

BRIGHAM YOUNG AS PASTOR: COMPASSION AND MERCY DURING THE UTAH WAR, 1857–1858

William P. MacKinnon

Will I run from the sheep? No. Will I forsake the flock? No. . . . I want you to understand that if I am your earthly shepherd you must follow me, or else we shall be separated. . . . I am your leader, Latter Day Saints, and you must follow me; and if you do not follow me you may expect that I shall go my way and you may take yours, if you please.

—Brigham Young announcing the Mormon Move South,
Salt Lake Tabernacle, March 21, 1858

Much has been written about Brigham Young's involvement in the origins, prosecution, and impact of the Utah War of 1857–1858.¹ Some of

1. In brief, the conflict was the armed confrontation over power and authority between the civil-religious hierarchy of Utah Territory led by Governor Brigham Young, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the administration of President James Buchanan. In the spring of 1857, soon after his inauguration, Buchanan perceived rebellion and set out to restore federal authority in the territory by replacing Young as governor and installing a successor to be escorted west by a large army expedition. It was a change Young contested through his territorial militia, the Nauvoo Legion, and the use of hit-and-run guerrilla tactics. The result was a conflict that brought not only casualties but federal treason indictments for Young and hundreds of other Latter-day Saints. For the former governor and a few others, there would also be indictments for murder. With thousands of troops and camp followers involved, it was the nation's most extensive and expensive military undertaking during the period between the Mexican–American and Civil Wars.

For the most recent scholarship on the Utah War, see Richard E. Turley Jr. and Barbara Jones Brown, *Vengeance Is Mine: The Mountain Meadows Massacre and Its Aftermath* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023); Brent M. Rogers, *Unpopular Sovereignty: Mormons and the Federal Management of Early Utah*

this analysis includes stiff criticisms of Young's leadership in this conflict as well as spirited defenses of his stewardship.² At times my own observations have been among the more critical ones.³ But one of the things that I have learned from my sixty-five-year association with Latter-day Saints and their history is that there are at least two sides to every story.

In pursuit of that observation, the purpose of this essay is to share four little-known vignettes about Brigham Young's leadership behavior during the tensest moments of the Utah War and the Steptoe Expedition immediately preceding that conflict. They reveal the pastoral side of his character—one far different from what students of the war usually discuss, preoccupied as they often are with military matters of tactics, strategy, and accountability for atrocities such as the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

I begin with the case of Miss Elizabeth Sarah Taunton Stayner, a wayward nineteen-year-old British-born Latter-day Saint who, with

Territory (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017); William P. MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword's Point: A Documentary History of the Utah War, Part 1 (to 1858)* and *Part 2 (1858–1859)* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2008 and 2016); David L. Bigler and Will Bagley, *The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War, 1857–1858* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011); Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Norman F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict, 1850–1859* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960).

2. Emblematic of these extremes is a joint article by two of the Utah War's leading but now deceased historians: Will Bagley and Ronald W. Walker, "Did Brigham Young Order a Massacre?" *True West* 50 (Apr. 2003): 31–34. My own position on Young's culpability for Mountain Meadows is that of a Scotch verdict: not proven. See MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword's Point, Part 2*, 608.

3. My most severe criticism of President Young has focused on his unrestrained public rhetoric and actions as Utah's governor during the 1850s, a form of negative leadership permitting a culture of violence to arise in the territory and its militia. This deterioration in societal tone led to murder and looting in Utah. See William P. MacKinnon, ed., "Lonely Bones: Violence and Leadership," chap. 7 in *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 295–328. For a good analysis of the episodically rough language of Young's public discourses, see Ronald W. Walker, "Raining Pitchforks: Brigham Young as Preacher," *Sunstone* 8 (May/June 1983): 5–9.

dozens of other married and single women, chose to accompany the US Army troops of the Steptoe Expedition to California when they left the Salt Lake Valley in the spring of 1855. Brigham Young was initially enraged by this departure under such provocative circumstances. However, when Elizabeth asked Young for help through her father in 1856, Young went to considerable effort through a Church agent in San Francisco and apostle Orson Hyde in Carson Valley to facilitate her return to Utah. Elizabeth ultimately declined the help and stayed in California. Why she never followed through on (or even acknowledged) these arrangements is unknown. In 1857 she married Luman Wadhams in San Francisco. He was from a respectable, venerable Presbyterian family from upstate New York and worked as a teamster and accountant. Elizabeth and Luman remained in San Francisco, survived the 1906 earthquake and fire, and had five children. Elizabeth died in Oakland as a widow at age eighty-seven in 1923.⁴

