed the Nestle Permanent Wave Machine, recognized as the outstanding accomplishment in its field.

Courteous, competent operators are prepared to serve you. Let them help solve your beauty problems.

Our prices are right and we guarantee satisfaction.

*Located in Snow Building*

**Phone 191**

*OUR BEAUTY SHOPPE MESSAGE IS:*  
**Get Your Appointment Early**

*for the*

**FOURTH OF JULY**

We are anxious to serve you with the best in

*Duart Imperial  
Permanent Waving*

**\$5.00 and \$7.00**

MARCELLS SHAMPOOS FINGER WAVES

**Edith and EvaLyn Harris**

Phone 116



# Cleo Sullivan Wardle

---

- She and her 4 sisters all became beauticians
- Apprenticed to her sister at 16 years old doing sculpted pin curls for 25 cents per customer
- Opened & operated Cleo's Uptown Beauty Salon, 1965-1977
- - Louise's Beauty Box 1978-1982
- - About Face 1982-1995
- Raised a family and traveled with her husband throughout West
- Retired at 76 years old after 60 years in the business, then became a horseshoe-throwing champion and competed in Huntsman Senior Games!
  
- Mentor
- Award-winning hair designer
- Community Leader

“The women left my shop with a lift in their step”

# ROSE LEAVITT MCALLISTER

1919–2016

- “Hard work but good income to help to educate our kids.”

“She had a knack for hair as a teenager and people noticed it. She would do hair for people on the weekends and after school. She charged 5 cents for a set and 10 cents for a haircut. She perfected a type of hair goo using cornstarch and water that would make the curls stay in your hair. “

- Got a \$125 bank loan to pay for beauty school
- Worked from 1939 until 1970s and loved it!
- Married and raised 4 kids
- Operated Rose’s Beauty Shop in town, then later ran a shop out of her home



“She gave her customers undivided attention!”

# TRADE ASSOCIATIONS & TRADE SHOWS

## BANQUET HELD FOR B. P. W. C. HONORING THEIR NATIONAL WEEK

A banquet was given by the Business and Professional Women's club of St. George on Wednesday night in the Science building in honor of the week beginning March 17 to 23, which has been set aside as Business Women's week. Many prominent civic and business leaders were present. The special speaker for the occasion was Lethé Coleman, State Magazine chairman, of Salt Lake City.

Anne Price, president, was toastmaster for the evening and introduced the various speakers and entertainers.

Tillie Winsor was the first speaker. Miss Winsor gave a five talk on the club's accomplishments and objects and closed by reading a beautiful poem entitled "A Collect for Club Women."

Mrs. P. D. Spilsbury sang, "Japanese Love Song." She was accompanied by Mae Pace. This was followed by a pianologue entitled "Something New in Hats," which was presented by Edith Harris, accompanied by Mae Pace. A reading "O No" by Beth Schmutz, and a piano duet by Clara Woodhouse and Mae Pace.

Short talks were given by Dr. Reichmann as representative of the Chamber of Commerce; C. W. Love, Jr., Vice-President and Washington County director for the Associated Civics clubs; Walter Smith, as representative of the American Legion, and Mrs. Vivien Woodbury, president of the Chamber of Commerce auxiliary. Other guests were: Joseph Milne, Rotary President, and

(Continued on page eight)

Wash Co News 3/21/35

Women beauticians gained leadership and travel opportunities which were empowering and influential



Business from the central Utah area will head the Utah Hairdressers and Cosmetologists Association for the coming year. Front: Shirl Young of Pleasant Grove, vice-president; Cora Lee Johnson, Springville, re-appointed National Beauty Salon Week chairman for Region A which comprises 8 western states, Hawaii and also Alaska. Back row: Ann Inks, Spanish Fork, historian; Genevieve Howes, Spanish Fork, retiring president and now director.

## Beauty operator re-appointed NBSW chairman

Cora Lee Johnson, manager of Artistic Beauty Salon, was re-appointed chairman of National Beauty Salon Week for Region A which comprises all of the 8 western states, Hawaii and Alaska.

Miss Johnson directed activities of this area last year and for her outstanding achievements, received a special citation at the national convention held in Miami recently. She reported that Utah took first in the nation for the third time in a row in the National Beauty Salon Week projects. Uintah Bullock of Salt Lake City was chairman this year. Miss Johnson was chairman previously when they were cited with this honor.

