

“A Man of God and a Good Kind Father”

Brigham Young at Home

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On January 31, 1857, Brigham Young (fig. 1) walked into the Church Historian’s Office in Salt Lake City and gave instructions that he wanted very little about his family included in the history of the Church.¹ His reticence no doubt stemmed from people’s curiosity about the Mormon leader’s polygamous lifestyle, which subjected his family to an inordinate amount of scrutiny and ridicule in the public press. Consequently, during his lifetime, the story of Brigham Young’s family remained largely untold. Even now, the literature about Brigham Young focuses disproportionately on his public life, his accomplishments as Church President, colonizer, governor of Utah Territory, superintendent of Indian affairs, and businessman.² But in addition to these responsibilities, he was the patriarch of probably the largest family of any public figure in the history of the United States. Brigham Young’s role as a parent is a subject that deserves closer scrutiny.

To appreciate what caring for Brigham Young’s children entailed, it is necessary to define his family and consider his domestic experience in the context of his life as a whole. During the years plural marriage was practiced by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham’s family was one of the largest, consisting of fifty-six wives and fifty-seven children.³ Sixteen of his wives bore his twenty-six sons and thirty-one daughters. He had no children with nine other wives, for whom he provided homes, support for their children from prior marriages, and an inheritance.⁴ Two of these women divorced him, one in 1851 and the other in 1876. He exchanged eternity-only vows with thirty-one others who were not connubial wives. Many of these women received his support—some of them widows much older than he, such as Phebe Morton, the mother of his wife Mary Ann Angell; and Abigail Marks, the mother of his first wife, Miriam Works. Seven of these thirty-one, whose vows applied not for time but for eternity only, later asked for and received releases from their sealing.⁵

The sizable dimensions of his family extended far beyond anything he may have imagined at the time of his marriage to Miriam Works in Aurelius, New York, in 1824. His family with Miriam was rather small for its day. Two children were born to the couple before Miriam contracted tuberculosis and



FIG. 1. Brigham Young, ca. 1869. Daughter Susa Young Gates called this view her "favorite picture" of Brigham Young. Photographer Charles R. Savage. Courtesy Lurene Gates Wilkinson.

died in 1832. Thereafter, his domestic world would unfold in a context of unstable living conditions. The same year Miriam died, Brigham was converted to Mormonism, and three years later, he was appointed to the Church's Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Six more children were added to his family following his marriage to Mary Ann Angell in 1834. As a committed Apostle and diligent supporter of Joseph Smith, Brigham rose to the pinnacle of Church leadership within a decade. Demands upon his time and resources and the several moves that took the Church from New York to the Salt Lake Valley placed a heavy burden upon his household. Prior to his leading the Mormon migration to the Rocky Mountains in 1847, he had established successive homes in five states.

A major shift in the constitution of his family came in 1842 when he was introduced to the principle of plural marriage by Joseph Smith—a principle that tested Brigham Young severely. None “could have been more adverse to it than I was,” he stated.⁶ But he became convinced that God required him to enter the practice, and by the time he settled in the Salt Lake Valley in 1848, he had exchanged marital vows with forty-three women and fathered eighteen children.

This enlarged family and Brigham Young's many Church duties restricted the time he was able to spend with his children. During the pre-Utah years, Brigham had been absent from his family for extended periods eleven times on Church proselytizing missions and other assignments, including a sojourn of nearly two years in England. In 1838–39, following the extermination order banishing the Latter-day Saints from the state of Missouri, Brigham Young supervised the exodus of the Church from that state in the absence of the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders, who were imprisoned. After Brigham's return from England, he took comfort in a revelation that informed him, “It is no more required at your hand to leave your family” and commanded him to take “especial care” of them “from this time, henceforth and forever” (D&C 126:1, 3). His ability to fulfill the revelation was severely taxed when the migration of the Saints from Illinois to the Salt Lake Valley created another major disruption for his family that lasted more than two years. Church and civic responsibilities during his Utah years would continue to limit his family time throughout the remainder of his life.

