

“SORE VEXATION,” THE UTAH SAINTS AND THE GENTILE WAR:  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LDS CHURCH DURING THE CIVIL WAR

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## ABSTRACT

The Mormons, who prefer to be called members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, tried to build a nation during the Civil War. In 1832, their prophet, Joseph Smith, prophesized that a war between the Northern and Southern states had been pre-ordained because of the Gentiles' sins against the Saints. Mormons thought this war would be the beginning of the end times. They believed the Civil War would cause the ruin of all nations—except for the Mormon nation of Zion. Mormons held fast to the promise that God would protect their land. Early members tried to build Zion, but angry anti-Mormon mobs chased them from their fledgling communities. During the Civil War, however, non-Mormons had little time to worry about the Saints. Mormons took full advantage of the lack of scrutiny and concentrated on building the perfect society for Christ's return. After the Civil War, the federal government again turned its attention to the Mormons and polygamy, but the Mormons fortified themselves while the nation warred. The Saints withstood the federal onslaught for close to twenty years because of their growth during the Civil War.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
INTRODUCTION: GENTILE WOES AND THE SAINTS' EXALTATION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: EARLY PERSECUTION AND BUILDING ZION .....	10
CHAPTER 2: THE UTAH SETTLEMENT.....	21
CHAPTER 3: PROPHECY FULFILLED AND THE GROWTH OF ZION .....	43
CONCLUSION: GOD'S GLORY.....	76
EPILOGUE: REIMAGINING THE CIVIL WAR.....	80
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	86
Secondary Sources.....	86
Primary Sources.....	87
Newspapers and Periodicals .....	90
Web Sites .....	90

## INTRODUCTION: GENTILE WOES AND THE SAINTS' EXALTATION

Nineteenth-century Mormons, who commonly refer to themselves as Saints, wanted to build the perfect political and spiritual kingdom in anticipation of Christ's return.<sup>1</sup> However, they seemed to inspire hostility in their neighbors. Non-Mormons who lived next to the Mormons often persecuted them, chasing them from their settlements. In 1847, seventeen years after Joseph Smith created the Church, the Saints thought they finally escaped their persecutors by settling in the west. However, the persecution did not stop; especially after the Mormons admitted they practiced polygamy.

In 1860, as the American nation prepared for the Civil War, the Mormons rediscovered one of Smith's prophecies. In 1832, their martyred prophet predicted the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> His prophecy asserted that North and South would sever their ties and South Carolina would be the first to secede from the Union. After its defection, "war would be poured out upon all nations."<sup>3</sup> According to the prophecy, the war heralded the coming of

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<sup>1</sup> Mormons prefer to be called members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The more common term, Mormons, is used in this work first for expediency and secondly because most historians also use the term Mormon. When referring to the Church or the Church hierarchy, the term LDS (Latter-day Saints) will be used. A guide to the preferred language of the LDS Church can be found at [LDS.org](http://LDS.org).

<sup>2</sup> Smith's prophecy coincided with the nullification crisis in which South Carolina had threatened to secede because of a tariff dispute.

<sup>3</sup> The prophecy about the Civil War was originally printed in the Pearl of Great Price, another book that contained an abridged version of Smith's "visions, translations, and narrations." It can be found on page 43 of the Pearl of Great Price: Being a Choice Selection from the Revelations, Translation and Narrations of Joseph Smith First Prophet, Seer and Revelator to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City Utah: Printed at the Latter-day Saints' Printing and Publishing establishment, 1878). It was later included in the Doctrine and Covenant of the Church of

Christ. It would cause the “full end of all nations,” except for the Mormon nation of Zion.<sup>4</sup> It claimed God would use the war to punish the Mormon persecutors. The prophecy explained that the war would not end until “the cry of the saints, and the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth [*sic*], from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies.”<sup>5</sup> In 1861, when South Carolina seceded first, the Mormons saw the fulfillment of the first part of the prophecy. They exulted. The prophecy proved their prophet’s divinity. Also the Lord was avenging Smith’s death, and the suffering of the Saints. The Mormons believed that God planned to shelter them from the war and that their future had been secured by His protection. They were His chosen people. However, they still had to build a kingdom for Christ’s return.

Americans had too little time and too few resources to concentrate on the Mormons after the Civil War started. The Saints capitalized upon that inattentiveness. The Mormons finally had within their grasp the chance to build their nation: they gathered their people, expanded their territory, and consolidated their power, believing their nation would be the one to lead the world after the Civil War ended. The Mormons had been trying to build a kingdom for years. They wanted to build Zion—a perfect society for Christ’s return—because they believed it would help herald His return.

Historians Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton explained that the Mormons

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Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Containing the Revelations given to Joseph Smith, Jun., The Prophet, for the Building up of the Kingdom of God in the Last Days, (Liverpool: William Budge, 1879) chapter 87, Google Books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=&lr=#v=onepage&q=87&f=false> (accessed January 28, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Pearl of Great Price, 43-44.

<sup>5</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 87:7.

were premillenarians, believing Christ's return was imminent, and that He would bring in a "thousand year reign of peace."<sup>6</sup> However, the Mormons also believed that Christ could not return until they created a community that was peaceful and prosperous.<sup>7</sup> The time before Christ's return was to be filled with wars and pestilence, but the Mormons had been promised by Smith that they would find sanctuary in Zion. They had also been told that the righteous people of the world would flee to Zion for shelter as their world crumbled.<sup>8</sup> The Civil War reconfirmed the Mormons' belief that God favored them, since they escaped the destruction that was tearing apart the nation. However, the Mormons were not unaffected by the Civil War. The war brought a sense of urgency to their nation-building. They wanted to be ready to welcome the world's righteous and Christ when He returned.

In the past, Mormons had been thwarted in their attempt to build Zion. Non-Mormons (Gentiles) persecuted the Saints for decades. They lost land, liberty, and their lives. Gentiles chased the Mormons westward to what would later become Utah, but even ensconced in their mountainous fortress, the Mormons did not escape Gentile scorn. Mormons often engendered contempt because they practiced polygamy, something they publicly announced in 1852, well after their exodus to Utah. Mormon marriage practices shocked many Americans. In 1856, the Republican Party declared they wanted to eliminate the "twin relics of barbarism": slavery and polygamy. The federal government

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<sup>6</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* ed. 2 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 36.

<sup>7</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 37.

<sup>8</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 15:14.

even sent an army to Utah in 1857 to quell what they claimed was Mormon seditiousness.<sup>9</sup>

The Gentiles' destructive intrusions upon the Mormon communities made it impossible for the Saints to create their model nation. They grew angry and frustrated.

Mormons believed the destruction wrought by the Civil War would be a just punishment for the Gentiles. According to Smith, the Civil War would just be the beginning of the Gentiles' troubles. He prophesized that Gentile destiny also included "famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven and the fierce and vivid lighting."<sup>10</sup> Mormons thought that the catastrophes would not end until the Lord satisfied his wrath and avenged the Saints' spilled blood.<sup>11</sup> Many Sunday sermons reinforced this belief, espousing the theory that Gentiles caused their own woes. Mormons preached that God directed his anger at the Gentiles because of their heretofore unpunished sins against them. And they felt that the Gentiles had much penance to do.

During the Civil War, the Union needed Mormon cooperation, but they could not gain it with military force. The Union needed their soldiers for the eastern battlefields, and few could be spared to enforce the federal anti-polygamy laws in Utah. Historian E.B. Long, who wrote one of the only histories dedicated to the study of the Mormons during the Civil War, asserted that Utah was an important asset for the Union. He argued that:

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<sup>9</sup> Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 58, 60.

<sup>10</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, chapter 87.

<sup>11</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 87:7.



Utah Territory would have been important because of its geographical position astride transportation and communication arteries even if it had not been an anomaly...being both a civil and a religious entity of considerable size and influence.<sup>12</sup>

Although Long may have exaggerated the importance of Utah, he is correct that Salt Lake City was a gateway to the west. The Mormons built a small oasis in a dry desert. It offered respite to weary westward travelers. It also contained a telegraph station, which had been completed in 1862 due largely to Mormon support. Its construction made rapid communication between the east and the west possible.<sup>13</sup> As Long pointed out, religious life in Utah was indelibly tied to the civil government of Utah; Mormons made up ninety percent of the population.<sup>14</sup> If the Union wanted to control Utah, they needed a working relationship with the Mormons.

Though the Saints believed that the United States was being ripped apart because of the way its people had treated them, they did not believe in secession. Secession was for radicals. Joseph Smith taught that democracy was essential for rebuilding Jesus' true Church (though the best form of government was believed to be a theocratic democracy). The Saints believed that God inspired the creation of the Constitution. The Mormons asserted that if politicians followed the guidelines set forth in the Constitution, their laws should be followed. However, the Mormons interpreted the First Amendment differently than many Americans. They believed the amendment offered *complete* freedom of religion and for the Saints that meant non-interference in the Church's affairs--even if

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<sup>12</sup> E.B. Long, *The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory During the Civil War*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), xi.

<sup>13</sup> Long, 42.

<sup>14</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 172.

their religious practices were at odds with Americans' common culture. When politicians tried to govern Mormon marriage practices, the Saints willingly disobeyed laws because they felt anti-polygamy laws were un-Constitutional. The Saints only followed laws that appeared to be grounded in the Constitution—e.g., laws that didn't interfere with their religious doctrine. The Mormons had a reverence for the Constitution. They held that their nation of Zion would lead the world into peace after wars had consumed the earth, and Christ returned. And the Saints planned to use the Constitution as a template for the new Utopia. The Mormons felt the Constitution was paramount and therefore, even though the Mormons believed the United States was destined to fall, they never tried to secede. Their lack of secessionist leanings pacified the federal government somewhat. Just as importantly the Union required Mormon cooperation. Therefore during the Civil War the government allowed issues, like polygamy, that garnered national attention, to slide quietly into the background. It was a temporary truce.

For a short time, between 1861 and late 1862, the Mormons controlled all branches of the Utah Territorial government. They did not squander their advantage. They consolidated their people by encouraging the emigration of *all* converts to Utah, increasing the Mormon population in Utah. They also created colonies throughout Utah and beyond, to expand their land holdings. Because of Smith's prophecy, the Saints associated the Civil War with Christ's second coming, believing it would closely follow the war. Therefore, the Mormons concentrated on their religious mission of preparing a kingdom for Christ during the national conflict, greatly enhancing their growth.

In late 1862, the 3rd California volunteer regiment, led by Colonel Patrick Connor, marched into Utah, ending the unofficial truce between the federal government

and the Mormons<sup>15</sup>. The regiment had been ordered to protect the mail route. Colonel Connor chose to build his base overlooking Salt Lake City. Connor disliked the Mormons and made it his goal to stop their expansion. He tried to lure non-Mormons to Utah, promising prospectors that Utah was full of precious metals. His efforts yielded few results. Connor's antagonistic attitude angered the Mormons and reminded them of past persecutions. The Mormons felt betrayed by Connor's undiplomatic attitude and the fact that the federal government even sent an army. The Mormons decided to shift some of their focus from expansion to protection. They wanted to be ready if Connor's troops tried to enforce any laws contradictory to Mormon belief (like anti-polygamy laws). However, the Mormons still had the upper-hand, greatly outnumbering the troops, and they still believed in Smith's prophecy. They continued to expand Zion.

By 1865, the Mormons realized the American nation survived the Civil War. They had striven to create a perfect community for Christ, but He had not arrived. In order to reconcile the prophecy with reality, Mormon intellectuals began to reexamine it. Before the Civil War officially ended, new interpretations of the prophecy began to appear in Mormon religious tracts. After the Civil War, the Federal government utilized all its power to control the Utah Territory and obliterate polygamy. Post-Civil War federal constraints contrasted starkly with Mormon theory on the Civil War. The Mormons began to de-emphasize the belief that the Civil War signified the imminent return of Christ. Instead, they focused on Smith's accuracy as a prophet. They often expounded upon the fact that he correctly predicted the Civil War twenty-nine years

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<sup>15</sup> E.B. Long, 94.

before it began. Until the last decade of the nineteenth century, Mormons would use the prophecy as proof of Smith's divinity.

The Saints grew spiritually and numerically during the Civil War. Their population increased due to immigration. They expanded their land-holdings, and the belief that they were God's chosen people was reinforced. However, this period of Mormon history is often overlooked. Noted historians like Leonard J. Arrington produced volumes that explore the LDS religion from its start to present day, socially and economically. These histories have focused on the broader picture (early persecutions, Brigham Young's leadership, and the federal government's crack-down on polygamy after the Civil War), leaving little room to intensively explore brief periods of time like the Civil War. Many others have studied polygamy. It was a defining characteristic of the Mormons during the nineteenth century and an oddity in American history. Numerous social histories examine the lives of polygamous families and the effect polygamy had upon women.<sup>16</sup> Other historians, like Sarah Barringer Gordon, a socio-political historian, concentrated on pre- and post-Civil War Utah when the Mormons and the United States clashed most forcefully. Americans focused on polygamy and taking care of the "Mormon problem" during these time periods. All of these histories add immensely to our understanding of Mormons during the nineteenth century. However, they have left a gap in the historical record. At least one historian, E.B. Long, has focused on the Civil War and the Mormons, but his research was largely about the conflicts between Brigham Young and Colonel Patrick Connor. While Young and

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<sup>16</sup> A few historians who have studied Mormon polygamy are Kathryn M. Daynes, Joan Iverson, and Jesse L. Embry.

Connor's relationship is fascinating, the story of the Civil War has greater significance. The Mormons grew immensely during the Civil War as they awaited Christ's return. They unwittingly prepared themselves for the federal onslaught that occurred after the conflict. For after the war, Washington D.C. concentrated the full weight of its power on eradicating polygamy.

As the American nation warred, the Mormons built a powerful base. The colonies they built during this time, and the immigrants that arrived, expanded Mormon influence in the west. The Saints had also grown spiritually. Though the Mormons didn't rejoice in the destruction wrought by the Civil War, it reaffirmed their belief that God blessed them, christening them as His chosen people. While other Americans fought and died in the Civil War, the Mormons flourished. By 1870, the United States turned its full attention back toward the "second relic of barbarism": polygamy. However, the strength the Mormons found during the Civil War era allowed them to resist federal government interference for the next twenty years.

## CHAPTER 1: EARLY PERSECUTION AND BUILDING ZION

In 1861, the Mormons, safely ensconced in the Salt Lake Valley, watched the American nation implode over slavery and states' rights. However, before their exodus to the Great Salt Lake in Utah, the Mormons had been chased from settlement to settlement in the east. Their houses were burned, their homes were robbed, and some, most notably Joseph Smith, lost their lives. Smith commanded his people to gather together and create Zion, but anti-Mormon mobs thwarted their efforts. The ideal for a perfected society began to take shape during these formative years (between 1830 and 1844). Persecuted, the Mormons had turned to the federal government for help in the early 1840s, but they received none. The Saints realized they would have to gain statehood to safeguard their earthly property and their physical beings. Protection of their temporal existence tied in with their spiritual beliefs. They thought statehood would give them earthly authority over their affairs and that it would permit them to create a strong Mormon nation to welcome Christ when he returned. However, Mormons wanted more than protection, they also wanted justice. For that, they turned to God, whom they believed punished the Gentiles during the Civil War.

The Mormons started colonies in Ohio in the early 1830s but hostile neighbors chased them from their settlements. They tried to settle in Missouri after they had been exiled from Ohio but were forced from the area by 1838. Illinois offered the Mormons a brief respite from 1839 to 1846, but the murder of their prophet, Joseph Smith, in 1844

ended their attempts at colonization in Illinois. These early persecutions shaped the Mormon view of the world for decades—particularly the cruelty they had encountered in Missouri. The violence in Missouri lasted close to ten years, and the exasperated Mormons accused the Missourians of unfounded malice. Joseph Smith told his followers that God selected Missouri as His chosen land, the place to build Zion.<sup>17</sup>

Nineteenth-century Mormons planned to gather in Zion. It was supposed to be beautiful, successful, and blessed. According to Smith, this model society would serve as a beacon of hope and light that would attract all the righteous. He described it, stating that “Zion shall flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her, and she shall be an ensign unto the people.”<sup>18</sup> Smith began to tell his followers to gather only a year after he organized the Church in 1830. They planned to build Zion in preparation for Christ’s anticipated return.

Along with Smith’s revelations, the *Book of Mormon* made it clear that Zion’s builders would be blessed. In First Nephi, a chapter of the *Book of Mormon*, it states: “blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion.” According to the *Book of Mormon*, just as God blessed some, He cursed others. First Nephi declared, “All that fight against Zion shall be destroyed.”<sup>19</sup> The Mormons believed that they needed to build up Zion in order to be spiritually fit when Jesus returned, and that God planned to punish all persons who impeded its growth.

The Mormons thought the righteous would find sanctuary in Zion. The *Doctrine*

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<sup>17</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 84:3.

<sup>18</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 64:41-42.