Springville Herald 9/14/61

21ST ANNUAL **National Beauty Salon Week**  
February 14-20



**HAIR IS IN.  
MAKE IT BEAUTIFUL!**

Today's new look in a delightful array of styles and cuts has never been more flattering. Hair colors, too, are in—and in unbelievably beautiful new shades. So, whatever you wear begin with your hair and everything else will follow in the same beautiful fashion. Phone for your appointment today.

**AFFILIATE NO. 7 FASHION LUNCHEON**  
Monday, February 15 -- Oak Crest Inn  
\$2.50 DONATION — 12:00 NOON  
"Fancy Free on Parade"

PROCEEDS FOR CHARITY — PUBLIC INVITED  
Tickets on Sale at These Beauty Salons:

**SPRINGVILLE BEAUTY SALONS**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ARTISTIC BEAUTY SALON<br>115 South 200 East — 489-4011       | MARGARET KING<br>140 East 300 South — 489-6241        |
| IDA MAE HOLT<br>114 East 800 South — 489-5206                | JUDY'S BEAUTY SALON<br>664 East 1000 South — 489-4252 |
| VONNIE'S BEAUTY SALON<br>235 E. Sage Creek Circle — 489-6386 | VAN'S BEAUTY BAR<br>607 South 100 East — 489-4160     |
| BETH'S BEAUTY SALON<br>78 West 200 North — 489-6702          | LA FEM SHOPPE<br>59 East 500 South — 489-7649         |

SPRINGVILLE

**NATIONAL Beauty Salon Week**

**WEAR THE PROMISE OF SPRING IN YOUR HAIR**

**NAOMI'S  
Beauty Shoppe**  
79 West 400 No. Orem  
Ph. 225-3241

**MARY'S  
Beauty Fashions**  
240 East 800 So. Orem  
Ph. 225-6211

**JENNY FORD'S  
Beauty Salon**  
644 No. 1000 East Orem  
Ph. 225-3742

**LOUISE'S  
Beauty Shop**  
829 No. State Orem  
Ph. 225-3168

**HOUSE of BEAUTY**  
384 So. State Orem  
Ph. 225-5882

**LEONA'S  
Beauty Shop**  
883 No. 235 East Orem  
Ph. 225-2279

**RUTH'S  
Beauty Shop**  
490 No. University Ave. Provo  
Ph. 373-7780

**KAY'S  
Beauty Shop**  
165 West 400 No. Orem  
Ph. 225-4290

**JAN'S  
Beauty Shop**  
864 So. 210 West Orem  
Ph. 225-4323

**FAYE ROSE  
Beauty Fair Salon**  
149 West 100 No. Provo  
Ph. 373-5108

Wear The Promise Of Spring in Your Hair

IS YOUR SHOP LISTED ABOVE?

OREM



# PLEASANT GROVE



READY FOR OPENING—Lorraine Hardy, Carol Loader and Marsha Timothy are ready

for grand opening of Classic Beauty Salon Saturday at 60 East State in Pleasant Grove.

## Classic Beauty Salon To Hold Grand Opening On Saturday

# MOAB

### From Vogue Beauty Salon, Here's a **VALENTINE GIFTS**

To The Ladies Of Moab, To  
Thank You For Your Patronage



**VOGUE  
BEAUTY  
SALON**  
Is Offering This  
Special During  
The Month  
Of February

#### ONCE-A-YEAR BEAUTY SPECIAL

Our Best Individual  
Body Wave ..... reg. 15.00  
Hair Cut  
To Suit You ..... reg. 2.50  
16-Oz. Professional  
Hair Spray (This  
spray is not sold in  
drug or grocery  
stores ..... reg. 2.00



TOTAL VALUE .... 19.50

**SPECIAL PRICE . . 12.00**

(Saving of 7.50 Off Regular Price)

Offer Limited to Mon. thru Thurs.  
During the Month of February

CALL JOE, CHARLOTTE OR SUE  
FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT WITH BEAUTY

HAPPY VALENTINE FROM —

**VOGUE** BEAUTY SALON Phone 253-4041

# VERNAL

## Beauty Salon Week February 20 to 26

Dedicated to More Beautiful Women

Time for your mid-winter  
hair-conditioning. Permanent  
growing out? Bad weather  
dulling your tresses. Need a  
thinning, a re-styling? Don't  
wait, call for an appointment  
today.