Despite these challenges, home was never absent from Brigham Young's consciousness. The welfare of his family was a constant concern.⁷ From Philadelphia in 1843 he wrote to Mary Ann, “There is no place like home to me.” And while leading the pioneer company west in 1847, he commented, “I due [*sic*] think the Lord has blest me with one of [the] best famelyes that eney man ever had on the Earth.” Later the same year he lamented to another of his wives, “O that I had my famely here.” He said

that he would “rather be annihilated” than be deprived of his family. And his daughter Susa heard him say that if he failed in his family responsibilities he would arise in the morning of the Resurrection “to find that he had failed in everything.”⁸ It was this strong sense of mission that guided Brigham Young’s words and actions as a committed and dedicated parent.

The Family Moved West

The movement of Brigham Young’s family from Illinois to the Great Basin during the Mormon exodus of 1846–48 was an epic within an epic. Prior to 1846, Brigham had married twenty-one women, at least two of whom had died since the marriage ceremony. The fact that he was married or sealed to an additional nineteen women in 1846, the year he departed from Nauvoo to lead the exodus, added an overwhelming personal burden to his already immense public one. A glimpse of the challenge he faced in trying to care for his family while at the same time shepherding the exiled Saints across the plains is seen in surviving Church and family records. When Brigham left Nauvoo with fifteen wagons on February 15, 1846, to begin the migration west, fifty family members accompanied him.⁹ The enumeration of the camp of Israel on March 27 at the Chariton River in Iowa reveals that among those traveling in the Young company were eleven of his wives, Mary Ann Angell’s six children, five other children from two of his wives’ previous marriages, and a handful of other relatives.¹⁰

According to prior arrangement, several of his wives traveled with their own parents or friends, while others remained in Nauvoo to come later. Eliza R. Snow, who had married Brigham Young in fall 1844, left Nauvoo on February 13, 1846, with the Steven Markham family and with them traveled across Iowa to the Missouri River. Along the journey west, she saw her husband on only rare occasions. Among those unable to leave Nauvoo with Brigham was Harriet Cook, who had given birth to an infant son (Oscar Brigham) just a few days before her husband’s departure. And Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, who also remained behind, “had not means to go with the church, in fact, we could hardly get enough to eat.”¹¹ Other plural wives who were unable to leave Nauvoo with Brigham were Julia Foster Hampton, Mary and Margaret Pierce (Margarett Peirce), Elizabeth Fairchild, Augusta Adams Cobb, and Mary Ann Powers.

Emily Dow Partridge (fig. 2) was caring for an infant child (Edward Partridge Young, one of the first born in plural marriage) when she started the exodus west. Emily recalled being cold, hungry, and lonely, wandering from one campfire to another to obtain food and shelter. When the Brigham Young company left Mt. Pisgah, Iowa, on June 2, 1846, she and another plural wife, Zina D. Huntington, remained there to assist the Huntington family. They were not able to join the rest of the family at Winter



FIG. 2. Emily Dow Partridge Young (1824–99) and children. Like many of Brigham Young’s wives, Emily Dow Partridge Young faced incredible challenges as she traveled westward from Illinois while her husband shared time and energies with thousands of Saints attempting the same trek. Emily poses here (ca. 1851) with her son Edward Partridge Young and daughter Emily Augusta Young. Photograph attributed to Marsena Cannon.

Quarters until the following spring just before Brigham left to go further west at the head of the pioneer company. Even though reflecting upon her lonely plains experience after many years still brought tears, Emily explained that her husband was responsible for “the welfare of the whole people” and therefore “had not much time to devote to his family.”¹²

Nevertheless, Brigham’s correspondence during that time reveals his anxiety for those left behind and his efforts to find ways for them to join the rest of the family. For example, on March 15, 1846, he wrote to Harriet Cook:

Br. J. B. Noble will see that you are provi[d]ed for to come comfort[a]ble, and I want you to com[e] with him. . . . I expect Br. Babbott will get a good caredge or wagon and team for you and others. Br Noble will get a good man to drive it. It is likely Br. John Young and Even Greene, Sister Faney [Young] and others of my frends will come at the same time. I want you to see Sister

[Mary Ann Clark] Powers and have hir watch hir oportunity . . . and start with some one that will bring hir a peace with spead. . . .