<sup>19</sup> Book of Mormon: 1 Nephi 22:14.

*and Covenants*, another LDS holy text, explained that in the tumultuous time before Jesus' return the only way to escape the pestilence and wars would be to gather in Zion.<sup>20</sup> The Saints held that the Civil War was a sign of Jesus' imminent return. After it started, they would be able to await the fulfillment of the many prophecies that promised both blessings and destruction. Mormons would be safe in Zion. Smith claimed the "wicked" would not invade it because they would fear it. One prophecy declared that the enemies of Zion would cry: "let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand [against them]."<sup>21</sup> According to Church doctrine, those who gathered in Zion would be spared the violence and bloodshed of warfare.

One of the first settlements the Mormons tried to create was in Missouri's Jackson County, near the town of Independence. It was a short-lived settlement. Disgruntled Missourians attacked the Mormons in 1833, two years after Smith declared the Mormons should gather there.<sup>22</sup> Missourians feared the influx of Mormons. And the Saints' self-isolation inspired distrust from outsiders. On July 20, 1833, the Missourians formed a committee to discuss what should be done with the "Mormonites." The *Niles Weekly Register* reported the findings. The committee's foremost fear was the growth of the Mormon settlement and their economic and political cohesiveness. They ironically declared they had "nothing to say" about the veracity of the Mormon religion. However, they had plenty to say about their religious practices:

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<sup>20</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 45:66.

<sup>21</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 45:70.

<sup>22</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 45; Doctrine and Covenants, 57:1-3.



Of their pretended revelations from heaven—their personal intercourse with God and his Angels—the maladies they pretend to cure with the laying on of hands—and the contemptible gibberish with which they continually profane the Sabbath...we have nothing to say. Vengeance belongs to God alone.<sup>23</sup>

Clearly the Mormons offended the Missourians' religious sensibilities, and this increased Missourian distrust of the Saints.

In an effort to stop the Mormon ingress, Jackson County residents drafted a statement declaring that the Mormons could neither move nor settle in their territory. They also ordered those that had already settled in the county to leave. The committee promised to stop any violence if the Mormons abided by their edicts.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, the Saints and the county residents continued to antagonize each other. On July 26, the *Niles Weekly Register* gave an update on the problems between the Missourians and Mormons. It reported that the Missourians “became exasperated at some specimens of their [Mormons] predatory habits.”<sup>25</sup> In retaliation, they destroyed a printing press and the home of a Church leader “and inflicted considerable injury upon the persons and property of the whole brotherhood.”<sup>26</sup> Sympathies obviously lay with the Missourians who were painted as the victims of “predatory” Mormons.

Missouri residents forced the Mormons to flee several other counties. Five years after they had been exiled from Jackson County, they faced the same fate in Daviess

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<sup>23</sup> “Regulating the Mormonites,” *Niles Weekly Register*, September 14, 1834.  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=x2wAAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA48&dq=niles+weekly+register+Mormon>  
 on (accessed January 8, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> “Regulating the Mormonites.”

<sup>25</sup> Emphasis on “predatory” appears in original document.

<sup>26</sup> “Regulating the Mormonites.”

County. In this case, the Missourians refused to let the Mormons vote because of their alleged tendency to bloc-vote. Missourians feared that they would become the political pawns of the Saints if they allowed them a political voice. The Mormons' preference for socializing only with other Mormons also tended to raise antagonistic feelings between them and their neighbors.<sup>27</sup> A mob eventually sacked the Saints' settlement and forcibly evicted the faithful from their land. Parley P. Pratt, a Mormon intellectual, chronicled the persecution, writing of "the horrid scenes of murder, treason, robbery and plunder."<sup>28</sup> He claimed the Missourians were motivated by greed, declaring that they had "long watched our [Mormons'] increasing power and prosperity with greedy and avaricious eyes."<sup>29</sup> Pratt stated that it was the Missourians' desire to steal the Mormons' prosperous lands that provoked the attack.<sup>30</sup>

The mobs exiled the Mormons from their homes and arrested several of their leaders, including Joseph Smith. Parley Pratt wrote another book describing their imprisonment (he too was jailed). He referred to the men guarding him as "a gang of demons in human shape."<sup>31</sup> A precedent had been set: Mormons began to view their

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<sup>27</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 51.

<sup>28</sup> Parley P. Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints...with a Sketch of their Rise, Progress and Doctrine* (New York: J.W. Harrison, 1840), preface, HBLL Digital Collection: <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?NCMP1820-1846,13737> (accessed January 28, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution of the Church*, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution of the Church*, 58.

<sup>31</sup> Parley P. Pratt, *The Late Persecution Inflicted By the State of Missouri Upon the Mormons...By Order of the Executive*, (Mexico, N.V.: Office of the Oswego Co. Democrat, 1840), preface, HBLL digital collections: 19<sup>th</sup> century Mormon publications , <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?NCMP1820-1846,13735> (accessed January 8, 2010).

persecutors as enemies of righteousness. Due to continued persecution, this belief became even more firmly entrenched in Mormon doctrine by the time the Civil War started.

Much of Pratt's frustration arose from the fact that the Mormons had very few allies. Many Mormons fled their homes with nothing but what they were wearing. They forfeited their lands and their livelihoods. Smith wanted them to be compensated for their loss. According to Pratt's description of the persecutions, the Missouri legislature refused to help the Mormons, and in fact betrayed them, by appropriating \$200,000 for the militia that helped exile the Mormons.<sup>32</sup> A Mormon delegation went to Washington, D.C. to personally plead their case to the United States President, Martin Van Buren. According to Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph Smith's mother, the President sympathized with the Mormons' plight but could not help them.<sup>33</sup> As Historian Sarah Barringer Gordon explained, the federal government was unable to help. During the first half of nineteenth century, they had little power to overrule state laws and practices.<sup>34</sup>

The Mormons sought protection under the Constitution's First Amendment, which guaranteed religious freedom but were sorely disappointed. They believed the Constitution was a divine document. Smith co-authored a letter in 1840 that declared "that the constitution [*sic*] of the United States is a glorious standard, it is founded in

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<sup>32</sup>Pratt, *The Late Persecution*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and his Progenitors for many Generations*, (Liverpool: S.W. Richards, 1853) 264, Google Books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=gWUoAAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Biographical+Sketches+of+Joseph+Smith+the+Prophet+and+his+Progenitors+for+many+Generations> (accessed January 29, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Gordon, 107-108.

wisdom, it is a heavenly banner.”<sup>35</sup> The letter also included a statement that declared that Mormons based their theology on the beliefs “that God is true, that the constitution [*sic*] of the United States is true, that the bible is true, the *Book of Mormon* is true, that Christ is true, that the ministering of angels is true.”<sup>36</sup> Smith grouped the American Constitution together with God, Christ, and the Scriptures. It was considered a divine work and the federal government’s inability to enforce its articles seemed anti-American to the Mormons.

The persecution in Missouri taught Mormons that owning property was an ethereal right subject to the whims of the majority and not actually protected under federal law. This hard-learned lesson translated into the belief that: above all, they needed a community comprised mostly of Mormons. Secondly, the Mormons wanted to rule that community so that they could keep what they worked so hard to build. Essentially, this explains the Mormons relentless drive for statehood. And lastly, they learned that the only higher power they could rely upon to assist them was God.

Curses against the Mormons’ persecutors abounded. Pratt warned that a dire fate awaited Missouri. He declared it would “be looked upon by her sister states as a star fallen from heaven, a ruined and degraded outcast from the federal union...the whole civilized world will detest and abhor her.”<sup>37</sup> Smith also cursed the Missourians, stating

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<sup>35</sup> Joseph Smith Jr., Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, Alexander Mcrae, “An Extract of a Letter Written to Bishop Partridge, and the Saints in General: by Joseph Smith Jr. and others while in Prison,” *Times and Seasons* Vol. 1, (July 1840). HBL digital collections: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century publications, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?NCMP1820-1846,9278> (accessed January 10, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> Joseph Smith Jr., Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, Alexander Mcrae, 134.

<sup>37</sup> Pratt, *The Late Persecution*, 28.

that because they hindered the Saints in their work, God would deliver “judgment, wrath, and indignation, wailing, and anguish, and gnashing of teeth upon their heads, unto the third and fourth generation.”<sup>38</sup> Several of Joseph Smith’s prophecies, like the one that predicted the war between the North and the South, hinted at the punishments that awaited their tormenters. As the *Doctrine and Covenants* promised:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall lay their hands upon you by violence, ye shall command to be smitten in my name: and, behold, I will smite them according to your words, in mine own due time.<sup>39</sup>

This prophecy, like many of Smith’s, was vague. “In mine own due time” could have meant one year or a thousand years, and the punishment for those who smote the Mormons was unspecified. Smith’s Civil War prophecy was much more exact, declaring that the North and South were destined to fight because of slavery, and that the first to secede would be South Carolina. Smith even reiterated this prophecy in 1844. He reminded his people that Christ’s time was at hand, stating “that the commencement of the difficulties which will cause much bloodshed previous to the coming of the Son of Man will be in South Carolina.”<sup>40</sup>

Mormons did not discuss the Civil War prophecy during these early years except in abstract ways. They mentioned the punishment that awaited the Gentiles but in general terms. Mormons attributed disasters and plagues to God’s vengeance. The *Latter-day Saints Millennial Star*, a periodical published by Mormons, printed a section

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<sup>38</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 102: 15.

<sup>39</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 9:7.

<sup>40</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 130:12.

named, “The Signs of the Times,” chronicling worldwide disasters with solemn glee. The 1843 edition outlined the various catastrophes, like earthquakes, floods, and the mysterious “black tongue” disease that was striking down Missourians and baffled “all skill.”<sup>41</sup> They also claimed that the Mormons were flourishing. In the same article, it was stated that the Mormons were “prospering,” but “the enemies of truth, who appeared for a time rampant with rage...are sinking into insignificance.”<sup>42</sup> The Mormons often asserted that they were thriving while the world was suffering, but it was hard to prove. Only three years had passed since the Mormons fled Missouri. They started to build up a new community in Illinois, but their neighbors eyed them suspiciously. In 1842, rumors of polygamy began to circulate. Some found the Mormons’ new doctrine odd and perhaps dangerous. Historians Arrington and Bitton explained that while the Saints built the new city, Smith began to introduce the doctrine of, “plurality of gods, ceremonial temple rites, baptism for the dead.”<sup>43</sup> Non-Mormons became wary. The Mormons were tampering with well-entrenched American protestant values.<sup>44</sup>

Anti-Mormon writers proliferated. Some attacked the founder of the Church, Joseph Smith, in attempts to discredit him and his family. Author J.B. Hunt described Smith’s family as “unprincipled, idle, ignorant, and superstitious—believing firmly in

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<sup>41</sup> “Signs of the Times,” *Latter-day Saints Millennial Star* Vol. 3 (April 1843), 200-205, 202. HBLL Digital Collections: Mormon Publication 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?MStar,20939> (accessed January 8, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> “Signs of the Times,” 205.

<sup>43</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 69; Mormons believe that this world (Earth) and some others, are only ruled by God and his son Jesus, but that there are other worlds that have their own Gods.

<sup>44</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 69-70, 75.

ghosts, witches, and enchantments, fortunetelling, and &c.”<sup>45</sup> Other authors concentrated on the new scriptures. Author John W. Barber described the *Book of Mormon* as “one of the weakest products ever attempted to be palmed off as a divine revelation.”<sup>46</sup> Still other critics portrayed Smith’s followers as delusional fanatics. As far away as England, the Reverend Henry Caswall of the Church of England wrote:

It has been said by a venerable authority, that "there is nothing new under the sun;" but the existence of the Mormon delusion...seems to be an exception to this proverb. It is true, however, that the followers of this imposture, being lunatics, are under the moon.<sup>47</sup>

By 1844, an angry mob of men martyred the Mormon prophet while he was imprisoned in an Illinois jail cell.<sup>48</sup> Such continued persecution made it hard to honestly declare that Mormons were prospering, but when the Civil War started that changed. During the Civil War, Mormon rhetoric that denounced the Gentiles increased, because the Mormon nation of Zion began to grow like never before. However, in order to escape anti-Mormons sentiment and violence and create their Zion, Mormons had to move westward.

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<sup>45</sup> James H. Hunt, *Mormonism Embracing the Origin, Rise, and Progress of the Sect with an Examination of the Book of Mormon...With an Appendix, Giving an Account of the Late Disturbances in Illinois which Resulted in the Death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith* (St. Louis: Ustick & Davis, 1844), 5. Google Books:  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=55YQAAAIAAJ&pg=PA241&dq=James+H+Hunt+mormon&as> (accessed March 8, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> John W. Barber, *Historical Collections of the State of New York ...with Geographical Descriptions of the Counties, Cities, and Principal Villages, throughout the State* (New York: Clark, Austin & Co., 1851), 397, Google Books:  
<http://books.google.com/books?id=Y0kVAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA398&dq=historical+description+of+N ew+York+Mormon&lr=&as> (accessed January 29, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Henry Caswall, “The City of the Mormons ; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842,” *The Church of England Quarterly Review*, Vol. 8 (January 1842), 45.

<sup>48</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 135:1.

The Mormons in an attempt to save themselves began to search for a more isolated region to inhabit. Even before Smith's death, the LDS leadership discussed moving farther westward. After Smith was killed, the Mormons enacted their plans (internal squabbles about who the next prophet should be and the details of how to move a large population of people delayed the Mormon exodus for a couple of years after Smith's death).<sup>49</sup> The move westward isolated the Mormons geographically from the rest of the United States. In fact, until the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in September of 1847, the Mormons were officially in Mexican territory.<sup>50</sup> By July of 1847, the first group of Mormons, including the new Church prophet, Brigham Young, arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.<sup>51</sup> Though the Mormons had been chased from their first Zion, in Missouri, and their prophet lay murdered, they did not give up the dream of Zion. But the almost constant persecution left an indelible imprint upon those who suffered through it. Mormons still believed the Constitution was divinely inspired, but they knew they would only gain its full protection with statehood. Bitterness against the "mobocrats" and the loss of dignity, as well as property, seeped into Mormon sermons and literature. They reported occurrences like the "black tongue" plague in Missouri somewhat gleefully. The Mormons believed God would redress the wrongs against them; and when the Civil War came, it seemed as if His vengeance was at hand.

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<sup>49</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 47-51.

<sup>50</sup> James A. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 3.

<sup>51</sup> Doctrine and Covenants, 111: 1; Arrington and Bitton, 101.



## CHAPTER 2: THE UTAH SETTLEMENT

In Utah, the Saints escaped physical persecution, but not condemnation. When they announced the practice of polygamy in 1852, the United States press (and some foreign authors) attacked them. Reformist authors and sensationalist journalists accused Mormons of everything from debauchery to treason. Mormons petitioned the federal government for statehood to protect themselves, but the government denied their request. This did not stop Mormon endeavors to create a community that was self-governed, but their nation-building halted when President James Buchanan sent an army to Utah to stop a “Mormon rebellion.” Buchanan installed a federally-appointed governor, and the Mormons seethed with anger. The federal government now controlled the Utah Territory. The Mormons viciously denounced federal law-makers, creating more tension between themselves and the United States, and became even more determined to gain statehood to control their destiny

Mormons hoped they had been delivered from persecution. The Saints trusted that God led them to Utah so they could find peace in the mountainous valleys. While celebrating the building of the Salt Lake Valley temple in April of 1853, LDS leader Edward Hunter told his audience that they were safe in “the Valleys of the mountains.” And he affirmed that God guided the Saints to Utah. He averred that, “we have been led by His Almighty power and watchful guidance. We have been delivered from our

enemies, from our oppressors.”<sup>52</sup> The statement emphasized God’s role in leading them to Utah and protecting them, and de-emphasized past persecutions. While the past violence still weighed heavily upon the Mormon conscious, they decided to view themselves as blessed, not as victims. The Mormons’ first choice for Zion had not been Utah, but their success there made them embrace it. They felt sheltered and protected. Emily Hill, a Mormon poet, wrote rapturous poetry about Zion. According to Hill, the rest of the world feared Christ’s return. She wrote, the people of Babylon’s “hearts are failing that never knew fear, For they think He is coming, they feel He is near.”<sup>53</sup> However, Hill did not feel the Saints had any reason to dread Christ’s return; they were in fact filled with “a blissful sensation.”<sup>54</sup> God protected the Mormons in Utah, or as Hill wrote, “mid the hills of the great Western Nation.”<sup>55</sup> The Saints concentrated on building their kingdom.

The Mormons applied for statehood only two years after they first rolled into the Salt Lake Valley. They hoped becoming a state would protect their lifestyle and their property (this was a temporary solution as they awaited Christ’s return). They drafted a Constitution and set up a government modeled after that of the United States government.<sup>56</sup> Ambitious dreams blossomed. The Mormon-proposed boundaries for the

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<sup>52</sup> Edward Hunter, “Persecutions, Position, Prospects, and Agency of the Saints,” in *Journal of Discourses* vol. 2, 36.