Elizabeth's motives for leaving Utah with the army in 1855 are murky. However, for others her motives were hopelessly entangled with the controversies surrounding the social interactions and sexual peccadilloes of Colonel Steptoe's officers and men with Latter-day Saint women and girls, at least one of whom was Brigham Young's daughter-in-law. Immediately after the Steptoe Expedition and its entourage departed for California, Governor Young summoned Chief Justice John F. Kinney to his office and grilled him about reports of gambling, drinking, and womanizing by army officers and others at a Salt Lake City hotel Kinney owned. Surrounded by Young and a gathering of eleven senior Church leaders, businessmen, and Nauvoo Legion officers, a

4. See Ardis E. Parshall, "Random Reasons Why I Like Brigham Young: Two," *Keepapitchinin* (blog), Aug. 19, 2009, <http://www.keepapitchinin.org/2009/08/19/random-reasons-why-i-like-brigham-young-two/>; William P. MacKinnon, "Sex, Subalterns, and Steptoe: Army Behavior, Mormon Rage, and Utah War Anxieties," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 227–46; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Runaway Wives, 1830–1860," *Journal of Mormon History* 42, no. 2 (Apr. 2016): 1–26.

beleaguered Kinney responded to the governor's interrogation with several remarkable disclosures recorded by an office stenographer:

There was considerable drinking in my house by my clerks and other[s] staying in my house, & sometimes by others visiting my house. And I confess that I have got high. I expect that I drunk more liquor last winter than I have done in all my life. And almost all about my house drank considerable last winter. . . . Miss [Elizabeth] Stayner & Miss Potter were very much at my house, and much to the annoyance of my family. And indeed I was disgusted at their conduct. The [army] officers have been in my house and met the girls, but I was not responsible for all acts done in my house, being but a boarder in the house and having a manager over the business of the Hotel.⁵

In her old-age reminiscences, Kinney's daughter Ellen limned a more benign picture of Elizabeth's conduct and state of mind. At the time she knew her, Ellen Kinney was fourteen years old, and Elizabeth Stayner was both her governess and tutor in French and English. From this perspective, young Miss Kinney described Elizabeth as "a very interesting young English woman . . . well educated and an accomplished musician. But she was most unhappy, she had found everything so different from the way she had expected it to be. She had come over with relatives, with high hopes that the new life in a new country, would offer opportunities she could not find in congested old England, she came from. How heartily she wished she were back there. Her music was a resource but not an asset. There seemed to be no opening for her or any of them. They were all discouraged and homesick, in reduced circumstances with nothing to do."⁶

When Elizabeth decamped for California, Ellen Kinney believed that "having made a little money, she decided to go on to San Francisco,

5. David O. Calder, transcript of interview, John F. Kinney by Brigham Young, et al., July 10, 1855, CR1234/1, box 47, folder 44, reel 61, Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter CHL).

6. Ellen Kinney Ware, "Crossing the Plains in 1854," unpublished typescript, pp. 69–71, Hall-Kinney Collection, RG2939AM, sub 3, box 4, folder 3, Nebraska Historical Society, Lincoln.

thinking she could make her living there with her music” and later asked herself “what became of her, for she was womanly and attractive.” As a grandmother in Nebraska City, Ellen naively believed that Elizabeth had traveled to California in 1855 “alone.” Whether she really did so in this way and for this reason or instead left Utah out of promiscuity, a sense of adventure, disillusionment, or simple boredom is unknown and beyond the scope of this article’s purpose. What is important is that when Elizabeth’s family reached out for Brigham Young’s help during February 1856 “in recovering our (at present) lost child,” Young immediately swung into action and did so without recriminations. In seeking Young’s assistance, Elizabeth’s father Thomas had not mentioned the circumstances under which she had departed Utah, but Young was well aware that she had been part of Colonel Steptoe’s California-bound entourage. Without reference to his earlier anger over Elizabeth’s behavior, he sent her a sympathetic letter in San Francisco and then one to apostle Orson Hyde asking him to arrange her travel from Carson Valley to Salt Lake City on a Church wagon train so that “she will find [with you] a way for her to return to her much afflicted parents.” It is telling that Young’s pastoral request of Hyde was part of a letter dealing with the more urgent matters of food shortages and destitution in Utah, Native American raids, and the launch of a Mormon-owned newspaper in San Francisco.⁷