I want you to see Sisters Mary and Margret Pears [Pierce], Br Robert Pears[']s daughters and see if ther Father is [coming]. If not get them along with you if you can. Br. Noble will bring the sister that is there. Sister Betsy [Elizabeth] Fairchilds [I] wish you could bring. give my love to them all. I want to see you and the little Boy. tell Sister Augusta Cobb I hope she will be blest[.] I want [to] see hir again. . . . be cherful and of good corouge Sister Hariott we shall soon meet again.¹³

The exodus uprooted families and upset routines. The Saints had to rely and depend upon one another to ensure the safety and welfare of each individual in the community. On the trek west, Brigham Young functioned as a father to all the Saints. Doing as much as he could for as many as he could, Brigham, in turn, had to rely on the assistance of others to care for many of his own wives and children until the Saints had all arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.

The Family Provided For

Settlement in the Salt Lake Valley brought much-needed security to Brigham Young's family. There he gathered many of the scattered wives and children together. As a colonizer, Brigham Young was the moving force behind the founding of more than four hundred settlements in the American west. At the center of this domain was his own family enclosure, entered through a large gate crowned with an eagle and surrounded by a high adobe wall on the north side of Salt Lake City. To care for his family, Brigham built what could be described as a village within a city. This family complex eventually consisted of three residences, an office building, school, store, carpenter shop, shoe shop, blacksmith shop, carriage house, barns, a wood storage house, swimming pool, gardens, and orchards. As his family grew and their needs increased, he provided homes for some of them at other locations in Salt Lake City, Provo, and St. George.

When Brigham arrived in the Salt Lake Valley for good in fall 1848, a central objective was the care and comfort of his wives and children. Since the number of his wives and children had increased drastically in the recent years, he embarked on an ambitious building program to care for them. He selected for the settlement of his family an area east of the temple block. He established his wife Mary Ann Angell and her children in a storage building that later became "the corn crib" before he completed in 1851 a more substantial living space known as "the white house on the hill." He moved his younger wives and their children from the Old Fort (located in present-day Pioneer Park) to the Log Row, an L-shaped structure consisting of a long living room at the west end and five rooms in a row with openings

to the north. Meals for the family in that home were served in a common living room; a large brick oven was located a few steps from the door. The living room also served for a time as the meetinghouse for the Saints who lived in the upper part of the city, while Brigham Young's office occupied one corner of that room. At this early time, two other wives lived in three wagon boxes mounted on a stationary trellis adjacent to the Log Row. Another wife, Margaret Pierce, was housed in an upper room of a building that later became the milk house, which stood near the Log Row; she was living there when her son Brigham Morris was born in 1854. In a two-room adobe house west of the lot where the Lion House was later built, Brigham housed another two of his wives and his second eldest daughter. Upon completion of the White House (fig. 3), Mary Ann Angell resided there with her family, and it became a place where Brigham Young entertained visitors.

The block directly east of the temple was designated for Church purposes and included structures such as the tithing offices and the president's office. However, for convenient access to Church affairs and to his family, Brigham built on this block his official residence, the Beehive House, where Lucy Ann Decker, Brigham's first plural wife, was the primary resident. On the west side of his office he built the Lion House, a long, three-floor stone building with a ten-gable roof commenced in 1854 and completed in