<sup>53</sup> Emily Hill, “Signs of the Times,” 1854, “Emily Hill Woodmansee papers 1836-1906,” L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B Lee Library Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah..

<sup>54</sup> Hill, “Signs of the Times.”

<sup>55</sup> Hill, “Signs of the Times.”

<sup>56</sup> Gustive Larson, *The Americanization of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1971), 4-5.

state of Deseret illuminate how badly they wanted a nation for their growth. They asked for a large area including most of present day Nevada, all of Utah, and parts of Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. The Mormons wanted the room to expand and explore diverse economic avenues. They included both Los Angeles and San Diego in their original boundary map. This was an attempt to have access to a Pacific sea-port for trading. Mormons were trying to become economically independent, so Zion would not have to rely on Babylon. After all, they believed Babylon was destined to fall and Zion would be the only nation left.



Idaho State University, "Mormon Settlement of Southeastern Idaho," <http://imnh.isu.edu/digitalatlas/geog/rrt/part3/chp6/46.htm> (accessed February 15, 2010).

However, non-Mormons soon began to interfere with the Mormons' western kingdom. In 1849, prospectors discovered gold in California. Men swarmed westward to become rich. The '49ers often traveled through Salt Lake City on their way to California. Of the almost 100,000 people who journeyed to California, as many as 30,000 went

through Salt Lake. Those who returned to the east often carried tales of the “peculiar” Mormons.<sup>57</sup> And by 1852, even before the Mormons made any official announcement, the *New York Times* printed an article outing the Mormons as polygamists.<sup>58</sup> Other writers began to chronicle what they believed were Mormon atrocities.

By the 1850s, exposés on polygamy were as common as they were titillating. Historians John Haupt and Leonard Arrington found that fifty anti-Mormon novels were written between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century.<sup>59</sup> Books like *Fifteen Years among the Mormons*, *Female Life Among the Mormons*, and *Mormon Wives a Narrative of Facts Stranger than Fiction* told the harrowing tales of Mormon wives.<sup>60</sup> Even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s fictionalized detective Sherlock Holmes felt the effects of the alleged Mormon treachery. Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet and the Sign of the Four*, described the Mormons as murderous, lecherous, and

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<sup>57</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, “Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900” (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 68.

<sup>58</sup> “The Mormons in Utah,” *New York Daily Times*, January 6, 1852 .

<sup>59</sup> Arrington, Leonard J.; Haupt, Jon. “Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature.” *Western Humanities Review*, 1968 22(3), 244.

<sup>60</sup> Nelson Winch Green, *Fifteen Years among the Mormons: Narrative of Mrs. Mary Nettie V. Smith Late of Great Salt Lake City*. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1858) Google Books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=D5kRfYSONPkC&pg=PA175&dq=Fifteen+Years+among+the+Mormons:+Narrative+of+Mrs.+Mary+Nettie+V.+Smith+Late+of+Great+Salt+Lake+City> (accessed January 11, 2010); Marie Ward, *Female Life Among the Mormons: A Narrative of Many Years Personal Experience By the Wife of a Mormon Elder Recently From Utah*, (New York: Burdick Brothers, 1857), Google books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=iJGcBQTA-OoC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Female+Life+Among+the+Mormons:+A+Narrative+of+Many+Years+Personal+Experience+By+the+Wife+of+a+Mormon+Elder+Recently+From+Utah> (accessed January 10 2010); Metta Victoria Fuller, *Mormon Wives a Narrative of Facts Stranger than Fiction*, (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856) Google books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=IHUoAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Mormon+Wives+a+Narrative+of+Facts+Stranger+than+Fiction> (accessed January 10, 2010).

traitorous.<sup>61</sup> In her pseudo-non-fiction novel, *A Females Life Among the Mormons*, Ward accused Mormons of infanticide, incest, murder, and torture.<sup>62</sup> According to Ward, polygamy caused these horrible atrocities. She claimed that Mormon women were tortured; some were branded by hot irons, while others were tied to trees and whipped, for speaking against polygamy. Others mysteriously disappeared when they expressed dissatisfaction with the Mormon lifestyle.<sup>63</sup> The authors favored tales of tortured wives and broken hearts. Women often died of melancholy when their husbands took a second wife. They also claimed a dreadful side effect of polygamy was that children born of such unions were unruly, sometimes sickly, and most often ill-behaved.<sup>64</sup>

Reformist authors often accused Mormons of treason. Ward wrote that she “had long suspected the Church leaders of disloyalty to the Federal Government [and]...knew that the whole creed and code of their religion was opposed to republicanism.”<sup>65</sup> The introduction of the novel, *Fifteen Years among the Mormons...*, declared that Brigham Young’s and the LDS leadership’s “principal business” was “the commission of crimes of the most atrocious character; among which may be included robbery, murder, and treason.”<sup>66</sup> Though Nelson Green’s book contained fewer accusations of treason than Ward and Fuller’s books, it nevertheless warned of the Mormons’ foul intentions. The

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<sup>61</sup> Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlett and the Sign of the Four*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904), 99-104.

<sup>62</sup> Ward, 66, 236-237.

<sup>63</sup> Ward, 236-237.

<sup>64</sup> Gordon, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Ward, 379.

<sup>66</sup> Green, xi.

appendix stated that the Mormons did not give “a fig” about statehood but only wanted self-government. In fact, Mormons wanted statehood mainly because they believed it would give them autonomy and self-governance.<sup>67</sup> Their ideology closely mimicked that of the American South—a complete confidence in state’s rights. However, their attitudes did not completely coincide. While the Mormons believed states had the right to control their domestic institutions (like slavery and polygamy), they did not believe states had a right to secede. They considered the Constitution to be sacrosanct.

Despite their strong belief in the Constitution, accusations of Mormon treason abounded. When *The New York Times* featured news of Utah and the Mormons, it often depicted them as traitorous and lecherous. In April of 1857, the *Times* reprinted a section from an article published in the *Deseret News*<sup>68</sup> which, according to the *Times*, was defiant in nature. The section from the *Deseret News* was actually quite inflammatory, first complaining about the federal government’s interference with Utah’s territorial government, and then asking, “How long, think ye, can such oppression be quietly endured?”<sup>69</sup> The *Times* chose not to print the section that discussed the Declaration of Independence and acknowledged that the Constitution was the “supreme LAW of the land.”<sup>70</sup> The *Deseret News* article tried to prove that the federal government had no right

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<sup>67</sup> Green, 322.

<sup>68</sup> The *Deseret News* was Salt Lake City’s newspaper, and published Church-sanctioned information.

<sup>69</sup> “Mormon Rebellion..” *New York Daily Times*, April 20, 1857, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed October 21, 2009).

<sup>70</sup> U.S. Appointments and Legislation for her Territories,” *Deseret News*, January 28, 1857, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews1,6414> (accessed October 21, 2009), emphasis on “law” in original document.

to appoint unwanted territorial government officials. Citizens of the Utah Territory had already democratically elected their own officials.<sup>71</sup> This became an ongoing quarrel between the federal government and the Mormons. Most Utahans considered themselves to be part of a Democratic system, but the system was also deeply influenced by the church. It was a theocracy of sorts. The Saints voted for their officials, but inevitably those elected would be church leaders. Mormons saw nothing wrong with their theocratic government. They believed they were correctly combining democratic principles with God's laws. As Orson Pratt said, "all good principles and laws have emanated from the Almighty and have come to man by inspiration from Him. For instance the government of the United States or the Constitution came from Him."<sup>72</sup> Pratt would also explain that the United States government would not survive, as it was, because the world would eventually unite under the banner of Zion. He stated:

will the government of the United States continue forever? No... the day will come when the United States government and all others will be uprooted, and the kingdoms of this world will be united in one, and the kingdom of our god will govern the whole earth, and bear universal sway.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps the Mormons damaged their cause with such rhetoric, but it seemed that Mormon enemies would find fault with anything the Mormons did. They accused Mormons of colluding with the Native Americans to attack westward travelers. Rumors of this sort started early in the Church's history and continued as Church members moved

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<sup>71</sup> "Mormon Rebellion"; "U.S. Appointments and Legislation for her Territories."

<sup>72</sup> Orson Pratt, "The Kingdom of God," *Journal of Discourses* vol. 3, 71.

<sup>73</sup> Pratt, "The Kingdom of God," 71. Pratt also said he declared this on his own authority and not that of the people.

westward.<sup>74</sup> The accusations of a Mormon/Indian conspiracy increased in 1855 when Native Americans killed Captain John W. Gunnison, and a small group of men, while they surveyed the Utah Territory for the railroad. Federal territorial officials accused the Utes of murder and tried them in a Utah Territorial court. The jury (which was all Mormon, if the *Times* is to be believed) found them guilty of manslaughter and sentenced them to three years' incarceration. The *New York Times* charged that the jury followed Brigham Young's dictates, finding the Indians guilty of manslaughter instead of the harsher charge of murder. The *Times* asserted that the Mormons perverted the justice system, and claimed Brigham Young told the jury how to rule. The correspondent wrote, "No greater crime can be committed than to substitute the authority of man for the justice of God; and Brigham Young has done this."<sup>75</sup> Gentile distrust increased when the Indians escaped, or as it was written in the *Times*, were "allowed to escape,"<sup>76</sup> a week after their incarceration. Outsiders saw it as a deliberate attempt to circumvent the American court system—a treasonous act.

Though Mormons believed strongly in self-rule and isolationism, they did not consider themselves treasonous. Joseph Smith's spiritual heirs, including Brigham Young and Parley Pratt, often echoed his thoughts about the divinity of the United States Constitution. Many Mormons still felt a profound respect for the government. Young

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<sup>74</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 146, 148. Parley P. Pratt, *The Late Persecution*, 6.

<sup>75</sup> Special Correspondence of New-York Daily Times.. "INTERESTING FROM UTAH :Trial of the Indian Murderers of Captain Gunnison. VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER ONLY. Mormon Interference with the Cause, of Justice. Full and Interesting Report of the Trial of the Murderers. SENTENCE OF THE COURT.." *New York Daily Times*, May 18, 1855, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed September 22, 2009).

<sup>76</sup> "More Mormon Troubles--Escape of the Murderers of Captain Gunnison." *New York Daily Times*, May 18, 1855, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed September 22, 2009).



declared that “Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Washington, and a host of others” had been inspired by God when they wrote the Constitution.<sup>77</sup> But the Mormons’ faith in their government was tempered by their past experiences. Rhetoric against the corruption in government, which started in Smith’s time, continued as the Mormons settled the Salt Lake Valley. So even though the LDS church leadership was likely to expound on the divinity of the government, they were just as likely to declare that federal officials were “some of the most corrupt, damnable mean curses here that ever disgraced the earth.”<sup>78</sup>

This rhetoric fostered distrust between the Saints and Gentiles. Outsiders began to believe that Young controlled Utah with an iron fist. Some thought Mormons would use popular sovereignty to protect polygamy. In short, popular sovereignty was the idea that each state or territory should be allowed to vote on whether to allow slavery—politician Stephen Douglass was its most ardent supporter. Opponents of the ideal claimed Mormons could use the idea behind popular sovereignty to legalize polygamy in the Utah Territory through a popular vote. Douglass defended his cause by attacking the Mormons. Douglass did not brazenly accuse the Mormons of treason. He demanded proof of their seditiousness: that they only followed Brigham Young, that most of them were immigrants, and that they were actively advocating the overthrow of the government. Douglass did not seem to think that there would be a lack of evidence. When the government substantiated the accusations, they could then declare that:

the inhabitants of Utah, as a community, are out-laws and alien enemies; unfit to

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<sup>77</sup> Brigham Young, “The Constitution and Government of the United States—Rights and Policy of the Latter-Day Saints,” *Journal of Discourses* vol. 2, 170.

<sup>78</sup> Brigham Young, “The Priesthood and Satan—The Constitution and Government of the United States—Rights and Policy of the Latter-Day Saints,” *Journal of Discourses* vol. 1, 188.

exercise the right of self-government under the organic act, and unworthy to be admitted into the Union as a State, when their only object in seeking admission is to interpose the sovereignty of the State as an invincible shield to protect them in their treason and crime, debauchery and infamy.<sup>79</sup>

It became necessary for politicians to involve themselves in the “Mormon problem” by 1855. Reformers and politicians alike claimed the Mormons were rebellious and their marriage practices tainted America with immorality.

In 1856, the first Republican Party platform called for annihilation of the “twin relics of barbarism”: slavery and polygamy. Reformers saw polygamy as akin to slavery, which could have made the Mormons and Southerners allies. Ironically, even though the Southerners and the Mormons believed strongly in the power of state’s rights, and both were being pressured to change domestic institutions they believed were divinely ordained, they did not become allies. The largely evangelical Protestant South did not sympathize with the Mormons’ plight. In 1855, *The Democratic Review* printed an article written by a Southern sympathizer Colonial Eidolon, who wrote:

in every aspect, it [polygamy] is ten-fold worse than African slavery; and yet by what right shall Congress abolish Mormon polygamy? This, more than slavery, is a local, a domestic, a peculiar institution...It is more unchristian, more immoral and damning, more degrading and beastly, more destructive both to soul and body, but where is the legislative panacea for purification? From the valley of Utah rises a more disgusting stench than from all the slave-wrought fields of the South.<sup>80</sup>

The Mormons found very few outside allies in their quest to gain statehood and keep the

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<sup>79</sup> Stephen A. Douglas, “Remarks of the Honorable Stephen A. Douglas, on Kansas, Utah, and the Dred Scott Decision. Delivered in Springfield Illinois, June 12, 1857.” (Chicago: Printed at the Daily Times book and job office, 1857), 12.

<sup>80</sup> Colonial Eidolon, “The Nebraska-Kansas Bill,” *The United States Democratic Review*, Volume 0036 Issue 4 (October 1855), 320, <http://digital.library.cornell.edu/> (accessed Nov. 11, 2009).

institution of polygamy.<sup>81</sup>

Federally appointed officials stationed in Utah added to the furor. Some early federal appointees had left the territory in disgust because of their lack of power in a Mormon-dominated land. To justify their defections, they accused the Mormons of criminal, treasonous, and immoral acts.<sup>82</sup> In 1852, Chief Justice Lemuel Brandebury, Judge Perry Brocchus, and Secretary Broughton D. Harris, all federal appointees, left the territory because they concluded, based on Mormon rhetoric, that the Mormons held no respect for federal authority. They accused the Mormons of sedition and hostility against the government. They also complained specifically about Brigham Young, reporting that he indulged “in sundry maledictions upon the memory of Gen. Taylor [President Zachary Taylor].”<sup>83</sup> The *Deseret News*, rather unrepentantly, queried,

what would be thought of a United States Judge who, in times of excitement, deserted his post and fled the State, because the Governor thereof, and other persons...has used intemperate and improper language towards the Unites States Government?<sup>84</sup>

The article in the *Deseret News* not only accused the federal officials who left of having weak characters, it also denied the accusations leveled against the Mormons. Since the most strident defense against the allegations of rebellion and sedition came from the Mormons, however, it was largely ignored.

The Mormon people responded to political attacks with anger. Elder Orson Hyde

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<sup>81</sup> Eidolon, 146.

<sup>82</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 16, 56.

<sup>83</sup> "The Mormons in Utah." *New York Daily Times*, January 6, 1852, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed November 23, 2009).

<sup>84</sup> "General Items," *The Deseret News*, February 7, 1852.

declared that if the United States tried to cut Utah off like the “ulcer” Stephen Douglas declared it to be, she would suffer dire consequences, and sacrifice her democratic principles. Hyde used the term “empire” derogatorily to describe the United States. For Mormons, the United States government’s interference with their business was similar to the British Empire’s earlier interference with the American Revolutionaries. They feared their lives would once again be marked with violence. Hyde predicted that if the United States acted in such a reprehensible way it would “be cut off from being a nation, and her star of empire set, and set in blood.”<sup>85</sup> Hyde also spoke of the lack of faith the Mormons had in the federal government, saying that they would not be able to trust the United States until it punished the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and prosecuted the “murderous incendiaries” who had killed the Mormons and looted their land.<sup>86</sup>

Articles about lecherous Mormon ways and treasonous Mormon activity continued to be published. The sustained fear of mob violence weighed heavily upon the Mormons, and the media that painted Mormonism in a bad light only increased their apprehension. Mormons wanted those who wronged them to be taught a lesson. In 1854, as the tensions between the North and South increased, Jedediah M. Grant, a Mormon leader, said, “I do not rejoice that the people and the press are waxing more and more corrupt, and the war cloud darkens more and more...but I rejoice the words of the prophet are being fulfilled.”<sup>87</sup> Grant was speaking of prophecies in general, but he was

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<sup>85</sup> Orson Hyde, “Injustice of United States Government against the Saints etc.” *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, 48.

<sup>86</sup> Hyde, “Injustice of United States Government against the Saints etc.,” 48.