In contrast to the spirit of Brigham Young’s efforts to help the Stayner family was the rant of Heber C. Kimball, his first counselor, to son William Kimball, then absent in England:

Col. Steptoe . . . sent a part of his command south, while he went with part north. He took some of our “silly women” in his command viz., Mrs. Wheelock, Mrs. Broomhead and her other daughter, Miss Stayner, Miss Z. Potter, with several others, and then several went south with the

7. Thomas Stayner to Brigham Young, Feb. 26, 1856, box 25, folder 8 (reel 35); Brigham Young to Elizabeth Stayner, Mar. 1, 1856, Letterbook 2, p. 619; Brigham Young to Orson Hyde, Mar. 3, 1856, Letterbook 2, pp. 622–23, all Brigham Young papers, CR1234/1, CHL. According to Ellen Kinney, Thomas Stayner had earlier traveled to San Francisco in an unsuccessful attempt to find his daughter.

other portion of the troops; one of Thos. Tanner's daughters, making three of his daughters gone to California, one of whom only lived three days after arriving in California. Emily Frost went with the soldiers north, starting for California, went as far as Boxelder [Brigham City, Utah], and then turned back to the city, giving as her reason for so doing, "they were too hard for her."⁸

Next comes a scene in the Wasatch Range during the brutally cold, snowy third week of November 1857. There, from a cave near the eastern end of Echo Canyon, Lt. Gen. Daniel H. Wells, Brigham Young's second counselor in the First Presidency, commanded the Nauvoo Legion. Wells pondered what was then the critical issue of the Utah War: Would the US Army's Utah Expedition, led by Col. Albert Sidney Johnston, move beyond the charred ruins of Fort Bridger to enter the Salt Lake Valley? There was a great deal at stake at this juncture, including the safety of Latter-day Saint women and the Church's leaders, who were widely believed to be targeted for molestation and summary execution, respectively. There was also the potentiality of wholesale bloodshed beyond what had already taken place in southern Utah at Mountain Meadows. During October and November President Young had secretly

8. Heber C. Kimball to William Kimball, May 29, 1855, CHL. In a parallel incident of non-forgiveness, Apostle John Taylor, then in New York, castigated Brigham Young for not having summarily executed his adult daughter, Mary Ann Taylor, after permitting her to marry a non-Mormon merchant in a civil ceremony and flee with him to San Francisco from Salt Lake City. Young defended his live-and-let-live behavior to the irate father, his church subordinate: "She seemed determined to go with the gentiles, and keep their company regardless of the remonstrances of her friends. And when Sister Taylor came to me to know what should be done about it, I told her that if he [the suitor] wanted to marry her, and she was a daughter of mine, I should let him do so, and I believe yet that it is much better for her to do so as she has, than to do like some others [not marrying] that I could mention. I do not believe that a faithful Elder as you are, and have been, will lose their children, when she has experienced enough of the world, she will be glad to return, and perhaps bring her husband with her." Brigham Young to John Taylor, April 30, 1855, CHL, unprocessed collection, John Taylor Papers.

replaced his no-bloodshed orders of September with authorizations for the Nauvoo Legion to use lethal force if the army continued to advance toward Utah settlements. Army officers and their civilian mountaineer guides were to be targeted first by snipers and raiders. Accordingly, President Young and General Wells issued orders that if the army moved past Bridger, the killing in northeastern Utah was to start.