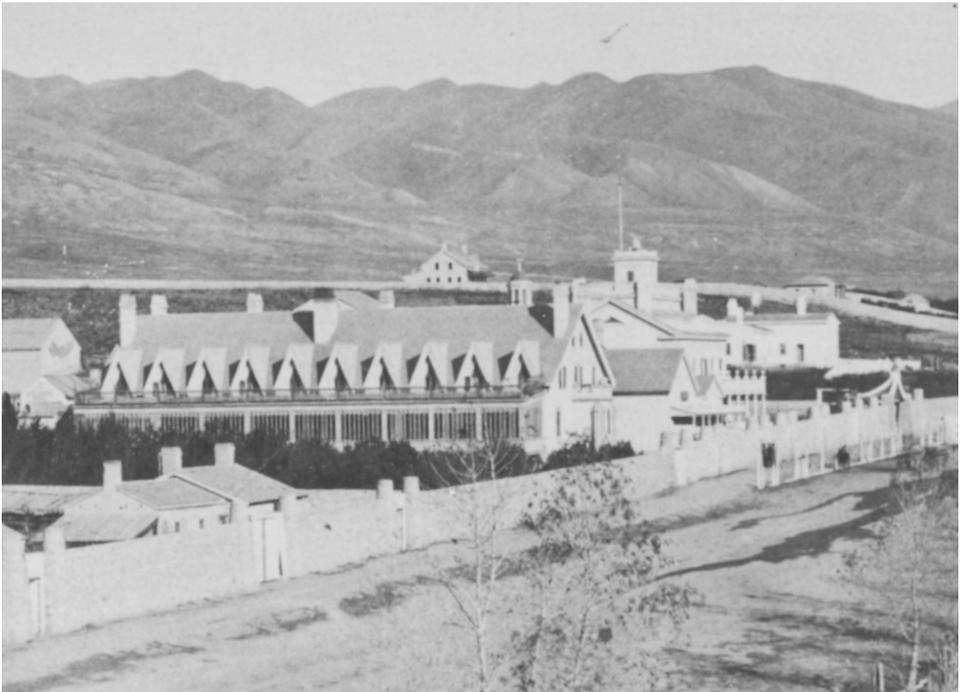


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FIG. 3. White House, ca. 1888. Brigham Young erected the White House from 1849 to 1851 as a residence for wife Mary Ann Angell and their five children. Standing on the north side of what is today South Temple between the Eagle Gate and A Street in Salt Lake City, the house was built of semidried adobe bricks and covered with plaster. This photograph by Charles R. Savage shows the outlines of the shingled roof, said to be the first in Utah.

1856 (fig. 4). It became the home for his twelve other living wives who bore children and for a few who were childless. The lower floor contained a kitchen, a long dining room that accommodated from fifty to eighty people at a meal, and a schoolroom, where one of the wives, Harriet Cook, taught the children of the family and where recreational activities were carried out during winter months. The main floor consisted of nine sitting rooms or apartments for wives with young children and a large parlor for family gatherings; the upper floor contained twenty bedrooms occupied by childless wives and older children.

For about fifteen years, most of the family lived in the Lion House. But as the children multiplied and grew, Brigham built or bought separate homes for most of his wives.¹⁴ First he provided a home nearby on State Street for Emily Partridge and her seven children, who later occupied a two-story residence on Fifth East. Then he provided homes for the various



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FIG. 4. Brigham Young family enclosure, ca. 1869. The Lion House's ten gables stand out prominently in this view of the Young family compound looking northeast from South Temple Street. Completed in 1856, the Lion House had more than two dozen rooms including a long dining room, where Brigham, his wives, and children ate and socialized together. Adjoining the Lion House was Brigham Young's office (immediate right), where he dictated to clerks and attended to visitors, and the Beehive House, his official residence.



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FIG. 5. Forest Farm. Located south of what is today Twenty-First South between Fifth East and Sugar House Park in Salt Lake City, Brigham Young's Forest Farm supplied his family with eggs, cheese, milk, and meat. The farm was occupied at various times by several of Brigham's wives and children but primarily by Susan Snively (1815–92), a wife with one adopted daughter. This view shows the large porch on which Brigham's children played and around which roses and hollyhocks bloomed.

wives at different locations: Emmeline Free and her family of ten slightly south on Main Street; Zina Huntington on Third South; Clarissa Decker on State Street near the Social Hall; Harriet Barney on South Temple near the temple gates; Mary Van Cott on South Temple across from Temple Square; and Susan Snively at the Forest Farm (fig. 5), located in the current-day Forest Dale area of Salt Lake City. He provided Eliza Burgess with a home in Provo and moved Lucy Bigelow and her children to St. George. Meanwhile, Lucy Decker and her children remained in the Beehive House, and Mary Ann Angell in the White House.¹⁵

With a family the size of Brigham Young's, the usual activities and complexities of life were multiplied. Illness and death were no strangers in pioneer homes and certainly not in his. In 1856, for example, seventeen of his children and one foster child were ill with measles.¹⁶ Furthermore, Brigham witnessed the death of twenty of his wives and fourteen of his children. Three of his wives died at a young age and their surviving children were raised by the other wives. There were other complexities. The challenge of raising teenagers never seemed to diminish. At the age of sixty-seven, Brigham had twenty-two teenagers in his home: sixteen girls and

six boys. Even something as seemingly simple as nightly supper was no easy affair. Susa Young recalled that, with their family, hired men and girls, orphans, and other unfortunate persons whom her father took into his home and cared for, “we often sat down in the dining room with 80 [people] at the table.”¹⁷