<sup>87</sup> Jedediah M. Grant, “Fulfillment of Prophecy—Wars and Commotion,” *Journal of Discourses* vol. 2, 148.

also referring specifically to Smith's revelation about the Civil War. Grant believed that war was on the horizon. And the "commotion ...in the broils and contention between the South and the North" proved Smith's prescience.<sup>88</sup>

The Mormons quite willingly advocated God's punishment of the United States, but they were not about to mutiny against it.<sup>89</sup> They believed retribution was God's work, not something to be carried out by his earthly followers. The Saints' fiery rhetoric blinded many Americans to the Mormons' self-imposed political boundaries. The tension between the Mormons and the United States is understandable, as the U.S. was on the verge of the Civil War. Any rhetoric that espoused the overthrow of the United States government, even if it was by God, was bound to cause problems. The federal government increased pressure on Utah and the Mormons to conform to American laws and social practices. Instead of playing by society's rules, the Mormons responded by increasing their inflammatory sermons and continuing to officiate polygamous marriages. By 1856, the Mormons would have a reformation, and as historian Sarah Barringer Gordon pointed out, the sermons became "hyperbolic," exaggerating the evils of Gentile living and federal corruption.<sup>90</sup> Gordon stated that during the reformation some sermons advocated "blood atonement," the idea that a sinner needed to shed their blood (hopefully not all of it) to atone for their sins. Others assured the congregants of Mormon "victory over the forces of Babylon." And the most hyperbolic contained talk of "killing non-

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<sup>88</sup>Grant, "Fulfillment of Prophecy—Wars and Commotion," 148.

<sup>90</sup>Gordon, 59.

Mormons.”<sup>91</sup> The escalation only increased tensions among Mormons, Gentiles, and the federal government.

The Mormons’ exaggerated rhetoric provided titillating fodder for the *New York Daily Times*. In 1856, it published an article that described how young Mormon girls were being seduced by the Gentiles in Utah. The *Times* did not dispute the accusations of seduction, saying the evidence was “quite conclusive.” But the article was especially vigorous in its description of Church leader J.M. Grant’s sermon. The *Times* accused Grant of saying that “he had guns and dirks for all such characters [the seducers], and instead of treating them to the law would cut them off from the face of the earth.”<sup>92</sup> The *Times*’ special correspondent promised he would not fail to send a copy of the sermon to the printers since it was one of the “outspoken kind that have before emanated from this [Salt Lake] City.” The *Times*, however, failed to mention that Grant’s speech also censured Mormons who had been led astray and lost in the “fog.” The warning was not just aimed at the Gentiles in Utah but also at people who professed to be Mormons but who did not follow the Church doctrine.<sup>93</sup> Grant’s speech was also given during the Mormon reformation that started in 1856 and lasted part of 1857. Due to anti-polygamist writing and the American nation’s difficulties, Mormons began centering their efforts on

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<sup>91</sup> Gordon, 59.

<sup>92</sup> “VERY INTERESTING FROM UTAH :VERY INTERESTING FROM UTAH. Settlement of Indian Difficulties--Meeting of a Convention for the Formation of a state Constitution--debate on the slavery Question--Speculations on the Admission of Utah--The Constitution of the Proposed State of ?? News. ws..” *New York Daily Times*, June 3, 1856, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed February 10, 2010).

<sup>93</sup> J.M. Grant, Exposing Wickedness Among the Saints—Corrupt Men Threatening the Saints with United States’ Troops—The Laws of Utah Set Aside in the Courts,” *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 3, 233-244.

creating a community that rigidly adhered to their religious tenets. Mormons didn't want Gentiles, Dissenters, nor lackluster Saints in Utah. Sunday sermons attempted to make "sinners," Mormon and non-Mormon, feel ashamed, uncomfortable, and weak.<sup>94</sup>

Mormons' sermons and behavior incensed the small non-Mormon population of Utah. Their relationship with the Saints was especially tenuous because Mormons outnumbered them. Since Mormons tended to vote as a bloc, non-Mormons had no avenue for political redress. The federal courts were one of the few institutions that Mormons did not dominate, since federally appointed judges ran them.<sup>95</sup> President Franklin Pierce appointed several new judges by 1854 to replace the earlier absconders, including Justice John F. Kinney, George P. Stiles, and William W. Drummond.<sup>96</sup> Drummond did not arrive in the Utah Territory until 1855 but he promptly began to fight the Mormon power structure. He believed that their probate courts claimed too much power. Instead of working with the Mormons, he vowed to overturn any court decisions made in the lower courts that were staffed by Mormons.<sup>97</sup> He resigned his post in 1856 but not quietly. In April of 1857, he wrote a letter to Attorney General Jeremiah S. Black that accused the Mormons of many sins, including murder and treason. Drummond complained that he had no real authority in Utah because it was all held by Brigham Young. He alleged that a group of Mormons secretly conspired to rob all non-Mormons

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<sup>94</sup> Gordon, 59.

<sup>95</sup> "Very Interesting From Utah," *New York Daily Times*, 1856

<sup>96</sup> Gustive O. Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1971), 17.

<sup>97</sup> Larson, 17; Thomas G. Alexander, "Carpetbaggers, Reprobates, and Liars: Federal Judges and the Utah War (1857-58)," *The Historian* (2008), 224, 230.

of their property and lives. He also re-asserted the charge that Mormons were colluding with the Indians, stating that as “Heart-rending and sickening as it may be, Capt. John W. Gunnison and his party of eight others were murdered by the Indians in 1853, under the order, advice, and direction of the Mormons.”<sup>98</sup> He also accused the Mormons of killing several federal officials and of destroying Utah Supreme Court documents.<sup>99</sup> Historian Thomas G. Alexander in his article, “Carpetbaggers, Reprobates, and Liars: Federal Judges and the Utah War (1857-58),” proved Drummond’s accusation were patently false. For example, he explained that Drummond’s assertion that the Mormons conspired to kill Gunnison’s party were investigated by two separate officials. Both men found that there was no proof for the accusations.<sup>100</sup>

But Drummond had set the stage and the *New York Times* special correspondent in Utah took up his cause. On May 19, the *Times* printed his article on the front page. The author of the article accused the Mormons of marrying ten-and eleven-year-old girls and practicing incest. But a more heinous crime occurred. According to the *Times*, Mormons broke into the court building, which was under the jurisdiction of the federal court, and burned the records.<sup>101</sup> Drummond had previously accused the Mormons of

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<sup>98</sup> The Political Text-book, or Encyclopedia, containing Everything Necessary for the Reference of the Politicians and Statesmen of the United States, ed. M.W. Clusky (Washington D.C.: Cornelius Wendell, 1857), 586, Google books: <http://books.google.com/books?id=wXTkxkg9EakC&printsec=frontcover> (accessed January 11, 2010).

<sup>99</sup> The Political Text-book, or Encyclopedia, 586.

<sup>100</sup> Alexander, 229, 233.

<sup>101</sup> Highly Interesting From Utah: Sale of Young Girls-Forcible" Sealing ??--Extraordinary Proceedings of a Probate Court Stirring Appeals for Snecor, &c., &c. Brigham Young Still at Salt Lake City, Graphic Narrative of Mormon Outrages. Melancholy And Affecting Incidents. Horrible Practices In The Church." *New York Daily Times*, May 19, 1857.



destroying court records in his letter. The correspondent asked if the newly sworn-in president James Buchanan would stop the Mormons' growing seditiousness and immoral behavior. According to the article, ignoring the Mormon problem had already produced dire consequences. The author accused President Fillmore of such laxity; consequently Fillmore had "laid the foundation of the Mormon treason."<sup>102</sup> The front page article ended ominously. The reporter seemed to fear for his life. Fortunately he believed that if he did die there was still "time to avenge our deaths..., and wipe out the foul blot which the Theocracy that rules these plains has fixed upon the National escutcheon."

President Buchanan did not ignore the situation in Utah, though there are competing theories as to why he sent troops. One theory has Buchanan believing what Justice Drummond wrote, even though most of it was untrue. Meanwhile, a theory put forth by Sarah Barringer Gordon, and by Arrington and Bitton, has Buchanan sending troops to distract the nation's populace, as well as its politicians, from the ever increasing threat of Civil War. Buchanan faced a quickly disintegrating nation. Kansas was torn apart with two capitals, one free and one slave. As Gordon pointed out, by sending troops to Utah, Buchanan was able to avoid the slavery question but also assert federal power.<sup>103</sup> Also, Arrington and Bitton theorized that it was a way to relieve the pressure that had been put upon slaveholders and give Northerners the satisfaction of stopping at least one rebellious people, the Mormons.<sup>104</sup> Both theories have credence; the rhetoric that came from the Salt Lake Basin did have a rebellious tone. And while many of

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<sup>102</sup> "Highly Interesting From Utah: Sale of Young Girls-Forcible."

<sup>103</sup> Gordon, 59-60.

<sup>104</sup> Holt, 120; Gordon, 60; Arrington and Bitton, 165.

Drummond's accusations were false, there was little information coming out of the Utah Territory (from non-Mormons) to dispute them.

The Mormons claimed they only wanted to govern themselves and denied any rebellious activity. Their main concern was their right to self-governance. Mormons felt President Buchanan's decision to send troops to Utah threatened the foundation of their community. Esaias Edward, a Utah Mormon, wrote in his journal in November of 1857: "We expect the United States Government will do all they can to kill us off next summer."<sup>105</sup> Emily Woodmansee wrote a poem about Buchanan's army and described the sense of betrayal that the Mormons felt. Her poem, "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: God's Legacy to the Children of Men" encapsulated the fear and anger in the Mormon community. In her work, Woodmansee revisited the old terrors that Mormons endured, writing that they had been "exiled, robbed and foully slandered, in this land of boasted light." Like many other Mormons, she reveled in what she saw as bitter irony: America was supposed to be the land of freedom and religious tolerance, or the "land of boasted light," but past violence proved that Americans had little tolerance for the Mormons. Her fear of mob brutality is also evident: not only was she angry about the past persecutions, she also felt that the Gentiles in America wanted to destroy the Mormons. She wrote that Mormon enemies, and the killers of the Mormon prophet, were "panting to enact like scenes again."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Esaias Edwards, "Diary," November 26, 1857, Harold B. Lee Library, *Trails of Hope: Overland Diaries and Letters 1846-1869*, <http://patriot.lib.byu.edu/u/?/Diaries,5099> (accessed November 16, 2008) original spelling kept for authenticity purposes.

<sup>106</sup> Emily Woodmansee, "Life Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: God's Legacy to the Children of Men" (1857 or 1858), "Emily Hill Woodmansee papers 1836-1906." Emily Woodmansee is the married name of Emily Hill, quoted earlier.

Mormon anxiety reached untenable proportions, and the Saints prepared for the worst. On August 5, 1857, Brigham Young sent out a proclamation that declared the Utahans were about to be “invaded by a hostile force,” and therefore he enacted martial law.<sup>107</sup> Woodmansee defiantly declared that the Mormons would protect Zion, writing that “no more we’ll rest supinely while the cords of Life are riven, As we serve the God of battles, we’ll maintain what He has given.”<sup>108</sup> The sentiment was shared by many Mormons; they were willing to fight for the community they built in Utah.

The renewed fear that mobs would once again ransack Saints’ homes had dire consequences. On September 11, 1857, as the United States Army was *en route* to Utah, a Mormon battalion attacked a group of immigrants at a place called Mountain Meadows. A group of Mormon militia men, led by John D. Lee, assailed the wagon train and killed everyone except those eight years and younger (Mormons believed children of those ages were innocent, not yet able to decipher right from wrong). In all, the Mormons killed 120 women, men, and children—the militia also killed several infants as their mothers sheltered them in their arms. Even though the Mountain Meadows Massacre was a horrible atrocity, legal action against the perpetrators would not take place until after the Civil War.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Brigham Young, “Proclamation By the Governor” (August 5, 1857). Harold B. Lee Library: Digital Collections, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?NCMP1820-1846,17425> (accessed November 24, 2009).

<sup>108</sup> “Life Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: God’s Legacy to the Children of Men.”

<sup>109</sup> Sally Denton, “What Happened At *Mountain Meadows*,” *American Heritage* 2001 52(7): 76-85. The Mountain Meadows Massacre is steeped in controversy and has been written about extensively. Though it is an important part of American Western history and Mormon history it is beyond the scope of this research except to describe Mormons frustration and anger with federal, or any, interference.

Public support dwindled for the Utah Expedition because, according to historians Richard Poll and Ralph W. Hansen, it was a spectacular failure. The army was sent late in the season, making it nearly impossible to cross the mountains, and the Mormons fought back by stealthily attacking supply trains. There were no blood-soaked battlefields, but it was a conflict all the same, with tactical actions from both sides: Utah's militia and the United States army. The lack of bloodshed is not surprising. The American soldiers were ill-prepared while the Mormons knew the territory. The supply trains the Mormons destroyed were necessary for men far from their home base. The tactic was effective, as the American soldiers had to wait long periods of time to receive new supplies from Fort Laramie. Public sentiment fizzled quickly, and by April of 1858 the "Utah War" was over.<sup>110</sup> It has become a nearly forgotten footnote in American history, but to Mormons it represented everything they feared. Men who would write only snippets about the Civil War in their journals penned detailed notes on where and how they campaigned against the coming of the federal troops. Diarist John Crook recalled that he was stationed at Echo Canyon [*sic*] where his regiment built dams and fortifications. He also recalled that "several thousand persons were there from all parts of Ter.[Territory]" Crook himself served as the chief cook and dishwasher for his regiment of ten men. He was perhaps bragging a bit when he wrote that several United States Army officers (including one who didn't even have a hat for his head) deserted their commands and turned to Mormons for help.<sup>111</sup>

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110 Richard D. Poll and Ralph W. Hansen, 128.

<sup>111</sup> John Crook, "Diaries and Miscellaneous papers 1851-1902," L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library: Brigham Young University.

Perhaps the worst thing for the Mormons was the fact that the federal army also brought with them a new governor. Young perhaps knew a sustained offensive against U.S. troops would end badly, so when Buchanan offered a presidential pardon on April 6, 1858, Young accepted. However, the Mormons denied any wrong-doing. Young and other LDS leaders only begrudgingly allowed the new governor into Utah.<sup>112</sup> Esaias Edwards once again captured the Utahan sentiment in his personal diary:

This Governor Comine [Cummings] is the man the President of the United States had appointed to be Governor of the territory of Utah instead of Brigham Young which had been Governor of the Territory ever since it had been first settled and allways has been and now is the universal choice of all the honorable citizens of the Territory and it seems hard and unjust for us to have a stranger forced upon us as Govnor and also Judges and other officers who have no interest in the Territory and have them backed up by an armed force without any just cause whatever and that two without sending an investigating Committy as is customary.<sup>113</sup>

The Utah War and the Mountain Meadows Massacre represented the apex of the Mormons' troubles in the pre-Civil War United States. They felt betrayed by Buchanan's actions. The Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred as a result of the fear and anger that had been revived within the Mormon people. The Saints remembered their past persecutions and reacted believing that their land and homes might once again be destroyed. But the Utah War ended with a sputter, not a bang. With the acceptance of Governor Cummings and the presidential pardon, the war ended. The angry mobs that Mormons expected to arrive on their doorsteps did not appear. Their lands were not confiscated nor were they chased out of their newly-built Zion.<sup>114</sup> For Mormons, this was

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<sup>112</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 169.

<sup>113</sup> Esaias Edwards, "Diary," August 8, 1858.

<sup>114</sup> Richard D. Poll and Ralph W. Hansen, "'Buchanan's Blunder: The Utah War, 1857-1858,'" *Military Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 3, Part 1 (Autumn, 1961), 130; Alexander, 232-234.

further proof of God's divine protection. The Utah expedition, however, did install federal authority in the Utah Territory. This included a federally-appointed Governor, and Camp Floyd, an army fort that was established thirty miles from Salt Lake City.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Long, 9.

### CHAPTER 3: PROPHECY FULFILLED AND THE GROWTH OF ZION

When the first shots rang out at Fort Sumter in April of 1861, novelists still rhapsodized about the evils of polygamy. However, their influence quickly declined as troops began to assemble for war.<sup>116</sup> Republicans damned both polygamy and slavery as the “twin relics of barbarism,” but they focused on stamping out slavery first. The Union could not or did not want to fight a battle on two fronts: the west and the south. The government had begun to recall the soldiers from Camp Floyd by 1860, and by 1861 the fort was empty. Governor Alfred Cummings, a Southerner, resigned his post in 1861 to fight for the Confederacy, leaving a Mormon in charge. Through 1861 and most of 1862, Mormons controlled their home. Smith’s prophecy came into fruition, and God was finally punishing the Gentiles. The Mormons began building. The 1862 arrival of General Connor, the leader of a Union battalion, hampered their freedom somewhat, but it did not keep the Mormons from testing the bounds of federal power. The Mormons used the early years of the Civil War to build up Zion in anticipation of Christ’s return. They expanded their land holding, worked on becoming a self-sufficient nation, encouraged and helped converts immigrate to Zion, enforced religious orthodoxy, and openly thwarted federal laws against polygamy.