## Alice's Beauty Shop

28 South 3rd West Phone 280

**ALICE KIDD BEULAH STEWART**  
Operators



FIG. A

FIG. B

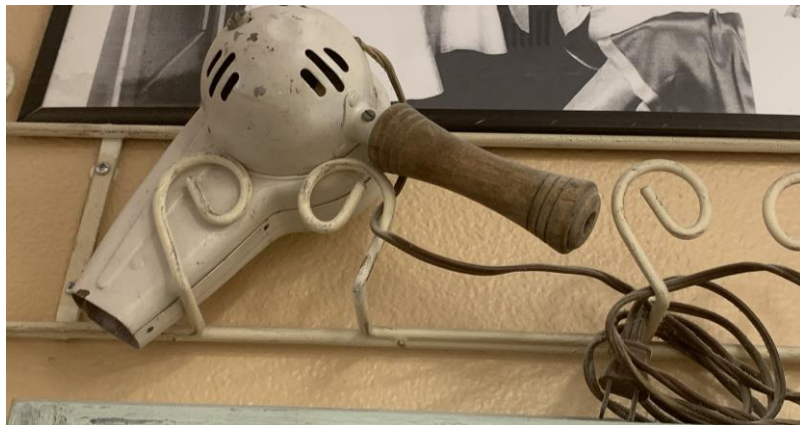
**25th Anniversary (MODEL 25)**

## SHAMPOO BOWL

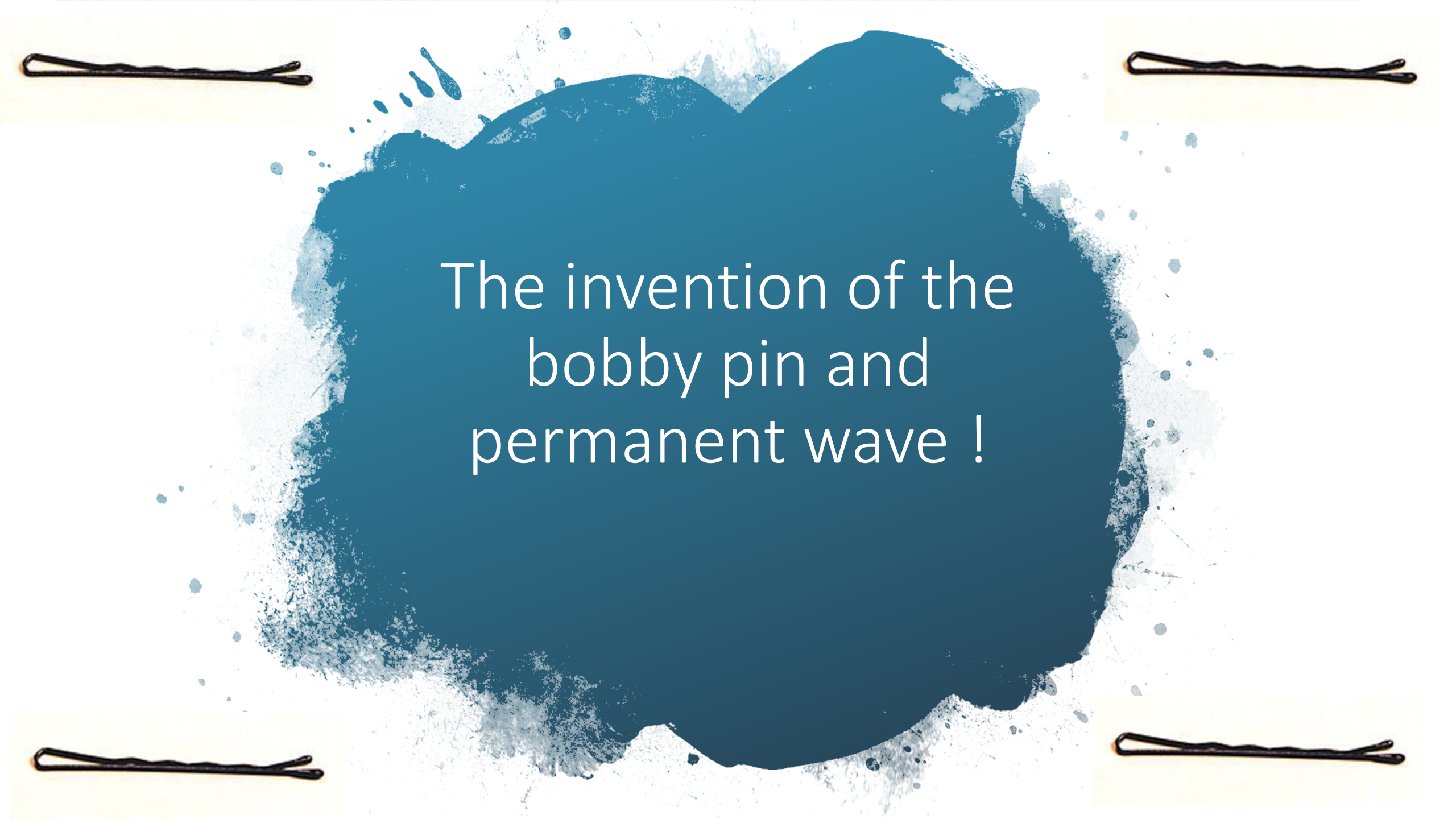
A brand new design with features you'll welcome through years of everyday use. Comes complete with famous Belvedere "Whiz" Shampoo Spray and fixture as shown in Fig. A. Note deep pitch on top rim of bowl as shown in Fig. B . . . a real help in preventing splash and spill-over on floor. Fig. B also shows deep well in bowl base, and Fig. C pictures it in use as handy catch basin for rinses, solutions, etc. Our wide selection of Belvedere Faucets are available for this model.