While dealing with this grim prospect, General Wells had other worries, for although he was one hundred miles from his several families, he also thought like a father. In this role he worried about an ailing son and a deathly ill infant daughter, one-year-old Luna Pamela Wells, his child by wife Hannah Corilla Free. On November 6, Wells received a letter from Young filled with military advice. But Young's message also contained quite different news: "Br. Wells, your little daughter Luna is still very unwell, and there is but little prospect of her recovery."⁹ A few days later, Young reported to Wells:

Br. Heber C. Kimball, myself, Bishops Lorenzo D. Young and Woolley and several of the neighbors attended the funeral of your little daughter Luna. Myself and others of the brethren present made a few remarks upon the occasion, and your family appeared reconciled and comfortable under their bereavement, recognizing and acknowledging the hand of the Lord in that as in all things. The rest of your family are in the enjoyment of pretty good health, but [your wife] Talitha's child is still very unwell.¹⁰

Overcome by Brigham Young's compassion as well as by his own loss, General Wells responded to this news with what must be one of the most remarkable war dispatches to emerge from the American West:

I cannot close without expressing to you Bro Brigham, my thanks and kind regards for your acts of friendship and Fatherly care extended to

9. Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells, Charles C. Rich, and George D. Grant, Nov. 4, 1857, CHL.

10. Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells, Charles C. Rich, and George D. Grant, Nov. 6, 1857, CHL. Luna's mother was the younger sister of Emeline Free, one of Brigham Young's wives.

my family during their affliction in their recent bereavement. It gives me greater satisfaction when I reflect that it is only one of many such, for you have always and uniformly been a kind Parent to me and mine.¹¹

The third vignette took place a few weeks later, also in Echo Canyon not far from General Wells's headquarters at Cache Cave. There Wells assembled his troops to hear the sentence of a general court martial he had convened to try Nauvoo Legion Private James Drake for a capital offense. Drake's crime, bestiality, was so heinous that a panel of legion officers heard the evidence and immediately found Drake guilty, sentencing him to death. As snow fell, General Wells presented these facts to his assembled troops and asked them, in typical Latter-day Saint fashion, to sustain Drake's sentence. They did so, and consequently Private Drake was to face a firing squad with only the date of his execution to be determined.

Here too the pastoral side of Brigham Young's leadership came to the fore. Young and Nauvoo Legion leaders were so shocked by Private Drake's offense that even the records setting forth what happened were heavily redacted.¹² However, on December 1, 1857 Young couriered his wishes to General Wells: "It will be best to release Drake and give him a severe reprimand, and let that suffice for his past conduct, and inform him that it may be permitted to sleep in silence, unless future like acts should require further proceedings."¹³ This news arrived on December 3 just as Drake was being tied to the stake before a legion firing squad. And so, because of this judgment, Private Drake went home for the winter in disgrace followed by anonymity rather than to a grave in northeastern Utah's Echo Canyon.

The fourth vignette illustrating President Young's wartime mercy came after a threat from a member of his own extended family. Briefly

11. Daniel H. Wells to Brigham Young, Nov. 21, 1857, CHL.

12. A summary of the proceedings and eyewitness accounts in the Drake case may be found in MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 373–75.

13. MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 373–75.

stated, on June 4, 1858, near Provo, James Valentine Young, a sister-in-law's son, unexpectedly lunged at his uncle and struck him several times, administering "a whipping" until bystanders subdued him. At times Brigham Young boasted that he could bring about the destruction of a miscreant or enemy with the crook of his finger. What James Valentine, like Private Drake, received was not summary judgment but the compassion of a man who was a pastor as well as his relative.¹⁴ Shaken and embarrassed, Brigham Young dealt with this attack by directing that his assailant "be furnished with a horse and necessary equipment to let him have his desire which he had cherished for some time of going to the States." Thus disgraced and banished (but still alive), James Valentine Young rode to Fort Bridger and dropped from historical notice.¹⁵ It would be fascinating to know what prompted such an attack on Brigham Young, but sources of the period are silent on what drove James's conduct.

In thinking about these incidents, it is well to remember that although during the conflicts of the 1850s Brigham Young was the Nauvoo Legion's supreme commander, his first rank in the legion years earlier in Illinois was as its chaplain, not as a combat leader. Small wonder that when war pressures prompted Young to evacuate northern Utah and put thirty thousand Latter-day Saints on the road to Mexican Sonora, he explained his role not in terms of military authority¹⁶ but by proclaiming, "I want you to understand that . . . I am your earthly shepherd."

When considering Brigham Young's wartime pastorate, it is also worth remembering the extent to which he later was able, in a sense,

14. MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword's Point, Part 1*, 81, 493.

15. President's Office Journal, June 4, 1858, CHL; documents of David Candland, June 2–9, 1858, Utah State History Collection. James Valentine Young was the son of Jemima Angell Young, the sister of Brigham Young's wife, the former Mary Ann Angell. With his father dead, James had traveled to Utah with his mother in 1848 under the protection of Brigham Young's wagon train. He subsequently returned to Utah and died there in 1909.

