A bride in Victoria, Australia, was given fifteen toasts and as many rounds of “For She’s a Jolly Good Lassie” before she and her groom left on their honeymoon.

In La Mirada, California, a wedding cake was decorated with fresh garden flowers instead of made from frosting.

During an Oriental wedding, the groom set off thousands of firecrackers at the end of the festivities, to the delight of the guests.

The following is a report on how some people in some places celebrate the fact that they prayed, carefully walked, slid, or fell into love and marriage.

A typical Latter-day Saint wedding begins in the temple—in Hawaii, London, Switzerland, Manti, or in any one of the thirteen presently operating temples of the Church.

This sweetest of all weddings is made up of a bride and groom in love—as all weddings are—but in a temple wedding there is still another dimension, that of the sacred, enfolding Spirit of the Lord. Bridal couples wear pure white clothing for a ceremony that binds them together for time and all eternity. Only persons having temple recommends from their bishops may witness the ceremony, which may be in any one of a number of languages.

Certainly inside the temple all Latter-day Saint marriages are the same. All have the same promises and blessings pronounced upon those who are being married. It’s the celebration after the ceremony that demonstrates the difference between a Mormon married in Berne and a Mormon married in Logan.

**Hawaiian Islands**

Marriages of Latter-day Saints who are haoles (Caucasians) in the Hawaiian Islands usually follow the pattern set by mainland members. There are newspaper announcements and printed double-enveloped invitations and a reception with the bride and groom dressed in white, and often the ushers and attendants are dressed in white, too. Although the wearing of leis is distinctively a Hawaiian custom, it has been adopted as a means of greeting and congratulating by all racial groups in Hawaii, and a wedding in the islands wouldn’t be complete without a profusion of leis on the bride and groom and guests.
The wedding ceremony is usually followed by a Polynesian feast. The bride and groom and all guests appear at this function in aloha shirts and muumuus, with fresh flower leis. The fete is festive, with an abundance of flowers and Polynesian music from ukeleles. Food consists of the usual kalua puaa (pig cooked in an underground oven), poi, taro tops in coconut milk, squid, dried fish, fresh pineapple, fresh coconut cake, and the ever-present soda water.

**Salt Lake City and throughout Utah**

During peak seasons, there are sixty or seventy weddings each morning in the Salt Lake Temple. Families and friends abound in the metropolitan area, and there may be three or four generations at the temple, and perhaps up to a thousand guests waiting in line for over an hour to greet the newlyweds at their reception that night.

Receptions are usually held in the cultural halls of the numerous wards dotting the valleys, or perhaps at one of the many wedding reception centers in most towns, or at home.

Most receptions are formal; that is, the bride is gowned in the traditional veil and long dress; the groom and ushers are in tuxedoes. There may be as many as eleven or twelve bridesmaids, all in similar dresses, who are sisters in large families or friends from school or church.

Living in an area where there are many Latter-day Saints means that a guest may attend more than one such reception in an evening.

**The Orient**

When brides or grooms of Oriental extraction are members of the Church, they do not have a traditional Chinese or Japanese ceremony in which participants are dressed in ceremonial costumes. Instead, they dress in contemporary clothing, and the ceremony (usually outside the temple, since the closest temple is in Hawaii) is performed by a bishop.

Chinese nuptial festivities are a family affair and are usually held in a Chinese restaurant. The importance of the family is traditionally gauged by the number of people present and the number of courses served. Fireworks are an exciting part of a large Chinese celebration, and often the groom lights hundreds of firecrackers at the end of the party to mark his and his bride’s departure with a bang!

Japanese post-ceremony entertaining is usually held in a teahouse. A sukiyaki dinner might be served, or a cold Japanese meal consisting of a variety of Oriental salads, rice, vegetables, and raw fish. Tables are always exquisitely decorated, and even the food is served in an exotic manner. For example, a whole fish that has been cooked and chilled is served on a nest of fresh white turnips shredded in such a way as to resemble a fishing net. The tone of the celebration is much more sedate, formal, and gentle than are many other celebrations.

**Australia**
As soon as persons are baptized in Australia, they often start saving for their wedding trip to the New Zealand Temple. Consequently, most couples travel to the temple after a civil marriage. A civil ceremony is required by law, so Mormons are married by the bishop or the appropriate priesthood leader and then honored with a reception immediately afterward.

No Australian wedding would be complete without the satin horseshoes that guests hook onto the bride’s arm following this civil ceremony. Friends in MIA and the Relief Society make these horseshoes out of satin, lace, orange blossoms, and ribbons.

An invitation to the wedding might be a two-fold card or a parchment scroll mailed in a tube with space left in the printing where the name of the person receiving the invitation may be written in. It is considered poor taste for guests to leave the reception before it is over—and it often lasts five hours.

Artificial flowers are used for the bridal bouquet so that it can be used later in the couple’s new home. At their reception, some brides may choose not to wear the full wedding costume; others may choose to make their own white gowns, with elegant details.

Before the bride and groom leave for their honeymoon, there is a toast (of apple juice) to the Queen, followed by numerous toasts, much singing to the couple, dancing, and light refreshment. At last, all the guests form a circle around the couple, and the bride and groom move around in opposite directions, kissing everyone good-bye. Then an inner circle is formed by family members and all sing “Auld Lang Syne.” Finally, all move in a rush toward the couple and then out again with a glorious shout of good fortune.