In January of 1861, as states began to secede in earnest, the *Deseret News*

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<sup>116</sup> A search in “Google books” though not exhaustive of all sources does reveal the pattern of anti-Mormon publications. Many anti-polygamy novels were written between 1850 and 1858 then there is a brief hiatus but anti-Mormon writing does reemerge quite vigorously in the 1870’s continuing into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

published an article reminding the Utahans of Smith's prophecy. It discussed "the whirlwinds, the hurricanes, the tornadoes, the storms, fires and tempests, together with other destructions and calamities that have come upon the people of the Dis-united States." The *Deseret News* solemnly asserted that God was punishing the Gentiles. The author of the article reminded the readers that the Union's destruction heralded the beginning of Gentile sorrows. He also recalled the Utah War of 1857-58, which still weighed heavily upon the Mormons, while attacking President Buchanan and "his gross administration of justice."<sup>117</sup> Buchanan's army had already withdrawn from Utah, and the Utah war ended two and half years previously, but the Mormons continued to feel violated. The article enumerated the horrible atrocities the Mormons endured, but it also sounded a triumphant note. The Mormons believed that their nation was going to grow and the righteous would flock to Zion. They thought that Christ planned to return soon.

The *Deseret News* declared:

We hazard nothing in saying, that while the people and nations of the earth are warring among themselves, and seeking to destroy each other, peace according to the promise, may be expected to prevail in Utah; and the time may soon be present when those who will not take the sword to destroy their fellow men, shall flee hither for safety.<sup>118</sup>

Joseph Smith's revelation also admonished the Mormons to "stand thee in holy places" because the day of the Lord was coming. The *Deseret News* reminded them that they already occupied that holy place. Mormons felt they were God's chosen people and that they would prosper and be untouched by the war.

Mormon publications and sermons repeatedly mentioned the Civil War and

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<sup>117</sup> "Passing Events," *The Deseret News* (January 2, 1861).

<sup>118</sup> "Passing Events."



Smith's prophecy. Some contrasted the United States turbulent affairs with Utah's peaceful prosperity. Others expressed contempt for their past persecutors. In February of 1861, *The Latter-day Saints Millennial Star*, a Mormon publication produced in England, explained the causes of the Civil War. The article condemned the press that had so willingly vilified the Mormons and accused the government of corruption. The author declared that the Gentiles caused their own woes by killing and attacking the Saints. He asserted that the Civil War had been caused by:

Venality and corruption in high places, the increase of wealth and consequent luxury, the lax administration of the laws, and the prostitution of the public press to misrepresentation and vilifying of the truth and the furtherance of the basest purposes, contributed also as meant to bring it to pass. But it was not the operation of these evils alone that brought so speedily the fulfillment of this prophecy...it was one of far greater magnitude...It was the shedding of the blood of innocence—it was the murdering of Prophets and Apostles and Saints.<sup>119</sup>

Not to be outdone by the *Deseret News*, the *Millennial Star* also referred to Smith's past revelation, declaring that, "The rebellion of South Carolina is the beginning of wars which will surely 'terminate in the death and misery of many souls,'" and then asserted that God planned the destruction "of all nations."<sup>120</sup> Mormons held that when all the nations ended, Zion alone would be left standing to welcome Christ.

Diarist Esaias Edwards chronicled his impressions of the war. He stated, "it looks to me that a bloody war is at their doors...we feel thankful that the Lord has led us far from [their] midst and while they are becoming divided the Saints are becoming more united."<sup>121</sup> He also asserted that the Mormons were doing exceedingly well while the rest

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<sup>119</sup> "Division of the United States," *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star* Vol. 23, 100.

<sup>120</sup> "Division of the United States," 102.

<sup>121</sup> Esaias Edwards, March 2, 1861.

of the nation suffered. Like many others, Edwards also noted that the war started in South Carolina just as his prophet predicted. He wrote:

the work of the Lord is rolling on steadily and the true hearted Saints are mad to rejoice exceedingly Whil [*sic*] while the wicked are doing wickedly the war spirit is stil [*sic*] increasing in the States from whence we came The South Carlinaans [*sic*] commenced the war.<sup>122</sup>

Mormon writers like Edwards blew triumphant notes. It was rather cathartic after forty years of religious persecution. Therefore, it is not surprising that Elder Orson Pratt, brother of Parley Pratt, wanted to proclaim to the nation that their prophet and seer had been correct. He sent a copy of Smith's prophecy to the *New York Times*, which appeared on page three of the paper on June 2, 1861.<sup>123</sup>

While many of the sermons preached in Salt Lake City expounded upon the theme of divine wrath, it was not all gleeful gloating. The Mormons had always believed that God guided the forefathers of the United States in the creation of the government. As noted earlier, they considered the Constitution a divine document. When the North and South violently dissolved the Union, the Mormons mourned. The same article that declared that the Gentiles caused their own suffering also stated, "What a mournful spectacle to behold!—the downfall of the noblest temple of liberty ever reared by human hands! Humanity shudders and weeps at the bare contemplation of such a *felo de se* [self-destruction or suicide]."<sup>124</sup> The Mormons felt the Civil War should prove to the United States and its largely Gentile population that their prophet was divine. They also believed

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<sup>122</sup> Esaias Edwards, June 1861.

<sup>123</sup> "A Mormon Prophecy." *New York Times*, June 2, 1861. <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed December 21, 2009).

<sup>124</sup> "Division of the United States," 98.

that God was rewarding their steadfast faith. Brigham Young thanked the Lord, declaring: “We are not now mingling in the turmoils of strife, warring, and contention, that we would been obliged to have mingled in, had not the Lord suffered us to have been driven to these mountains.”<sup>125</sup> But they also grieved because politicians corrupted a divine institution, causing it to fall. Young declared in the same sermon that, “We have one of the best human Governments upon the earth...and yet we are divided, torn asunder, and confused.” He then asked which government was governed by God. He answered himself saying, “Neither of them have anything to do with the Lord...The principles of human government as now practised [*sic*], are wrong; for what man knows the things of God?”<sup>126</sup> He answered his own question saying that God withheld this knowledge from the wicked while conferring it to the Saints.<sup>127</sup>

Many Mormons could not contain their excitement, but others were more reserved in their outlook. They showed little interest in the Civil War. Diarist John Crook who lived in Provo, a previously settled colony that was much smaller than Salt Lake City, described building a house, planting and reaping of crops, the deaths of several other colonists, and the growth of his community. However, he did not write anything about the troubles between the North and South in his personal journal. Crook described in detail his duties during the Utah War but appeared unconcerned about the war between the north and the south. Though Crook settled outside of Salt Lake City, and therefore

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<sup>125</sup> Brigham Young, “True Testimony—Preparation for Coming Events--Corruption of the Government, ETC,” *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 9, . Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?/JournalOfDiscourses3,3919> (accessed January 8, 2010).

<sup>126</sup> “True Testimony—Preparation for Coming Events--Corruption of the Government, ETC,” 10.

<sup>127</sup> “True Testimony—Preparation for Coming Events--Corruption of the Government, ETC,” 10.

didn't live in an information nexus, it is still probable that he learned of the problems between the North and the South during his travels. He wrote in his journal that he journeyed to Salt Lake on three different occasions. Two of those occasions had been for General Conference, a time when all the Mormons who were able gathered together to hear from their leaders.<sup>128</sup> Other documents from Utah during the Civil War show a similar lack of concern. Elizabeth Snow wrote her husband, Erastus Snow, in March and April of 1861, and didn't mention the war in the States. Her letters focused around family life, gardens, and financial matters. They carried the message: "All is peace and quiet here."<sup>129</sup> These Mormons didn't concern themselves with the war because they were far removed from the actual battles. They also believed they were doing the Lord's work, and that He intended to protect them. However, many Mormons did not take the attitude of quiet confidence and were quite vocal in the belief that God was finally punishing the Gentiles.

Just a few years earlier, Americans would have censured such attitudes, but their new concern, the Civil War, refocused their attention. They left the Mormons alone, and the Saints quickly took control of their territory. Governor Cumming, a southerner, left his office on May 17, 1861, to join the fray. The *Deseret News* printed the news of his departure, and in retrospect described him as performing his duties with a

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<sup>128</sup> John Crook, "Diaries and Miscellaneous papers 1851-1902," L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library: Brigham Young University.

<sup>129</sup> Elizabeth Snow to Erastus Snow, March 27, 1861, "Julius S. Dally Collection of Mormon material 1851-1933," L. Tom Perry Special Collection: Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

“straightforward course.”<sup>130</sup> His replacement, Frances F. Wooten, also a southerner, soon followed suit, also leaving in 1861. Wooten’s Secretary of State, Frank Fuller, a Mormon, became acting Governor until the arrival of John Dawson. Dawson arrived in December of 1862 and lasted three weeks before he fled the territory.<sup>131</sup> Fuller took the Governorship again.<sup>132</sup>

The Mormons said little about Wooten’s service as Governor, but John Dawson managed to scandalize most of Utah. Dawson outraged the Saints with his first official act as Governor; he refused to support the Mormon petition for statehood.<sup>133</sup> However, the friction between the new governor and the Utahans ran deeper than the vetoed bill. The Mormons had wanted to rule themselves and gain the protection of full statehood since their arrival in Utah. Dawson’s veto reminded them that the federal government had ultimate jurisdiction in Utah. The freshly appointed Governor’s behavior also shocked the Mormons’ sensibilities. Historian Gustive Larson contends that Dawson “became involved in moral scandals.”<sup>134</sup> After he abruptly left Utah, the *Deseret News* published an article outlining his shortcomings. The author accused Dawson of making improper advances upon a lady, which the *Deseret News* asserted should be punished by

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<sup>130</sup> “Departure of the Governor,” *The Deseret News*, May 22, 1861, Harold B. Lee Digital Collections, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews2,3179> (accessed December 25 2009).

<sup>131</sup> Nels Anderson, ; Nels Anderson, *Deseret Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah*,(1942 reprint; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 222.

<sup>132</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 169; Anderson, 222.

<sup>133</sup> John W Dawson, “Executive Communication,” *The Deseret News*, December 25, 1861, Harold B. Lee Digital Library, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews2,3955> (accessed December 31, 2009).

<sup>134</sup> Larson, 30.

death. They declared his attack against the lady's character so atrocious that "under the common law of the country, would, if it had been enforced, caused him to have bitten the dust."<sup>135</sup> The *Deseret News* claimed that "as soon as he was informed that the deed would be divulged by the injured party, he suddenly became sick and crazy,"<sup>136</sup> and this inspired his hasty departure from Utah. Dawson had broken the Mormons' strict moral code (Mormons were puritanical about sexuality), but his lack of moral fiber wasn't Dawson's only perceived failing. They felt he did not have the wherewithal to be a good governor. Shortly after the Governor fled the territory, the residents of Salt Lake City held a mass meeting. They formed a delegation to write a state constitution and petition the Union for admission (the very thing Dawson vetoed). In the meeting, they referred to Dawson as a stranger who did not understand Utah.<sup>137</sup>

The unfortunate Dawson encountered more problems as he fled Utah. A group of thieves waylaid and beat him after he left Salt Lake City. Both he and the Mormons theorized about the incident and the perpetrators. In a letter to Abraham Lincoln, Dawson claimed he was followed after leaving Salt Lake City by a band of Danites. They then "wantonly assaulted" and beat him.<sup>138</sup> He claimed the Church sanctioned the violence because he refused to support their bid for statehood. Dawson must have followed the

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<sup>135</sup> "Departure of the Governor," *The Deseret News*, January 1, 1862.

<sup>136</sup> "Departure of the Governor."

<sup>137</sup> "The Voice of the People," *The Deseret News*, January 8, 1862, Harold B. Lee Digital Collections, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews2,4116> (accessed December 31, 2009).

<sup>138</sup> The Danites were a group of vigilante Mormons that were formed when tensions between Missourians and Mormons were at their worst. The group, however, took on mythical proportions after the Mormons move westward. According to legend their main duties were punishing heretics, and harassing and killing Gentiles.

events in Utah closely. He even cited the fact that the Mormons held a meeting to discuss the subject shortly after he left. Dawson also questioned Mormon loyalty. In a letter he wrote to President Lincoln, Dawson asserted that, “not a day passes but that disloyal sentiments are heard on the streets—nor a Sunday without it is preached from the pulpit of the tabernacle.” He also alleged that the:

whole purpose of the people is to gain admission into the Union on an equal basis—& then the ulcer polygamy will have a sovereign protection...it must not be admitted—till the foul ulcer [of polygamy] is cured, by a predominance of gentile population or by federal bayonets.<sup>139</sup>

He wanted action to be taken against the Mormons, and as he said, “the sooner...the better.”<sup>140</sup> The January 8 edition of the *Deseret News*, however, described the incident differently. It claimed that when Dawson left Salt Lake he had been accompanied by a band of thieves who “at Hanks station, beat him in a most cowardly and dastardly manner, and robbed him and other passengers of clothes blankets and other things.”<sup>141</sup> The article expressed only disgust for the villains’ actions and showed sympathy for Dawson’s plight (and perhaps a small chastisement for Dawson, as he had fallen in with the wrong type of people for his journey).

In 1857, after federal appointees fled the territory carrying tales of Mormon treason and misdeeds, President Buchanan sent troops. Although Dawson leveled plenty of accusations against the Mormons, his complaints were left unanswered. The Union had

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<sup>139</sup> John W. Dawson to Abraham Lincoln, “Affairs in the Utah Territory,” Monday, January 13, 1862, Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:3:/temp/~ammem\\_092n::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mal:3:/temp/~ammem_092n::) (accessed December 31, 2009).

<sup>140</sup> Dawson, “Affairs in the Utah Territory.”

<sup>141</sup> “Disgraceful Outrage,” *The Deseret News*, January 8, 1862, HBLL Digital Collections: <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews2,4120> (accessed February 1, 2010).

to funnel its resources into fighting the Civil War and did not have the strength to send troops because of Dawson's contested allegations of treason. Also, Salt Lake City was an important gateway to the west, and the Utah Territory had become a communication hub. October of 1861 heralded the completion of a transcontinental telegraph station in Salt Lake City. The city was an important asset to the Union, and the federal government willingly forgave perceived transgressions to foster good relations with the Mormons.

In October of 1862, the Union called Brigham Young and the Mormons into service. They asked Young to raise a militia to protect the telegraph and overland mail route. As historian E. B. Long points out, "the intriguing point about this request is that it did not go to the territorial government officer, but to Brigham Young."<sup>142</sup> President Lincoln assigned several federal employees to the Utah Territory, but his officials sent the troop request to Young. It was a tacit acknowledgment that Young controlled the Utah Territory.

Young did raise an army for the Union cause and applied to the Union leadership for statehood. Young's willingness to become part of the Union and even fight for it illuminated an odd undercurrent in the Mormons' view of the Civil War. Earlier statements in sermons, journals, and Church publications declared that the Mormons had no stake in the Gentile war. It had been caused by the Gentiles' sinful living. In July of 1861, the *Deseret News* explained quite clearly the Mormons' duties during the Civil War. It stated,

Shall we join the North to fight against the South? NO! Shall we join the South against the North? As emphatically, NO!! Why? They have both, as before

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<sup>142</sup> E.B. Long, 42, 84.



shown, brought it upon themselves, and we have had no hand in the matter. Whigs, Democrats, Americans and Republicans have all in turn endeavored to stain their hand in innocent blood, and whatever others may do we cannot conscientiously help to tear down the fabric we are sworn to uphold. We known [*sic*] no North, no South, no East, no West; we abide strictly and positively by the Constitution.<sup>143</sup>

Still, the Mormons did get involved. They signaled their willingness to join the Union by petitioning for admission as a state. They also raised an army to help protect the Union's western interests (even though their service was short-lived). It is a bit ironic that they sided with the Union, since both Mormons and the South believed strongly in states' rights. Also, the Saints entered the United States as a territory that did not prohibit slavery (the 1860 census showed that there were twenty-nine slaves held in the Utah Territory).<sup>144</sup> Brigham Young stated that African-Americans bore the mark of Ham and therefore should be held in servitude until the Lord released them.<sup>145</sup> His views on slavery also partially aligned with southern philosophy: both believed in the primacy of the white race and in a divinely ordained hierarchy. It seemed that the South would have been the Mormons' natural ally (even though the South didn't want them, and for that matter, the North wasn't very keen about having them as allies), but the Saints joined the Union cause.

The fact that the Mormons got involved at all seemed to betray their stated

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<sup>143</sup> "Celebration," *The Deseret News*, July 10, 1861, HBL Digital Collections, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews2,3545> (accessed December 31, 2009). The article was not entitled "Celebration," because the Mormons were celebrating the fall of the United States. The article was describing a July 4 celebration and the latter portion dealt with the Civil War.

<sup>144</sup> E. B. Long, 4.

