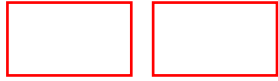


What's New!

## Trail Site 10

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### Home of Vilate Young

*26 Charter Street*

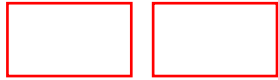
Throughout Salem's history, houses have been moved from neighborhood to neighborhood or from many miles outside the city (see [S33](#)). The Chadwick House and this one, recently moved and preserved by the Peabody Essex Museum, continue that trend. This house was briefly the home of Vilate Young (1830-1902), the daughter of Brigham Young and Miriam Angeline Works Young, and who was born in Mendon, New York. Her father, an early leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, believed strongly in the "law of eternal progression" and that "this life is part of eternity... eternal knowledge and glory are to be obtained and promoted on this earth. Improvement, learning, training, building, and expanding are the joy of life."<sup>14</sup> Vilate's mother died when she was only two, and Vilate was raised by her father and their close friends Vilate (for whom the little girl had been named) and Heber Kimball until Brigham married Mary Ann Angell in 1834. Knowing Salem's reputation for female education and cultural opportunities, Brigham Young sent his daughter to live with his friends Eliza Ann Prescott Felt and Nathaniel Felt in 1842 when she was just twelve. Vilate's father wrote to her regularly, once reminding her "to be steady to your school and practis on the Pianna. Get all you can while you have an opportunity."<sup>15</sup> The Felts welcomed many early leaders of the church into their home, and Brigham Young himself visited his daughter in May of 1844. By June of 1845, after the murder of the church's leader, Joseph Smith, the Felts left Salem for Nauvoo, Illinois, and Vilate is listed as a resident of Winter Quarters (now, Florence), Nebraska, by 1846 — making the sixteen-year-old one of the earliest settlers to endure the grueling western migration. Six hundred residents of their temporary haven from persecution perished during the winter of 1846 and 1847, but Vilate survived and went on to marry Charles Franklin Decker in 1847. That June, they left Winter Quarters for what would become Salt Lake City, Utah, on a thousand-mile journey on foot, pulling handcarts. Vilate and Charles had eight children. He married two more wives and continued to father more children. As Charles's younger offspring arrived, he spent more time with them and less with Vilate. This apparently did not sit well with her, and in a highly unusual act for the times and within the church, Vilate divorced Charles and moved to Lewisville, Idaho, in the

late 1890s to live with her sister Elizabeth. Vilate died a few years later, and the two sisters are buried there side by side.

### Notes

14. Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (Liverpool, England, 1859), 6: 286.

15. Brigham Young to Vilate Young, August 11, 1844 (Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Ut.).



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