**FOR COMPLETE DETAILS SEE YOUR DEALER NOW!**

**BELVEDERE PRODUCTS, INC. • BELVIDERE, ILL.**  
WEST COAST OFFICE: P. O. BOX 523, GOLETA, CALIFORNIA



# BEAUTY SHOP EQUIPMENT



The invention of the  
bobby pin and  
permanent wave !

## MANTI - Ruby Shand



## LEVAN – Gwen Stephenson



Gwen was born in Loa in 1927, married with 4 kids. She did ladies' hair for 40 years, owning her own beauty shop in Levan for **32 years**.

Ruby was born in Gunnison Valley, was married in 1945 & raised 4 kids. "Set up her own business...became well-known for her pin curls and finger waves...Her love and talent for cutting, styling, coloring and perming hair was evident at a very early age and her desire to become independent and successful led to her to master the skills needed..."



## HONEYVILLE - Ruth Tolman



Ruth operated her own beauty shop for **50 years** in Honeyville; she was widowed as a young mom and raised 4 kids, then served three church missions.

## BOUNTIFUL - Mada Hall Bodily



Mada was a licensed beautician for **44 years** - "Always available to do someone's hair" - raised 3 kids while moving 84 times during her married life.

## HELPER – Katherine Zaccaria



Kay was born in Castle Gate, operated Kay's Beauty Shop for many years and "enjoyed the companionship of her many wonderful customers (friends)." She raised two children and supported her husband's work with United Mine Workers in Price.

## VERNAL – Beulah Stewart

## TOOELE – Gertrude Long

## LOGAN – Zelda Plowman



Beulah Hardy Stewart  
(1920-1975)

She was married 65 years and worked as a beautician for most of her life in Vernal.

Gertrude L. Long (1913-1993)

Gertrude graduated from Tooele High School and Quish School of Beauty. Gertrude worked as a beauty operator at the New Ute Hotel in Salt Lake City until 1940. Then she returned to Tooele and opened her own shop, located in the Ritz Theater Building on Main Street. She worked there for **46 years** until poor health forced her to retire. Gertrude's hobby was her beautiful flower garden she planted each year.

Zelda Ella Skanchy Plowman (1913-2003)

Zelda graduated from Logan High and attended Utah State University. After graduating from Quish School of Beauty Culture, she then opened her own salon – Zelda's Beauty Shop – in Logan for **60 years**, from 1933-1993. She also helped her husband run Keith's Market for many years while raising two daughters. "She had a talent for making friends, loved her family, and will be remembered for her many acts of kindness."



# THE EMPOWERMENT INFLUENCE

Remember the powerhouses of the pincurl!

Work/Life Balance – they could teach us a thing or two!

Leaders and Style-Setters

Mentors for other Women

Businesswomen

Social Heart of their Communities

Creative and Service-Minded

Dedicated to  
Edith Harris Milne  
(1906–1973)



## THANKS TO:

Cleo Sullivan Wardle  
Judy McAllister Hart  
Washington County Historical Society  
Utah Digital Newspapers  
Utah State Historical Society  
Valerie Jacobsen – USHS Library  
Rhonda of Thairapy Salon in St. George  
"Permanent Waves" – Julie Willett  
Edna Mae Sampson  
Shirlee Harris Graff  
Lori Hunt Jamison

Contact us at [RelentlessHistory@gmail.com](mailto:RelentlessHistory@gmail.com) with your story!