**Canada**

It’s a long day for a Latter-day Saint bride and groom in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. First, there is the one-hundred-mile drive to the Cardston Temple for the ceremony in the morning and then the drive back to the wedding dinner that night. The scene of post-ceremony celebration is usually a hotel or the cultural hall. Round tables that can seat eight are set up with white linen and formal centerpieces. There is a head table for members of the wedding party, who sit down only after all guests have gone through the bridal line.

A light supper is served, with the couple making one cut in the white bridal cake and moving about the tables to serve a prewrapped groom’s fruitcake to perhaps three hundred or so guests. If the reception is held in the cultural hall, the friends and family of the bride decorate the room in an elaborate way, with crepe paper streamers, arbors, greens, and flowers. Punch bowls are set up in several places.

It is an honor to be asked to serve as master of ceremonies of the wedding celebration, for this person sets the tone of the evening and announces the program. Often there are musical numbers, readings, toasts to the couple, and the reading of telegrams or congratulatory letters and cards (perhaps sent by guests at the party).

**Mexico**
All marriages in Mexico must be performed by a judge in a civil ceremony. The religious ceremony is held later, followed by a reception. For Mormons in Sonora, Navojoa, the wedding celebration includes a special program at the church and a reception in either the cultural hall or the home of the bride’s parents.

At one wedding the arrangements for the program included a beautiful white cloth on a table at the front of the chapel with a simple vase of greenery—no flowers. Two chairs for the couple faced the pulpit, and behind them sat the families of the bride and groom on special chairs. Then the guests were seated. In all Mexican gatherings, children from infancy up are included and very happily in evidence.

The wedding program included a hymn, a prayer, and talks by family members and the branch president. Then the bride and groom left the chapel and were each given a “father’s blessing” in the branch president’s office. A song and closing prayer closed the program.

The bride made her own floor-length white gown, silver jewelry, and slippers. She carried no flowers. The groom wore a business suit.

A parade of cars and taxis honked its way to the bride’s family home for a luncheon for the fifty or sixty wedding guests. The bridal car led the way, colorfully decorated with huge paper flowers. The home was also bedecked with paper flowers. While some guests ate, others danced or visited. Refreshments included refried frijoles, cheese salad, pasta, and soda pop.

Madison, Wisconsin

Well educated and proud of it, people in college towns such as Madison are careful to “do it by the book,” but with an emphasis on simplicity that would please Thoreau. There are no toasts or programs of any kind, and the decorations are often fresh flowers on the stage behind the bridal line. The university community is often invited to the reception; consequently, many non-Mormons will be included on the guest list. Invitations are the usual formal fold in double envelopes, with guests responding in handwritten notes.

Gifts are not displayed at the reception, but often the couple will hold a small at-home reception for close friends to show their gifts when they return from their honeymoon.

Because the missionary effort is of prime concern in these areas, many converts have been introduced to the gospel at these receptions.

Eastern U.S.A.

Friends of the brides who live in large metropolitan areas of America like Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C., have unique situations with their Mormon marriages. There isn’t (at this time) a temple within fifteen hundred miles. Sometimes the couple attend school in the West and aren’t home to be entertained much before the marriage. One innovation in this instance is that several friends of the bride or her mother will get together and “pool” a modest amount from each person. With suggestions and help from the mother, gifts will be purchased and beautifully wrapped and
presented at a special time. Often the groom will not be known to the hostesses and guests. Hence, a clever script detailing the courtship will be read.

The familiar trend for some couples is to be married during conference time in Salt Lake. Families can make an appropriate visit conveniently at this time and acquaintances from other places may be gathered for conference. There will be a beautiful sit-down wedding breakfast or supper following the ceremony. In some cases, a reception might be held. The bride usually throws her bouquet, in keeping with the tradition that the girl who catches it will be the next one married. The bride may have been through the temple for her own endowments before her wedding day; hence the ceremony is often performed in the early morning.

At a later date, when the couple goes east on a visit or as part of their honeymoon trip, the family will hold an open-house reception with flowers, buffet, music, and photographers. Church members try hard to be an example of our faith and of good propriety when they entertain, because there will always be many nonmembers who will attend such an affair. They hold strictly to Church standards in refreshments, entertainment, and clothing, and everything is as socially correct as possible. The bride and groom may wear traditional formal wedding clothing and give their attendants lovely keepsakes of the occasion, such as jewelry, a book, or embossed stationery.

**California**

Catering food and flowers for weddings in Norwalk Stake in California has earned many a group their expenses for Church activities. Sometimes when a bride is the only member of her family who is a member of the Church, the Relief Society will help plan a party to honor the couple following their temple ceremony.

The party is held in a cultural hall in one of the wards, and a sixteen-foot-long table is set up and covered with a festive net skirt to hold an elaborate wedding cake (decorated with fresh flowers), fruit punch, nuts, and candies. The bridal couple stands before velvet curtains, a wooden gazebo accented with ivy or topiary trees, and swags that are decorated with tiny twinkle lights. The bridal party is traditional, and at least one bridesmaid attends the bride. Bridegrooms lately are wearing pastel-colored dinner jackets instead of the white or classic black tuxedo.

**Samoa**

A Samoan celebration is indeed something to behold. Samoans traditionally make a great celebration of a wedding. The tables are laden not only with enough food to serve the guests who are present, but also enough for each of them to take several times the amount that he can eat home to his family. A whole chicken is placed in front of each guest, and often a small pig is shared by three or four guests. The Samoans bake taro in an underground oven, and then small pieces are broken off and dipped in palisami, a soft mash of coconut milk and taro leaves. Baked bananas are a delight too.

*Elaine Cannon, “Mormon Marriages around the World,” New Era, June 1971, 38*