<sup>145</sup> Brigham Young, "Necessity For Watchfulness—The proper course to Pursue Towards Stranger—Selling Flour and Grain.—The War and its Effects Upon Slavery" *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 9, 250.

beliefs. Sunday sermons had been punctuated with the idea that the world would soon fall to ruin and the Mormons would inhabit the only safe place on earth—their mountainous fortress. Mormons could have simply awaited the inevitable fall of the world, and for the most part they did. However, Brigham Young was a pragmatic organizer. Perhaps this was his greatest gift as a leader. In a sermon given in April of 1861, he admonished the congregation to concentrate on their own spiritual salvation and to not be in a “hurry to see the overthrow of the wicked.” Young said that the war would cause the downfall of the American Nation, and it was happening “as fast as the wheels of time” could roll. But Young also admonished that the Lord would return in “his own time and way.”<sup>146</sup> If Young guaranteed that the world would end with the Civil War and was unable to deliver on his promise, it would have lessened his effectiveness as leader. Though many of his sermons were filled with dire predictions at times, caution also peppered his speeches. Young always preached preparedness to his people, so perhaps by supporting the Union he was preparing for an end of the war that didn’t include the end of the world.

Also, the Mormons believed deeply in the supremacy of state’s rights, but they held even more strongly that God inspired those who created the United States government. As the *Deseret News* printed, “we abide strictly and positively by the Constitution.”<sup>147</sup> The Zion that the Saints planned to create included the Constitution; it would be part of the Democratic Theocracy. Years earlier, Orson Pratt explained that the government “was organized to suit the people and the circumstances in which they were

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<sup>146</sup> Brigham Young, “True Testimony—Preparation for Coming Events--Corruption of the Government, ETC,” *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 9, 3.

<sup>147</sup> “Celebration.”

placed, until they were prepared to receive a more perfect one.”<sup>148</sup> The South not the North had officially withdrawn from the divinely inspired government. President Lincoln was trying to keep the United States together. Sermons declared that both the North and South had forsaken the Constitution, but Lincoln was the lesser of two evils.

Young, although at times very disenchanted with the United States, never tried to separate from it. Even during the tense moments of the Utah War, Mormons did not advocate for secession. The Saints fought the United States troops because the soldiers brought a governor that was appointed, not democratically elected like Brigham Young. The Mormons believed they should have the right to elect their own officials even though the federal government held the right to appoint territorial officials. And although they complained bitterly of the government’s betrayal, their complaints had been against the corruption that had seeped into the government’s structure. In early 1861, Young declared that secession would cause “perfect anarchy,” and “if a State has a right to secede, so has a Territory, and so has a county from a State or Territory, and a town from a county, and a family from a neighbourhood [*sic*].”<sup>149</sup> Though Mormons tended to believe in the primacy of states’ rights, especially those who lived through previous persecutions, they were not willing to completely break away from the United States.

The Mormon support of the Union did not bespeak a readiness to integrate fully into the Union’s culture. Mormons believed strongly in creating a self-sustaining community. Mormons held that God gifted them with the Utah Territory, and supplied

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<sup>148</sup> Pratt, “The Kingdom of God,” *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 3, 71.

<sup>149</sup> Brigham Young, “Human Intelligence and Freedom—National Administrative Movements, &c,” *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 8, (1861), 322, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?/JournalOfDiscourses3,3206> (accessed January 2, 2010).

them with all the natural resources needed to create a self-sustaining community. Therefore, the Saints could limit their exposure to the Gentile community. The LDS leadership decided to use the resources, real and imagined, given to them to the best of their abilities. Home manufacture was a major theme amongst LDS leadership and especially dear to Brigham Young. He wanted Mormons to grow and process everything needed to sustain their community within the borders of Utah Territory. If Zion was the last nation standing, the Mormons would have to provide for themselves as the wars raged around them. Church leaders had preached the doctrine of self-sufficiency since the Mormons first settled in the Salt Lake Valley. It was both practical and a religious calling. The railroad had not been built yet, so importing goods from the east coast was expensive and slow. The dogma of self-reliance and economic independence would soon become entwined with Mormon doctrine. Therefore, it would not have been unusual to hear a Church Elder declare that, “The time is coming when the lord will speak for the heavens and send his angel to administer to men on earth,” and then give advice on raising sheep.<sup>150</sup>

The Mormons redoubled their home-production efforts after the Civil War started. The belief that the Utah Territory was a safe haven galvanized the doctrine of self-sufficiency during the war as did more practical concerns. Erastus Snow, husband to the aforementioned letter writer Elizabeth Snow, wrote to *The Deseret News* in December of 1860, declaring that, “The present political financial crisis in this nation beggars

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<sup>150</sup> Brigham Young, “The Gifts of God-Home Manufacturers-Word of Wisdom-Happiness,” *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 9, 33-34.

description.”<sup>151</sup> Though the Mormons felt secluded in their serene valley, they could not ignore the United States. Its financial and material woes affected the Mormons. For example, Mormons feared that they would not be able to import cotton from the South—a great motivator for planting their own cotton fields. The Saints realized the war between the North and South would greatly decrease the availability of goods. They also believed God gave them Utah because it could sustain any type of crop; it was the perfect nation. George A. Smith, an LDS leader explained:

We need not expect to get cotton from the Southern States, for they are fighting with the North... We have got to provide for ourselves as a great family and as a nation... The God of heaven, in his abundant mercy, has given us the control in these elevated valleys, of a northern and southern climate.<sup>152</sup>

In the spirit of expansion and self-reliance, colonists moved three hundred miles south to Utah’s Dixie. It’s center was St. George, located in the far southwest corner of Utah Territory. A small group of settlers in the 1850s had grown cotton there on a small scale. However, in 1861, Church leaders called a large number of people, three hundred families, to the cotton mission. They were sent to grow “cotton, grapes, figs, flax, hemp, rice, sugar cane, and other much-needed semi-tropical products.”<sup>153</sup> Mormons built their lives around the Church, but they were not all happy to be called on to move to an isolated and inhospitable place (even if the LDS hierarchy claimed it could be

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<sup>151</sup> Erastus Snow, “From New York,” *The Deseret News*, January 9, 1860.

<sup>152</sup> George A. Smith, “Difficulties with which the Church has had to Contend in its Establishment in Utah,” *Journal of Discourses* vol. 9; Anyone with knowledge of the Mormon religion might notice that Snow mentioned the growing of tobacco. Though Mormon teachings restrict alcohol and tobacco, it seems that it was much more acceptable in the early days of the Church, although still frowned upon, and in fact there were colonies dedicated to growing grapes for wine.

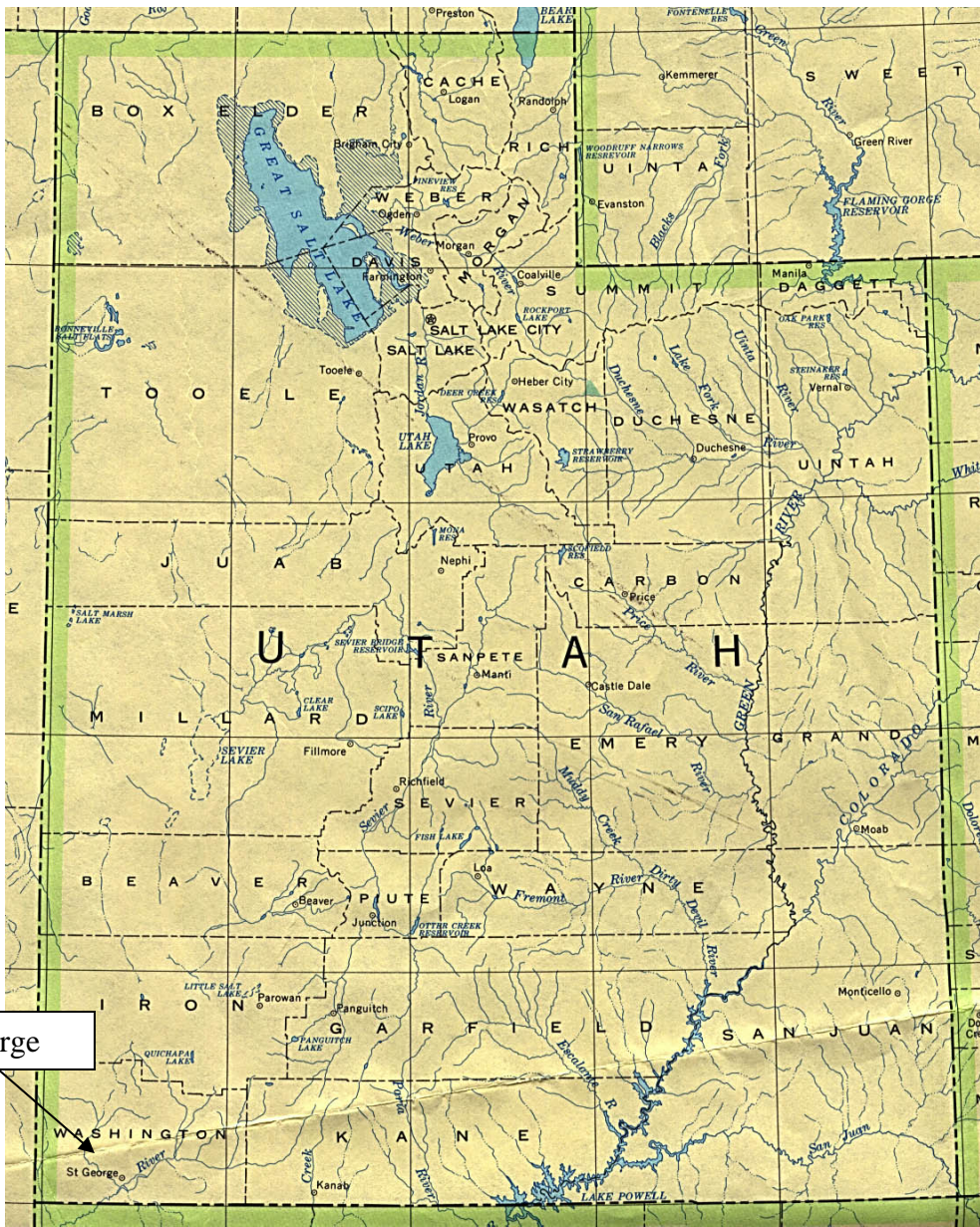
<sup>153</sup> Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints*, 216.

productive). Church leaders lauded Dixie, claiming it had a temperate climate, but while the winter weather in Dixie was temperate, the summer was not. The thermometer often read over one-hundred degrees Fahrenheit in the summer, and with little precipitation, crops withered.<sup>154</sup> Irrigation canals brought water to their settlement, but they also brought mosquitoes, which then infected the settlers with malaria.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Larry M. Logue, *A Sermon in the Desert: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George Utah*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 2-4.

<sup>155</sup> George A. Smith, "Difficulties With Which the Church Has Had to Contend in the Establishment in Utah," 114; Logue 2-4.



St. George

University of Texas Austin: Perry-Castañeda Map Collection, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united\\_states/utah\\_90.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united_states/utah_90.jpg) (accessed February 1, 2010).

Some Mormons dreaded being called on the Cotton Mission. While chastising the congregation for their unwillingness to colonize the outer edges of Utah Territory, George A. Smith said, “I have seen faces look as long as a sectarian parson’s face, comparatively speaking...as soon as they heard they were wanted to perform any

unpleasant mission.”<sup>156</sup> He also reminded Church members that all the righteous people of the world were expected to flee to Zion during the last days. It was their religious duty to build up Zion so there would be room for all of God’s faithful followers. It is a testament to the Mormons’ cohesiveness and faith that 309 families gathered together, despite the many obstacles, and as a group they moved southward to Utah’s Dixie. They weren’t able to plant a crop in 1861 because of their late arrival. But with their first crop, planted in 1862, they harvested 100,000 pounds of cotton.<sup>157</sup> However, Utah’s Dixie never prospered. Settlers worked tirelessly, but they did not have the natural resources to support a successful colony. The Church continued to support the settlers in Dixie, even sending more colonists a year later. Farmers there were hard-pressed to feed themselves, let alone make a profit on cotton, but Church leaders still preached of its success. The *Sacramento Daily Union* printed a letter from the *Deseret News*. The Dixie settlers sent their allotted ten percent of goods to the general tithing office, and according to the correspondent, they tithed an abundance of goods. The writer declared:

Southern Utah does not ‘keep back,’ but furnishes the north with its productions. There being no quarrelling about negroes and extension of slavery, friendly relation may be expected ever to exist between the northern and southern valleys.<sup>158</sup>

For some Mormons, the Southern colonies of the Utah Territory became a miniature America, complete with a Northern and Southern culture, but without the great divisions

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<sup>156</sup> George A. Smith, “Covetousness-Labours of the Elders-Mission to Form A Southern Settlement,” Reported by J.V. Long in *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 9, 200.

<sup>157</sup> Arrington, “Great Basin Kingdom,” 216; Leonard J. Arrington, “The Mormon Cotton Mission in Southern Utah,” *The Pacific Historical Review* (Aug., 1956), 225-228.

<sup>158</sup> Special Correspondent, “Letter From Salt Lake,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 22, 1861; also can be found in the *Deseret News* May 15, 1861.



that ripped apart the United States.

The Dixie mission helped entrench the Mormon belief that God gave them everything they needed to create Zion. It also fulfilled the Mormon doctrine of self-sufficiency, but it had another purpose as well. Those who were sent to Utah's Dixie and other colonies helped "enlarge the borders of Zion."<sup>159</sup> The Church wanted room to expand, and colonies like those created in Utah's Dixie region allowed for the growth. Some Mormons worried that the Utah lacked sovereignty in the new settlements. When Nevada gained territorial status in 1861, its borders encroached on what Mormons considered to be their territory. Both older and newer colonies were in danger of falling outside the purview of Utah's laws and protection. In April of 1861, the *Deseret News* assured its readers that their far western colonies were not going to be annexed by Nevada. The Mormons asserted that Providence even had a hand in the creation of the borders. The *Deseret News* claimed that the new provisions for the territories were copied from previous acts with, "the transcriber forgetting the amendatory provisions that have been made...to operate against Utah."<sup>160</sup> The Mormons held that they would continue to grow unchecked, as the acts meant to rein in Utah "had failed to accomplish the purposes for which they were intended."<sup>161</sup> Some Mormons worried they would lose land to the new territory of Nevada, but the Civil War delayed any attempts to check the Mormon expansion.

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<sup>159</sup> George A. Smith, Covetousness—Labours of the Elders—Mission to Form A Southern Settlement—Grumbling, *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 9, 203.

<sup>160</sup> "The New Territories," *The Deseret News*, April 3, 1861, Harold B. Lee Library Digital Collections, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?desnews2,4380> (accessed February 1, 2010).

<sup>161</sup>"The New Territories."

Mormon converts from all over the world also fueled Mormon growth. Many new converts wanted to move to the center of the Mormon community, and the Church encouraged the mass migration of converts.<sup>162</sup> Mormon emigration swelled during the Civil War.<sup>163</sup> The Church entreated their congregants to help the new Saints. In 1861, they asked for two hundred wagons to be prepared for the immigrants. The converts used them in the overland crossing to Salt Lake City. Milo Andrus led one of those companies from Liverpool, England, to Salt Lake City. Their journey lasted from April until September of 1861. The travel logs for the trip mostly contain notes on the weather and distances traveled. In a few instances, the Mormon viewpoint on the war, and the world in general, did find its way into Andrus' journal. Landing in New York, some of the Saints took the train to Florence, Nebraska, and then used the overland route from there. Passing travelers updated the Saints on the war, but the news recorded about it was very matter-of-fact. There was no sermonizing or taking sides. But when the Saints left Nebraska for their overland trip on July 2, they chose to start their journey by singing: "Oh Babylon, Oh, Babylon We Bid Thee Adieu."<sup>164</sup> They traveled thousands of miles to escape the wars and turbulence in Babylon, which they believed signaled the end of the world. The Mormons wanted to move all the righteous Saints to Zion, quickly. In 1862, Brigham Young asked his congregation to increase the number of wagons sent to meet the immigrants from two hundred to three hundred. He also called upon those with some

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<sup>162</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 140.

<sup>163</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 139.

<sup>164</sup> Milo Andrus, "Milo Andrus journals 1840-1861." L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo Utah.

wealth to donate cattle.<sup>165</sup> The Civil War was causing considerable physical and emotional damage to both the North and South, but Mormons felt comfortable enough in their situation to increase their population significantly in order that they could become a strong force in the west.