Brigham Young’s 1850s decision to house his family essentially under one roof was primarily one of economics. It was cheaper than providing a separate dwelling for each of his wives and her children. Another advantage was the bonding and opportunities for interaction it provided for the entire family. Everyone benefitted from the skills of the individual wives. For example, Zina Huntington (fig. 6) served as a schoolteacher, midwife, and doctor. Aunt Clara Decker was regarded as a trusted friend, confidant, and “social mentor” for the children, a friend who “could wink at all kinds of youthful derelictions” and who had uncanny influence with Brigham Young when youthful interests were at stake. Zina Huntington, Eliza Snow, and Lucy Bigelow were regarded as the “spiritual props and guides” of the family. Lucy Bigelow and Susan Snively, a childless wife who raised an adopted child, made butter and cheese for the entire family from their residence at the Forest Farm.¹⁸ Margaret Pierce, a talented cook and housekeeper, managed the domestic chores for the workers at the gristmill, later the site of Liberty Park. Another of the childless wives was a widow, Naamah Twiss, “an economical manager and first class cook,” a stern, no-nonsense woman who for many years managed the Lion House kitchen and dining room with two hired cooks and two dishwashers. She ran a very tight ship so far as meal times and children eating between meals were concerned—an important asset for a family of that size living in such close quarters. And Clara Decker and Lucy Bigelow served as the nurses for Brigham when he was ill, and presumably for other family members as well.¹⁹

With most of his wives and children under one roof, Brigham Young employed laborers to the benefit of the entire family. Brigham’s daughter Susa pointed out that, while her father was a “devout believer” in work, “he had seen his invalid mother bedridden for years, and his own cherished first wife was an invalid for four sad years and then died in his arms. These memories made him exceedingly careful of women. He guarded the physical strength and health of his wives and daughters as second only in importance to that of their spiritual welfare.” She concluded that for this reason he hired men to do the heaviest work and “always kept some strong girls in the kitchen who were glad and willing to earn good wages at the housework.”²⁰

Challenges Created by Proximity

But along with the advantages of having his family concentrated mostly under one roof, Brigham’s plan also had drawbacks. For one thing,



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FIG. 6. “Aunt” Zina D. H. Young (1821–1901) with two Young children. Zina Young, a plural wife of Brigham Young, was skilled as a schoolteacher, doctor, and midwife. A resident of the Lion House, she devoted her many talents to the welfare of her sister wives and children. In this photograph (ca. 1862), Zina sits with Willard and Phoebe Young, the children she mothered after the death of sister wife Clarissa Ross.

in the case of his daughters, it did not allow the training in household and domestic skills that could have been provided in more conventional households without hired help and with less specialization of labor. Susa (fig. 7) noted that the daughters for the most part were

pretty giddy and gay. None of them did anything out of the way especially, but they . . . wanted nothing but fun and frolic. I think that they would have been better raised and indeed father said so himself, if each wife had had a home of her own and had brought up the girls in all the science of house-keeping, arts and labors. But having no particular kitchen work to do and going to school always, we wasted a good deal of the rest of our time in useless



FIG. 7. Susa Young Gates (1856–1933). A precocious and self-assertive Susa Young poses for this photograph (ca. 1875) taken a few years after she moved out of the Lion House. She recalled never having heard her father raise his voice in anger. Photograph by Charles R. Savage. Courtesy Lurene Gates Wilkinson.

or even in reproof to one of his wives. I never saw him whip one of the children and I don't know that he ever laid his hand upon one of his daughters in my life, unless to spank a child, perhaps when it was really needed on some sudden occasion.²²

Susa recognized that a potential for tension existed within the Young household. But self-discipline seemed to prevent open display of conflict. She saw her father's wives as

women of strong character, powerful wills. . . . I do not say that even I, as a child loved all my fathers wives alike. Some of them were queer even sarchastic [*sic*] and a few of them I had only respect for. . . . I have often said that I never heard a quarrel between my father's wives in all my life. They may have had words with each other, I suppose they did have on occasions, but at least they had the decency and dignity to keep such differences from the ears and understanding of their children.

