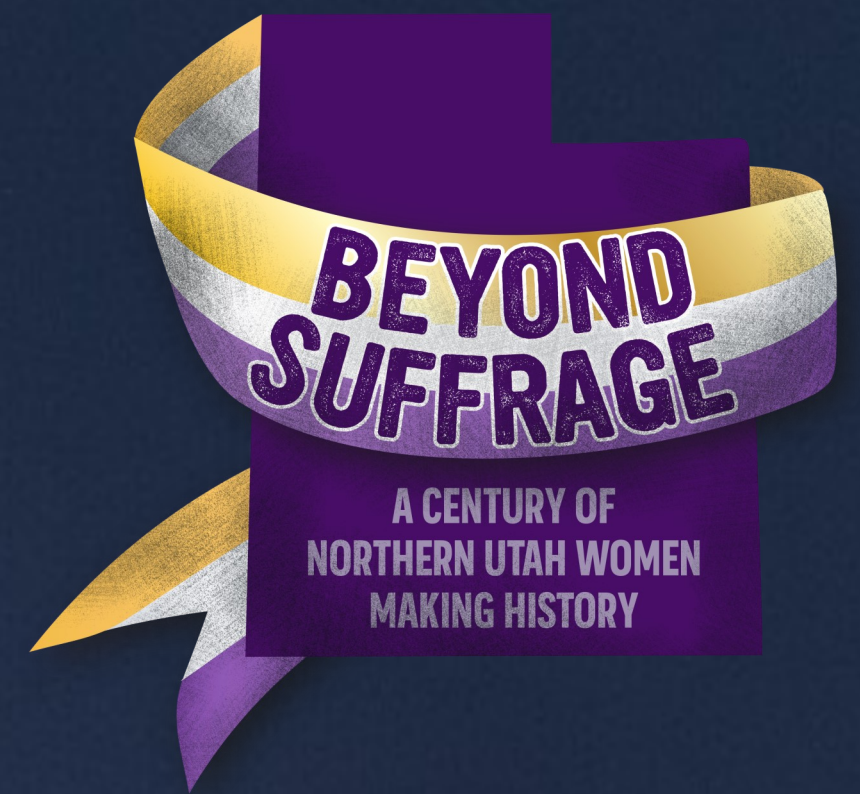


# Martha Society

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Ogden barbers donated their time to give children at the Martha Society Nursery free haircuts, ca. 1920s.

In 1906, Martha Brown Cannon, wife of Frank J. Cannon, Utah's first senator, gathered a group of women to form the Ogden Charitable Committee for the purpose of doing charitable work among the poor and needy in Ogden. Upon her death in 1908, the organization was renamed the Martha Society and incorporated.

The Martha Society began by helping needy families with the necessities of life such as food, clothing, house rental, and fuel. They did this as subtly as they could, so the families would not feel insecure about receiving help. However, members of the society noticed that in many of these families both parents worked, creating the need for a day nursery. On June, 14, 1913, the society opened such a facility with a total of 61

boys and girls. The Nursery offered services both day and night, and 24 of these children were permanent residents at the nursery. A more permanent home (Washington and Elizabeth St.) was purchased in 1917.

While the Martha Society funded the Nursery through donations and an annual Charity Ball. Many of the children's parents paid a ten-cent fee if they could. Not only did the Martha Society provide a place for these children, but members offered help with school work as well as providing food and clothing. To take more pressure off of the working mothers, members of the society met at the nursery to sew for the children. They worked with other members of the community and were able to provide the children with access to physicians and dentists for free. Many different groups in the community were willing to support and donate to the societies cause. They were even presented with a crate of bananas for the children by the Nicholas Produce Company.

In the 1930s, the Society yielding to changes in child welfare work, and closed the nursery, placing the children in foster homes in accordance with the new government program for dependent children under Social Security. The Martha House remained open as a day nursery until it closed in 1959



The Martha Society provided daily care for nursery students, as shown here in 1937.