The increase of Utah's population did not go unnoticed. The Mormons boasted about their growth. Notices about ships arriving in eastern American ports with Mormon converts appeared in the *New York Times*.<sup>166</sup> The *Sacramento Daily Union*'s special correspondents from St. Louis reported that, "More Mormons are on their way to the holy land this year since the first settlement of Salt Lake City."<sup>167</sup> Gentiles accused the Mormons of many sins because of their missionizing and conversions. Non-Mormons speculated that the Mormons chose the prettiest girls for conversion in order to expand the marriage pool in the Utah. They also accused them of preying upon country folk that had little or no education.<sup>168</sup> In a letter penned in 1862 for his sister, Attila L. Harding wrote of going to a Mormon meeting. He heard what he believed was the most "abominable harangue" against the United States government. He also pointed out that the congregation, which was "mostly foreigners," believed the sermon, or as he a bit

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<sup>165</sup> Brigham Young, "Call for Teams to go to the Frontiers.—Encouragement of Home Manufacture," *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, 186.

<sup>166</sup> "Arrival of Another Ship-Load of Mormons," *New York Times* (Jun 2, 1862).

<sup>167</sup> Special Correspondent, "Further by Pony Express, Atlantic Intelligence. Letter Form St. Louis," *Sacramento Daily Union*, July 15, 1861.

<sup>168</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 137; "New American Religions," *The London Quarterly Review* vol. 239 (July 1866), 253-254, Google Books: [http://books.google.com/books?id=L\\_jUAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA253&dq=Mormon+immigrants](http://books.google.com/books?id=L_jUAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA253&dq=Mormon+immigrants) (accessed January 5, 2010).

more cynically wrote, “swallowed it.”<sup>169</sup> Attila considered the foreign Mormons at best naïve, or at worst, stupid. His attitude was not unusual. Non-Mormons often claimed that the Saints gave all their loyalty to the Church, leaving none for America. The accusers especially suspected recent immigrants, simply because they had not been raised in America.

However, Utah Territorial news became peripheral to many Americans. The *North America Review* lamented upon the lack of interest, declaring that because the question of slavery oppressed “the mind of the American nation, the question of Mormonism, which had begun to be troublesome, has been thrust into the background.”<sup>170</sup> The author feared that Mormonism would continue to expand, and perhaps become an accepted religion. He was horrified by the possibility that the Mormons would gain statehood despite their marriage practices. He declared that, “If Utah is admitted with its polygamy, why may not some island of the sea, which America may come to possess, claim, with its Pagan rites and its feasts of human flesh, to be received as a sovereign State in the Union?”<sup>171</sup> The article contained much of the hyperbolic rhetoric that punctuated earlier anti-Mormon writings. But the dire warnings did not capture audiences as they once had. Most Americans were wrapped up in the Civil War. Therefore, the Mormons continued to expand their base by creating peripheral colonies and inviting more Mormons from all over the world to join them in

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<sup>169</sup> Attila L. Harding, “Letter to sister,” Stephen Selwyn Harding Papers, 1862-1901, Utah State Historical Society; Attila L. was the son of Stephen S. Harding who was governor of Utah between 1862 and 1863.

<sup>170</sup> “Mormons and Mormonism,” *The North American Review* (July 1862), 189.

<sup>171</sup> “Mormons and Mormonism,” 190.

building Zion.

In their quest to create the perfect community, the Mormons violated the rights of a group that had splintered off from the main LDS Church. Mormons did not welcome dissenters in their utopian community. It was an ironic twist. Mormons forced a group of people known as the Morrisites to flee their property and, in a final bitter betrayal, killed their prophet.

Mormon doctrine inadvertently encouraged different and sometimes contradictory religious interpretations. They believed that God and Jesus still communicated with the world through a prophet. Mormon congregants were also encouraged to court close personal relationships with Jesus and, thus, they often received their own revelations. At times men (not often women, since Mormons had a patriarchal structure) claimed they received revelations from heaven that contradicted the LDS teachings. Little schisms often occurred within the Church.<sup>172</sup>

The rift that happened during the Civil War was not the largest or most important,<sup>173</sup> but the Mormon reaction to it is a testament to the control the Mormons had in the Utah Territory in 1862. The Morrisites started like many other groups had. One Mormon man, who had immigrated to Utah from Wales, John Morris, began to receive revelations from God that went beyond a personal scope. Morris, at some point, received a revelation that Young had lost his divine mandate. Morris settled near the Weber River and was largely ignored until 1862.<sup>174</sup> Mormons did occasionally sermonize against

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<sup>172</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 89

<sup>173</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 176.

<sup>174</sup> Long, 90.

dissension and apostates. And they often reiterated that Brigham Young was the Church's divinely sanctioned prophet, but they did not speak specifically about the Morrisites.<sup>175</sup> According to the *Deseret News*, the faction that gathered in South Weber were troublemakers. They were rowdy but had been largely overlooked because no one complained of interference with "their rights."<sup>176</sup>

In early 1862, while Frank Fuller (a Mormon) was the temporary governor, this began to change. The Morrisites lived by the law of consecration, which meant all property was held in common by their Church. In 1862, as the group began to disintegrate, those who left wanted their property back. Morris and the other leaders refused to return it.<sup>177</sup> The Morrisite defectors told Utah authorities that Morris arrested several men and was holding them unlawfully. The complaint was brought before Judge Kinney, a non-Mormon judge, but at least on the surface friendly to the Mormons. He issued an arrest warrant for Morris and his closest advisors. According to the *Deseret News*, Deputy Territorial Marshal J. L. Stoddart served the warrant but the Morrisite leaders refused to surrender themselves. The Morrisites further insulted Stoddart by refusing to release their prisoners into his custody. The *Deseret News* wrote that the Morrisites were defiant and "many threats were uttered." They then ordered Stoddart to

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<sup>175</sup> Heber C. Kimball, "Establishment of the Kingdom of God," *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 8, *et al*; Ezra T. Benson, "Testimony and Religion of the Saints," *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 8, 369-370.

<sup>176</sup> "General Items," *Deseret News*, June 16, 1862.

<sup>177</sup> Long, 90.

leave.<sup>178</sup>

According to Edward William Tullidge's *History of Salt Lake City*, the acting Governor Fuller sent a message to General D.H. Wells (a Mormon). Wells commanded the Utah Territorial militia. He accused Morris and his associates of marshaling "themselves into an armed force to resist the execution of said writs." Fuller wanted Wells to gather his militia and enforce the law.<sup>179</sup> A force of around two hundred gathered to arrest Morris and his counselors. The executive and judicial branches of the Utah Territory, as well as the military, were being controlled by the Mormons. There was no governmental oversight as tensions amplified between the Mormons and the Morrisites. The Mormons felt emboldened by the lack of federal command and decided to take action.

The militia greatly outnumbered the Morrisites. According to historians C. LeRoy Anderson and Larry I. Halford, the Morrisite men only numbered around ninety.<sup>180</sup> The militia marched on the Morrisite camp. In reaction to their arrival, Morris and his people gathered in his Bowery, waiting to receive divine direction. The militia leader grew weary of waiting for Morris to surrender himself. He ordered his men to fire two cannon shots as a warning. The soldiers misaimed and killed two women. The Morrisites fought

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<sup>178</sup> Arrington and Bitton contend that Judge Kinney was sympathetic to the Mormons superficially but while in Washington D.C. he often accused them of treachery and disloyalty; "General Items," *Deseret News*, June 16, 1862.

<sup>179</sup> Edward W. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Star Printing Co, 1886), 438. Google Books. <http://books.google.com/books?id=fNkBAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover> (accessed January 8, 2010).

<sup>180</sup> C. LeRoy Anderson and Larry I. Halford, "The Mormons and the Morrisite War," *Montana: the Magazine of Western History* Vol. 24, no. 4 (1974), 50; Halford and Anderson also contend that the posse had around 400 people which is disputed by Arrington and Bitton.

back, beginning a three day siege of their encampment. When the Mormon militia finally stormed the Morrisite holding, they killed Morris and two women. Mormons said Morris was defiant to the end, while the Morrisites claimed their leader was surrendering when he was cruelly shot down. In the end, the casualty list included ten Morrisites and two Mormon Militia men.<sup>181</sup>

The Mormons had reason to go into the Morrisite camp and enforce the law. However, the force used to bring Joseph Morris and his cohorts to justice was excessive. The Morrisites as early as 1860 complained about harassment from the Mormons, or as they referred to them, “Brighamites.” One diarist claimed that orders “had come from Brigham Young that the officers of the law must [arrest] any Morrisite against whom they could make out a charge, and of the slightest pretext be given by resistance shoot him down.”<sup>182</sup> Although the *Deseret News* printed differently, there had been past tensions between the Mormons and the Morrisites. Some authors, like T.B.H. Stenhouse, claimed that the Mormons who attacked the Morrisites were trying to court favor with Brigham Young by ridding their nation of a nuisance.<sup>183</sup> Mormon enemies accused them of being Young’s puppets, and Judge Kinney would later face similar accusations.<sup>184</sup> The writ to arrest Morris had come from Kinney, and several Morrisites would be tried in his

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<sup>181</sup> Long, 91.

<sup>182</sup> *Mark Hill Forscott collection*, “Pettit’s Pocket Diary,” L. Tom Perry Special Collections: Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

<sup>183</sup> T.B.H Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints a Full and Complete History of the Mormons...The Development of the Great Mineral Wealth of the Territory of Utah* (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler) 594, 595, 599-601, <http://books.google.com/books?id=Q3gFAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover> (accessed January 8, 2010).

<sup>184</sup> Stenhouse, 600; Long, 2.



courtroom. The Morrisites proclaimed their innocence, stating their gathering had been peaceful until the first cannon shots were fired. Only then did they take up weapons to defend their homes and families. They also claimed that their leader was shot and killed intentionally—an assassination—but their claims carried little credence in the Utah Territorial courts.<sup>185</sup> Seven Morrisite men were convicted of murder, for the death of the two dead militia members, and “sixty-six others were fined one hundred dollars each for resisting the posse.”<sup>186</sup>

The Morrisites weren't a real threat to Young and his followers, as they were very few when compared to the Mormon population. Other sects had come and gone throughout the history of the Church, but the Mormons reacted to the Morrisites the most violently. At the time of the Morrisite war, the Mormons controlled the judicial system, the governor, and the militia. The principle reason the Mormons entered the Morrisite camp may have been well-founded, but the excessive force used to arrest them was not. The Mormons staunchly defended religious freedom and the right to self-rule. However, when they held all the power in the Utah Territory, they became guilty of the very things they abhorred. They not only interfered with the Morrisites internal affairs, they also killed their prophet. The lack of federal oversight allowed the Mormons complete control in the Utah Territory, and it seemed there was no room for dissenters in God's kingdom.

The conclusion of the Morrisite affair actually heralded the end of the Mormons' free reign. Shortly after it ended, the federal government once again reminded Utahans

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<sup>185</sup> Stenhouse, 598.

<sup>186</sup> Tullidge, 319.

that they were under its jurisdiction. The new federally appointed Utah Territorial governor, Stephen S. Harding, arrived in 1862 and he became the Morrisites' benefactor. He arrived in July of 1862, right before the Mormons' traditional celebration of their first arrival in Salt Lake City. At the 24 of July celebration, Governor Harding was asked to speak. The *Deseret News* chronicled the occasion, writing that "Governor Young invited Governor Harding to address the people." Young had not been the official governor of Utah Territory for close to four years, but the *Deseret News* still addressed him as such, illuminating the importance Young still retained in the territory. Harding made a good impression upon the Mormon people with his first speech, which lauded the importance of the Constitution and freedom of religion.<sup>187</sup> But by the beginning of 1863, Harding lost their good will.

The Mormons held strong to their belief that God wanted them to practice polygamy. They thought it should have been protected by the Constitution's freedom of religion clause. Harding argued that polygamy was immoral, and decided to publicly address the issue. Harding had earlier declared to the Mormons that freedom of religion was paramount, but he then publicly denounced polygamy. The Saints saw this as a contradiction. Harding also implied that Mormon disloyalty held back their petition for statehood. The Mormons, who had recently raised a militia to protect the mail route and believed themselves very loyal to the Constitution, were insulted. The more urgent problem, though, was the fact that Utah's petition for statehood was in jeopardy. They

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<sup>187</sup> "Three Cheers for our Mountain Home," *The Deseret News*, July 30, 1862.

feared that Harding's accusations of disloyalty would hamper their efforts.<sup>188</sup> The Mormons wanted Harding gone and sent a message asking Lincoln to remove him from office along with two judges that aided Harding.<sup>189</sup> A month after the Mormons' meeting, on April 1, 1863, *The Deseret News* printed an article entitled "A Contemptible Document." Governor Harding insulted the Mormons further by pardoning all the imprisoned Morrisites. The *Deseret News* article was filled with indignation, and the writer was so angered that he felt unable to write coherently, stating, "the interference with the administration of justice is deferred for the present and till our anger shall have abated."<sup>190</sup>

Harding may have pardoned all the Morrisites as a parting shot at the Mormons after he learned President Lincoln planned to remove him from office. In May of 1863, Lincoln appeased the Mormons and relieved Harding from his post. He consoled Harding by making him Chief Justice of the Colorado territory.<sup>191</sup> Though his tenure as governor had only lasted ten months, he had been the most constant federal appointee since Governor Cummings left in May of 1861. The Mormon-run courts followed his edict and freed the Morrisites, but the arrival of General Patrick Connor might have inclined them to comply. General Connor and his army marched into Salt Lake City in October of 1862. The Union sent Connor to protect the mail route from Indian attacks. However, his decision to set up base just miles from Salt Lake City alarmed and angered the

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<sup>188</sup> Stephen S. Harding, *Governors Message* (December 8, 1862), 3-8.

<sup>189</sup> "Mass Meeting in the Tabernacle," *The Deseret News*, March 4, 1863; Anderson 225-226.

<sup>190</sup> "A Contemptible Document," *The Deseret News* (April 1, 1863).

<sup>191</sup> Anderson 225-226.

Mormons.<sup>192</sup> Also, Connor quickly concluded that the Mormons were a seditious lot. He summed up the situation between the Mormons and Morrisites and decided to side with the latter. Connor reported in June of 1863 that the Morrisites were sorely afflicted. He stated that they “had been reduced by the long-continued persecutions of the Mormons to the most abject poverty.” Connor declared they would have “the protection and assistance of the forces under my command.”<sup>193</sup> Connor’s decision to insert himself into Utah’s internal affairs represented everything the Mormons despised about the federal government. More than anything they wanted to control the domestic institutions within their territory. Connor reminded them they still had opposition. Connor’s presence was a deterrent to Mormon self-rule, but he could not completely control the Mormon-dominated city.

Connor was not even able to enforce federal law. In 1862, President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act, which aimed, “To punish *and prevent* the practice of polygamy in the Territories of the United States and other places.” President Lincoln signed it into law in July of 1862. According to Tullidge, Lincoln had no intention of enforcing the law. Perhaps Lincoln was making a token attempt at eradicating the second relic of barbarism. When the law passed, Tullidge alleged, Lincoln also sent a letter to Brigham Young. Lincoln declared that he would not prosecute polygamists as long as the Utah

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<sup>192</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 172.

<sup>193</sup> United States War Dept, *The war of the Rebellion: A compilation of the official records of the Unions and Confederate Armies* series 1 vol. 50 (Part I) , (Washington Govt. Print. Off) : Cornell State University, The Making of America: Books: Civil War Official Histories, <http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=moawar;cc=moawar;q1=Morrisite%2A;rgn=full%20text;idno=waro0105;didno=waro0105;view=image;seq=246> (accessed January 5, 2010).

Territory stayed faithful to the Union. Though the letter only said, “I will let them alone if they let me alone,” it carried volumes of meaning.<sup>194</sup> The law, according to Tullidge, was also “generally understood to be inoperative and as a dead letter on our statute books.”<sup>195</sup> After the Morrill Act was passed, the number of Mormons entering polygamous marriages increased. Connor didn’t have the power to enforce the law.<sup>196</sup> Stenhouse also found Connor’s army to be an ineffective deterrent to Mormon polygamy. According to Stenhouse, Brigham Young knew he had the upper hand against the troops that settled so close to Salt Lake City. The number of Mormons he could call upon to protect the city far outnumbered those under Connor’s command, so instead of inducing fear, Connor’s army was only an annoyance.<sup>197</sup> But it did shift some of the focus from growth to defense.

Mormon men stood ready to protect their city and prophet. T.B.H Stenhouse described the increased tension between the Mormons and the soldiers. He explained that in January of 1863, Brigham Young married Amelia Folsom in direct violation of the

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<sup>194</sup> House of Representatives, “Bills and Resolutions,” *H.R. 391*, 37<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session American Memory: A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llhb&fileName=037/llhb037.db&recNum=2215> (accessed January 7, 2010); U.S. Senate, “Senate Journal” (July 1, 1862), 735, American Memory: A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsj&fileName=054/llsj054.db&recNum=734> (accessed January 7, 2010); Tullidge, 358.

<sup>195</sup> Tullidge, 358.

<sup>196</sup> Kathryn M. Daynes, *Transformation of a Mormon Marriage System 1840-1910* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 102.