She concluded her assessment with the observation "Were it not for their religious convictions, which informed and inspired every waking hour of

frolic. Of course it was more economical to have us together and it cost a good deal you may be sure to feed and clothe from fifty to seventy-five people.²¹

Another possible drawback of concentrating the family under one roof was the increased potential for discord between the different wives and their children. Yet apparently such friction was rare. Born in 1856, the year the Lion House was finished, Susa Young witnessed the occupants of the home through the eyes of a child with many older siblings and many "aunts." By age fourteen, she saw the family mature and the wives move with their children to separate dwellings, culminating with her departure with her own mother to St. George in 1870. From her perspective, written later in her life, the home was not a place of contention and division:

I never heard one of my father's wives correct another woman's child, much less strike it, in all my life. And certainly, never did I hear my father's voice raised in anger

their lives we would have had chaos instead of peace, constant bickering and hatred in place of comparative harmony and love.” The family unity and cohesiveness meant that there were no “half-brothers” and “step-sisters,” just brothers and sisters, and “their mothers were indeed ‘Aunts’ . . . and we loved them all, some better than others.”²³

Nevertheless, the brood was not above occasional acts of juvenile meanness. Susa recalled one of her brothers who “took keen delight in torturing little girls and animals,” promising her “a little red box with five nails in it” if she would use her natural agility to steal some apples across a high fence. Upon doing so, she was felled by a slap to the head, followed by the comment, “I have given you the little red box on the ear with my five finger nails in it.”²⁴

Even though by 1875 Brigham had provided individual homes for most of his wives and their children, he seriously considered bringing the families back together again. The need for greater unity in his expanding family weighed so heavily upon him that he addressed an epistle to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren on March 23 that year. “In the providences of God I am privileged to address you a few lines and lay before you a subject fraught with interest to ourselves and worthy of our mature consideration,” he began. He pointed out that being “advanced in years” he must “soon pass away from this stage of action.” He continued:

Reflection on the present condition of my family has caused me to consider the possibility of locating them more advantageously for their permanent support and spiritual advancement. The more perfect union of my family has occupied my thoughts for many years and a plan has been suggested which is practicable and in my Judgement will secure to them all the benefits of a home which I could desire.

Lying in Cache County I have a farm enclosed containing near 11000 acres of land which may be classed as Gravelly bench land especially adapted for city sites and raising hardy fruits also a large tract of farming land suitable for raising cereals [*sic*] and vegetables. Hay and pasture land in abundance all sloping gently to the west susceptible of irrigation from the Logan and Blacksmith fork rivers.

This large farm is amply stocked—short horned Durham and long horned Devon cattles, Spanish Merino and Cotswold sheep, which affords a fine opportunity to found a stock farm which will furnish employment at remunerative rates for a large number of people. Beside many other advantages in RR, communication &c. it is the most healthful climate found in these mountains. My plan will be to—

First Select a suitable site for a city and begin building it—the city—this season.

Second Move my family there as soon as suitable accommodations can be provided.

Third. Rent our property in Salt Lake City.

The rent roll will show a handsome income which will supply cash articles and furnish ample capital to improve our buildings[,] gardens[,] and farms. If this plan be adopted I am satisfied the wisdom of such a movement will be patent to all my family and with the blessings of God confirm peace and plenty upon our children and childrens' children so long as they obey me and forsake not the Lord.

Your loving husband and father.

(signed)

Brigham Young²⁵

There is no evidence that this proposal was officially discussed or voted upon by the family. Circumstances in Brigham's own life probably prevented the immediate implementation of the plan. At the time he wrote the letter, he was in the midst of a divorce suit by Ann Eliza Webb, one of his plural wives, which would continue to require his attention. In addition, pressing Church responsibilities that occupied his mind included construction of the temple at St. George and plans for another at Manti, the establishment of settlements on the Little Colorado in Arizona, and the reorganization of stakes of the Church. It is unknown whether these events played a role in Brigham's decision to shift the proposal for his Cache Valley lands. In the end, a month before his death, he deeded most of that acreage for the establishment of Brigham Young College in Logan.²⁶

Kindness Shown

The expressions of love and commitment to God and His kingdom that surface in the correspondence between Brigham and his children suggest that something extraordinary must have taken place in his home to produce those feelings. For example, numerous letters to Brigham from family members during their absence from home contain statements such as these:

It is with more than ordinary interest and aff[e]ction that this letter is penned for your perusal.