16. "A series of instructions and remarks by President Brigham Young, at a special council, tabernacle," Mar. 21, 1858, CHL.

to recognize, if not admire, the long suits of those who had been his adversaries during the Utah War. Col. Albert Sidney Johnston and virtually the entire leadership of the US Army's Utah Expedition had been trained at West Point. Thirteen years later, President Young sent his eleventh son, Willard, to the US Military Academy, as he did one of his grandsons, Richard Whitehead Young. In setting apart these lads to serve as "missionaries" to the army as well as West Point plebes, Brigham Young began a tradition in which four consecutive generations of his descendants earned army commissions at the academy.

Willard Young, who entered West Point in the summer of 1871, faced an especially difficult challenge as the first Latter-day Saint in this role, one accompanied by national news coverage of his appointment and hazing from fellow cadets titillated by the presence of the son of a polygamous marriage involving one of the most famous men in America. In sending his son east aboard the Union Pacific Railroad he had just helped to build with Mormon labor, Brigham Young gave Willard advice in a letter that was as pastoral as it was fatherly, filled with admonitions about dealing with temptation, homesickness, bad companions, and the need for recreation and exercise. Along with his cautionary language, Young assured Willard that West Point would prepare him "to take a place even in the foremost ranks of the great men of the nation" and that "any assistance you need that I can furnish will be provided." It was not quite a patriarchal blessing, but close to one; no son could have asked for a better send-off, irrespective of his religious affiliation.¹⁷

Occasionally during the Utah War a few of Brigham Young's "flock" tried to take advantage of this compassionate side of his nature, apparently mistaking it as a sign of vulnerability to exploitation. It was risky behavior but apparently irresistible for adventuresome types such as J. V. Vernon, a Latter-day Saint given to flattery, compliments, and perhaps even deviousness. For example, on March 12, 1858, Vernon began a

17. See Appendix A.

note to Young written from the Utah Territory–Oregon border with the salutation “Esteemed Sir” and then went on to declare, “It is my duty to acknowledge in grateful terms your pastoral solicitude for my welfare.” Having tipped his hat to Young’s pastoral inclinations, Vernon proceeded “to solicit a further favor.” He wanted permission from Brigham Young to leave wartime Utah Territory in company with five other people whom he described ambiguously as “wayfaring men whom fortuitous circumstances have thrown together in this vicinity.” It was the type of travel Young had explicitly banned upon proclaiming martial law during the preceding September. That Vernon’s destination was Vancouver Island via the Columbia River and Oregon City was especially provocative given the British Crown’s nervousness about rumors of a mass Mormon migration to its Pacific Coast possessions. Queen Victoria’s ministers would soon shore up the island’s defenses by dispatching a frigate of the Royal Navy to the area and creating the Crown Colony of British Columbia to supersede the weak administration of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

Young replied that it would be far safer to reach the Pacific by way of California rather than Oregon. Then the gloves came off, with Young telling Vernon, “If you was not so dark in your mind that you cannot understand right from wrong, I should have caused you to return to this place and take care of your family. But I know that a whip is just as good as [a] nod to a blind horse.” He closed with the observation, “I would respect and love you and do you good, if you would let me.” It was a message no Latter-day Saint wanted to hear in those terms. Vernon beat a hasty retreat, telling Young that he would delay his trip for two or three months, travel by a different route, and take his wife and daughter with him.

Vernon did not seem to have learned his lesson for long. He eventually turned on Young. In January 1859 Utah’s chief justice, Delana R. Eckels, informed US secretary of state Lewis Cass that Vernon was an “apostate” and was writing letters undercutting the viability of Utah’s governor, Alfred Cumming. Vernon’s criticism was directly contrary to Brigham Young’s policy of protecting Cumming from political

opponents like Eckels and from potential removal from office by President Buchanan.¹⁸