<sup>197</sup> Stenhouse, 606.

new anti-polygamy law.<sup>198</sup> A few Saints misconstrued an overheard conversation between General Connor and a federally-appointed Judge, making them believe that Connor intended to arrest Young. In response, Young signaled for help. According to Stenhouse, Mormon men surrounded his house within thirty minutes, and “rifles, lead, and powder were brought out of their hiding places.”<sup>199</sup> The faithful Mormon soldiers surrounded the prophet for several weeks. Stenhouse asserted that they stood ready to kill any soldiers that tried to arrest their prophet. Judge Kinney aided Young by summoning him to his courtroom. Once there, a jury of his peers “found no evidence” that he had married Miss Folsom (although the marriage had occurred). Young was free. Stenhouse asserted that Connor never intended to arrest Young, but to end the standoff, the Mormons needed assurance that their prophet would not be incarcerated.<sup>200</sup> The Mormons, having already lost one prophet, wanted to assure the safety of Young. The crisis required the Saints to divert valuable man-power that could have helped build Zion to protect their prophet, and therefore their nation. The tension that marked Mormons’ pre-Civil War years returned.

The Mormons also felt the Union betrayed them by sending troops. Brigham Young, who willingly called the Utah Territorial militia to action in 1862 in order to protect the mail route, changed his attitude after Connor set up camp. Young told his congregation:

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<sup>198</sup> According to Utah’s website dedicated to telling Utah’s history Amelia Folsom was considered by most observers to be Young’s favorite wife. Utah History to Go: [http://historytogo.utah.gov/salt\\_lake\\_tribune/in\\_another\\_time/073095.html](http://historytogo.utah.gov/salt_lake_tribune/in_another_time/073095.html) (accessed March 9, 2010).

<sup>199</sup> Stenhouse, 604.

<sup>200</sup> Stenhouse, 603-605.

if the Government of the United States should now ask for a battalion of men to fight in the present battle-fields of the nation, while there is a camp of soldiers from abroad located within the corporate limits of this city, I would not ask one man to go; I would see them in hell first.<sup>201</sup>

When Connor and Young did fight, there were no violent outbursts; instead, Connor sent a flurry of letters to Washington. Mormons retaliated by sermonizing about the sacredness of the Constitution and the evil men who perverted it.<sup>202</sup> The *Deseret News* summed up the Mormon feeling on Connor and his troops after a particularly tense month. The Mormons knew they were still in charge of the Utah Territory and Connor could not do much about it. The article declared:

Colonel P. Edward Connor and his regiment were sent across the mountains to protect the telegraph and the overland mail, and to fight the Indians, and not to kick up trouble with the Mormons or any other class of persons. The Government has enough of fighting now on its hand and there is no necessity for increasing it.<sup>203</sup>

The Mormons knew Connor was in Utah to protect the mail route, but they were still bothered that he was even there. Connor also made no pretenses about liking the Mormons, believing them to be seditious.<sup>204</sup> The Mormons continued to expand with Connor and the troops watching them, but they no longer controlled the executive, federal, and judicial branches of the Utah Territorial government.

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<sup>201</sup> Brigham Young, "The Persecution of the Saints—Their Loyalty to the Constitution—The Mormon Battalion—The Laws of God Relative to the African Race." *Journal of Discourses* Vol.9, 107.

<sup>202</sup> Long, 156, 159.

<sup>203</sup> "California Press on Affairs in Utah," *The Deseret News*, March 25, 1863.

<sup>204</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 172.

## CONCLUSION: GOD'S GLORY

During the Civil War, the Mormons believed God's glory was upon them. Joseph Smith's prophecy had been fulfilled while God avenged his death. As the Civil War raged, the Mormons took advantage of their freedom to build up the "Kingdom of God." They expanded their land holdings, introduced an unprecedented number of Saints to the United States and Utah, and strengthened the institution of polygamy. Mormons were also able to weed out dissenters, like the Morrisites, using the military and the judiciary, leaving the faithful Saints in total control of the territory. During the Civil War era, Mormons believed that God blessed them, and that their dynamic growth amidst the war was proof of Divine providence.

The Mormon expansion into "cotton country" in an attempt at self-sufficiency was not materially successful. The settlers could not produce abundant crops because of the poor soil, harsh weather, and illness (malaria). The mission, at least during the Civil War years, did instill a sense of pride within the Mormons. They felt that they had been able to create a mini-nation because God provided them with all the necessary resources. They lauded the goods that came from their "southern colonies" while disparaging the fighting between the Northern and Southern states. They declared that while the North and South fought, Utah, which had both a northern and southern culture, would never fight.<sup>205</sup> In the Mormons' eyes, their nation was bound together by God. Their growth

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<sup>205</sup> Special Correspondent, "Letter From Salt Lake," *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 22, 1861.



during the tumultuous war years proved to many Mormons that God blessed them, while the Gentiles suffered for their past sins. Their unchecked expansion during the Civil War ended. Shortly after the South surrendered, the Nevada territory was officially surveyed. The Mormons lost their Muddy River Colonies, which were part of Utah's Dixie, to the Nevadans. These "cotton mission" were the only colonies that had managed a modicum of temporal success.<sup>206</sup>

They also found proof of God's blessing in the growth of their population. Mormon converts were converging in Utah like never before. Church leaders increased programs to ensure immigrants had a chance to experience Zion. Mormon immigration reached its peak during the Civil War. During the 1860s, thirty-five percent of Utah's population would be foreign-born immigrants.<sup>207</sup> The Mormons were gathering to build Zion. They believed that Christ's return was imminent and that all the Saints needed to prepare for his arrival. Mormon intellectual George Q. Cannon compared the work of gathering the Saints to the work Moses performed. According to Cannon, "the gathering of the Saints together from the various nations, is a far more stupendous work...than the gathering of Israel from Egypt to the land of Canaan."<sup>208</sup> Cannon, like many Mormons, believed the gathering of the Saints was essential to the growth of their kingdom and Christ's return. They held that their work was no less important than that of the Bible prophets of old. The Mormons' main motivation was the thought that the Civil War was

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<sup>206</sup> "The Mormons Cotton Mission," 235.

<sup>207</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 139.

<sup>208</sup> George Q. Cannon, "The increase of Faith Among the Saints—More Implicit in their Obedience Now than in the Days of Joseph—Comparison Made by Men Between the Past and the Present—The magnitude of the Work of God, Etc." *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 10, 345

the beginning of the end times—as Joseph Smith foretold. But the temporary lack of federal oversight also helped. After the war new laws that targeted all immigrants, not just Mormons, slowed down immigration. But in 1887, the government struck directly at the Church by cancelling the charter of the Perpetual Emigrating Company (a financial institution specifically designated to help pay Mormon immigrants' way to the United States).<sup>209</sup> The government severely limited the Church's power to guide Saints to the promised land of Zion.

Though the Church welcomed new Saints, they did not welcome dissenters. They cleansed Utah of the unfaithful, like the Morrisites. When Colonel Patrick Connor arrived, he sympathized with the Morrisites and became their protector. But he was more than that. He was also a federal employee who felt obligated to keep an eye on the Mormons. His arrival, more than anything else, signaled the end of Mormon self-rule. Even though he didn't have the power to stop the Mormons, he antagonized them. Connor believed as long as the Mormons were the majority of Utah's population, no one else in the territory would have any political power. Connor tried to lure non-Mormons to Utah, declaring it was filled with mineral wealth.<sup>210</sup> The federal government's attempts to keep the peace with the Mormons were thwarted by Connor's aggressive attempts to diminish Mormon power. The Mormon nation was still growing, but it was being needed by outsiders.

In 1862, Young warned that the time of the Lord was approaching fast and the

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<sup>209</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 138.

<sup>210</sup> Long, 225.

Saints were still not prepared for His return. He reminded the Saints that it was their duty to build up Zion. He described the growth of Zion in numbers as well as stature. He declared that:

By-and by you will see the Saints flock together. Will they come merely by one or two shiploads? No; it will require many more ships than we have heretofore employed to bring home the gathering thousands to Zion. Millions of people that now sit in darkness—that are now, to all appearance, in region and shadow of death, will come to Zion...Zion will extend, eventually, all over this earth. There will be no nook or corner upon the earth but what will be in Zion.<sup>211</sup>

The Mormons built a nation for Christ amidst the deadliest war fought on American soil. They believed they were doing God’s will. Just as their prophet Joseph Smith foretold, the United States split. They had no reason to doubt his other assertions and were also convinced that Christ would soon return. The Mormons growth during the Civil War gave them the wherewithal to defend for decades what they built. For after the Civil War the federal Government turned the full weight of their power upon the Mormon practice of polygamy—tearing at the very fabric of the Mormons’ community. Even though Christ had not returned, but Mormons had grown in faith and numbers during the Civil War, which made them a stronger people.

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<sup>211</sup>Brigham Young, “Gathering of Saints—Honouring the Priesthood, etc,” *Journal of Discourses* Vol. 9, 138.

## EPILOGUE: REIMAGINING THE CIVIL WAR I

In 1865, the Civil War ended. The Mormons' earlier assertions that the war would result in the destruction of all nations, besides Zion, were proven wrong. Young had occasionally shown some restraint when he sermonized. He cautioned his people that the Lord worked in His own time. But many Mormons had believed that the end of the world was near. Their sermons had been filled with dire predictions on the fate of the Gentiles. They had to reconcile what they believed with what happened. Intellectual Mormons began to reexamine Smith's prophecy to see if it had been understood correctly. Reinterpretations appeared, and they emphasized Smith's unerring prediction that South Carolina would be the first state to secede and rediscovered parts that had not been discussed during the Civil War.

Smith's prophecy about the Civil War proved to be partially correct. South Carolina was the first Southern state to secede. Mormon intellectuals reemphasized Smith's prescience. Though the South surrendered and the world was left standing, the prophecy wasn't wrong—according to the Mormons. In March of 1865, an article entitled "Modern Prophecy and its Fulfilment" was printed in the *Millennial Star*. The editors believed it might be beneficial to republish some of those predictions so that the memory of the Saints could be "refreshed." The author did not want Mormons to discount

Smith's prophecy even though the War was almost over and Christ had not arrived.<sup>212</sup> The article reminded the Saints that Joseph Smith correctly asserted that South Carolina would be the first state to secede and offered the belief that Smith's prophecies were the most specific and truthful in existence. It also drew attention to one particular line in the prophecy, which declared, "the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceeding angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with sore vexation."<sup>213</sup> The Mormons paid little heed to that line during the Civil War (besides the portion that declared the Gentiles would be vexed), but it became an important aspect of the prophecy as the Civil War was ending. The Mormons studied the term "remnants of the land," and decided Smith had been referring to the Native Americans. The article declared that in order for the prophecy to be completely fulfilled, the American "aborigines" would have "to add to the suffering and great calamities of the American nation."<sup>214</sup> Wording that had been inconsequential during the Civil War years took on a new meaning for Mormons.

Poet Emily Woodmansee also reinterpreted Smith's prophecy. She agreed with the *Millennial Star*. Woodmansee still believed Christ's return was imminent. She watched the Indians (the remnants of Jacob and the Lamanites) with trepidation as she awaited their attack. She reminded her readers that all of the prophets' words had to be fulfilled. According to Woodmansee, the prophecy had not been completely satisfied. In

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<sup>212</sup>"Modern Prophecy and its Fulfilment," *Latter-day Saints Millennial Star* Vol. 27, (March 25, 1862), 184, HBL Digital Collections <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u?/MStar,8127> (accessed January 8, 2010).

<sup>213</sup> "Modern Prophecy and its Fulfilment," 185.

<sup>214</sup> "Modern Prophecy and its Fulfilment," 187.

an attempt to elucidate all these points, Woodmansee wrote a poem. She claimed that,

The remnants of Jacob are roused in their lair,  
 “They Young lions” as they crouch for their prey,  
 They are thirsting for blood; let the white man beware-  
 For who shall the terrible Lamanite stay.

The nation has tasted of war’s fearful woe  
 But must it the dregs of the bitter cup drain?  
 Must the nation be scourged by a pitiless foe  
 Whose fierceness and fury it cannot restrain?

The word of the Lord by His servant was spoken  
 That woe upon woe should each other succeed.  
 “Not a tittle or jot of that word can be broken”  
 God will surely accomplish the judgment decreed.<sup>215</sup>

Woodmansee and other Mormons did not give up on millennial dreams. They still felt that the Lord’s time was at hand. They also believed that God was still punishing the Gentiles. They claimed that the Civil War had been the beginning of the Gentiles’ troubles and no one knew exactly when the wars and pestilence would stop. The editors explained that,

The blood of Prophets still calls for vengeance, and the full answer shall some day come. We can recognize the hand of God plainly in many things that have already transpired, but the beginning of sorrow has only dawned upon the nation.<sup>216</sup>

After the Civil War the Republican Party decided to focus on the second relic of barbarism. The Saints retaliated by increasing their rhetoric on the corruption in government. They were fighting a losing battle. Undistracted by war, Americans now

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<sup>215</sup> Emily Hill Woodmansee, “Judgments Begin at the House of the Lord,” June 1867.

<sup>216</sup> “Historical Contrast Betwixt the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 1844, and the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 1865,” *The Latter-day Saints Millennial Star* Vol. 27, 413, HBL Digital Collections: Mormons Publications, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u?/MStar,8303> (accessed January 8, 2010); My mother, a devout Mormon born in 1945, remembers being taught in Sunday school that the world had not been destroyed at the end of the Civil war, because the war was just the first sign of the second coming.

turned their attention to the Mormons' polygamous practices. Utah would not gain statehood until 1896, and that was only after they promised to give up polygamy. In 1890, Wilford Woodruff, president of the LDS Church, promised lawmakers that the Church would no longer support polygamous marriages nor perform polygamous marriage ceremonies. The LDS leadership abided by Woodruff's proclamation because their choices were limited. Mormons either had to give up polygamy or face the annihilation of their Church—they chose to give up polygamy.<sup>217</sup> It was also around this time that LDS leaders started to urge Mormon converts to stay home and not to emigrate to Utah. The Mormons of Utah changed their doctrines to appear more mainstream in an attempt to gain acceptance from the rest of the nation.<sup>218</sup> But as late as 1897, Mormon journals like the *Millennial Star* still referred to Smith's prophecy about the Civil War. For Mormons, it was conclusive proof that Smith was a prophet, and it can still be found in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.<sup>219</sup>

However, by the twentieth century, new interpretations of Utah's role during the Civil War were starting to appear. Mormons began to emphasize their loyalty to the government. In 1911, Dr. Seymour B. Young, a LDS leader, wrote, "An Open Letter to Lieut. Hobson," because the statement "Brigham Young was always a traitor to the general government, and lived and died a traitor," was published in a "prominent

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<sup>217</sup> Larson, 263, 301.

<sup>218</sup> Arrington and Bitton, 141.

<sup>219</sup> "Joseph Smith's Divine Mission," *The Latter-day Saint Millennial Star* Vol. 59, (1897), 252, HBLL Digital Library: Mormon Publications, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u/?MStar,34143> (accessed January 8, 2010).

periodical.”<sup>220</sup> The Mormons believed in the supremacy of the Constitution, but Brigham Young’s radical rhetoric might have prejudiced a few non-Mormons against him. But Seymour Young did not discuss the finer distinctions Mormons had made between loyalty to a righteous government and loyalty to a corrupted government. He instead discussed the many times the Mormons assisted the government in fighting their wars. He first discussed the battalion that fought for President Polk in the Mexican-American war and then reminded Lieutenant Hobson that when “Governor Brigham Young” was asked to raise and equip a cavalry to protect the mail route he responded affirmatively and quickly. Also, in 1861, Brigham Young authored the first message sent from the newly built telegraph station in the Utah Territory. It assured those reading the message that “Utah has not seceded, but is firm for the Constitution and laws of our once happy country, and is warmly interested in such useful enterprises as the one so far completed.”<sup>221</sup> The message was clear: Mormons, including Brigham Young, had been willing to fight and die for their country just like thousands of other Americans. The role of Mormons during the Civil War was of course much more complex than Seymour Young’s interpretation, but there was some truth in his statement.

Mormons used partial truths to reinterpret the Civil War. It was a necessary step to reconcile the fact that the United States did re-emerge and Jesus did not return. They were not consciously lying, just trying to reshape interpretations that seemed so conclusive during the Civil War era. Later generations would go even further, as the

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<sup>220</sup> Seymour B. Young, “The Loyalty of Brigham Young: An Open Letter to Lieut. Hobson,” *Improvement Era* (May 1911), Utah State Historical Society.

<sup>221</sup> Seymour B. Young, 604, 611-612.



Church became more mainstream— forgetting much of the radical rhetoric, and instead focusing on their faithfulness to the Constitution. By changing the meaning of the Civil War, the Mormons were able to maintain their faith in Joseph Smith, and in doing so they kept their Church strong.

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Journal of Discourses

Latter-day Saints Millennial Star

New York Daily Times

The North American Review

Sacramento Daily Union

Times and Seasons

### **Web Sites**

Brigham Young University Digital Collections

Cornell University: The Making of America

Google Books

Library of Congress: American Memory