In 2013 Craig L. Foster captured well the multidimensional and complex nature of Young's presidential style in trying to bring what he viewed as a need for balance to John G. Turner's much-noticed biography: "In spite of a celebrated temper and strong sermons, Brigham Young was known for having a loud bark but not a strong bite. In spite of raining pitchforks and preaching blood-curdling threats, Brigham Young tended to be kind, sagacious, and forgiving when dealing individually with sinners and [Church] members with problems. This did not, however, mean there was no bite. Brigham, like other leaders of his time could be hard when needed."¹⁹ As another historian commented about the vignettes described here, "they are a gentle reminder to those who would dismiss Brigham Young as a moral monster that there were other sides to his personality, and sides that endeared him to the [Latter-day] Saints."²⁰

18. J. V. Vernon to Brigham Young, Mar. 12, 1858, Brigham Young Collection, CR1234/1, box 26, folder 15, reel 36; Brigham Young to J. V. Vernon, Mar. 16, 1858, Brigham Young Collection, CR1234/1, box 18, folder 11, reel 37, CHL; and J. V. Vernon to Brigham Young, Mar. 29, 1858, Brigham Young Collection, CR1234/1, box 26, folder 15, reel 36, CHL; Delana R. Eckels to Lewis Cass, with Vernon attachments, Jan. 15, 1859, State Department Territorial Papers, Utah Series, vol. I, Apr. 30, 1853–Dec. 24, 1859, microfilm 491567, Church Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

19. Craig L. Foster, "New Light and Old Shadows: John G. Turner's Attempt to Understand Brigham Young," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 3 (2013): 208.

20. Comment by anonymous reviewer of this article in draft form, Apr. 2023. The author is grateful for the insights of this reviewer and a second unidentified reader as well as the guidance of *Dialogue's* editor. He also thanks Salt Lake genealogist-historian Ardis E. Parshall for her research and administrative assistance. Much of this essay is derived from the author's unpublished remarks at the devotional meeting, Mormon History Association Annual Conference, Assembly Hall, Temple Square, Salt Lake City, May 27, 2007 as well as his study of the Utah War during the last sixty-five years.

Appendix A

Brigham Young to Willard Young, May 19, 1871²¹

Salt Lake City, U.T.

May 19, 1871

Mr. Willard Young,

My dear Son;

As you are about to leave home for a season and those with who you have been in the habit of associating for years, many of whom are near and dear to you, a few words of advice may not prove unseasonable.

In entering the Academy at West Point, you are taking a step which may prove to you of incalculable advantage. You are thereby enjoying a privilege which falls to the comparatively few. You will do well to treasure up the instructions so abundantly provided there, that in after years you may be prepared to take a place even in the foremost ranks of the great men of the nation.

Experience will teach you that the greatest success does not attend the over-studious, and a proper regard must be had to physical as well as intellectual exercise, else the intellectual powers become impaired, and, therefore bodily recreation and rest are as necessary as they are beneficial to mental study.

Every facility will be afforded you at home by your friends in the furtherance of your studies, and I have no doubt that a straightforward, manly, upright course on your part will give you favor with and ensure you valuable aid from your fellow students.

Bear in mind above all, the God whom we serve, let your prayers day and night ascend to him for light and intelligence, and let your daily walk and conversation be such, that when you shall have returned home, you can look back to the time passed at West Point and see no

21. Brigham Young to Willard Young, May 19, 1871, CR1234/1, Letterbook 12, 687–88, CHL. Transcription courtesy of Ardis E. Parshall, Salt Lake City. Text may also be found in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1974). A summary of Willard Young's army experiences may be found in J. Michael Hunter, "The Youngs at West Point: Duty, Honor, Country—A Lifelong Pledge of Faith," *Pioneer* (Summer 2002): 26–31.

stain upon your character. You will doubtless have your trials and temptations, but if you will live near the Lord, you will hear the still, small voice whisper to you even in the moment of danger. Attend strictly to your own business, be kind and courteous to all, be sober and temperate in all your habit, shun the society of the unvirtuous and the intemperate, and should any person ask you to drink intoxicating liquor of any kind, except in sickness, never accept it. Select your own company rather than have others select yours.

If at any time you feel overtaxed or home sick, seek relaxation in the Society of our Elders in New York, or in other places where they may be travelling, that is, when the rules of the Institution or special license, permit you leave of absence.

Write to me frequently and any assistance you need that I can furnish will be provided. May God bless you and preserve you from every snare and give you His Holy Spirit to light your path before you, and help qualify you for usefulness in His Kingdom.

Your Affectionate Father

Brigham Young

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