My confidence, esteem, and love, can be three times estimated, First by the undying and unbounded confidence I have in your mission as a Prophet of God, bearing the Holy Priesthood. Second, by the duty I owe to an able, faithful leader of a Great People. Third, by the warmest affection that burns within my heart for a beloved Father.²⁷

I cannot help thinking how much you have done for me and all the children, and how little we have repaid you for all your kindness. I feel I can never repay the great debt I owe you.²⁸

I know the deep interest you feel for your children's welfare. . . . I have always felt grateful for having been blest with a father, who always inspired me with perfect confidence, who always felt so jealous a care for my well-being, and who always set so worthy an example for me to follow. . . . Since leaving home, I have felt a desire to worthily represent you and our people. . . . If I can

be the means of doing good in establishing God's kingdom on the Earth, and can succeed in doing all that is expected of me, I shall feel happy indeed.²⁹

I am unable to convey to you on paper the thankful feelings that is in my heart for such a father, and for the care that you have shown me heretofore.³⁰

And from one of Brigham's wives who accompanied the pioneers to Salt Lake Valley in 1847:

I can sit down and let my thoughts wander back to Winter Quarters and fancy I see you surrounded by your family enjoying their sweet society and they yours. . . . Your kindness to me the past summer will never be forgotten it shall live while memory lives with me.³¹

Considering, on the one hand, the size and structure of Brigham Young's family and the demands upon his time that took him away from them for extended periods and, on the other hand, the general good will and family fealty that seem to have existed, the question arises: What did Brigham Young do to inspire the feelings of devotion and loyalty that are frequently expressed in writings of family members? The origins of such sentiments cannot be ascribed solely to Brigham Young. During an era when Church responsibilities coupled with the demands of colonizing and building new settlements took fathers from their homes frequently and for extended periods of time, much of the responsibility for nurturing the minds as well as the bodies of the children rested upon their mothers. The respective responsibilities of the father and mother in the rearing of children was not defined in the same terms as it was for a later generation of Latter-day Saints living in more decadent social conditions. Brigham's pointed remarks to the mothers during the early settlement of Utah illustrate the emphasis of that time:

What faults do I discover in my neighbors' families? I can see their women go off visiting, riding on horseback, attending parties, while their little ones are neglected, and left to run at large in the streets, exposed to the pernicious examples of vile company. Hear it again! The blood of these wicked children will be required at the hands of their mothers! Should your husbands be called out to fight the Indians, or go to the islands of the sea to gather the poor, it is none of your business, when it is their calling to be away from home.

I want education to commence here. I wish you strictly to follow out this principle, and when children are old enough to labor in the field, then the father will take them in charge. If children are not taught by their mothers, in the days of their youth, to revere and follow the counsels of their fathers, it will be hard indeed for the father ever to control them. I know it is so, for it is too true. Mothers will let their children go to the Devil in their childhood, and when they are old enough to come under the immediate guidance of their fathers, to be sent out to preach the Gospel in the world, or to learn some kind of mechanism, they are as uncontrollable as the winds that now revel in the mountains.³²

By this standard, much of the devotion and good will reflected in the writings of Brigham Young's children can be attributed to the "splendid women" whose religious convictions for the most part "informed and inspired every waking hour of their lives."³³ But in addition, Brigham Young himself made the best of the limited contact he had with his family. His attentiveness is reflected in such phrases as these from family letters previously cited: "how much you have done for me and all the children," "your kindness," "the deep interest you feel for your children's welfare," and "a father . . . who always felt so jealous a care for my well-being . . . who always set so worthy an example."

The traits revealed in these phrases are contrary to the popular image of Brigham Young characterized by the inherently aggressive symbol of the Lion on the portico of his home. In fact, at least where his family was concerned, Brigham Young was quite the opposite. On one occasion, President Young attended a Church court for a man in Salt Lake City. After one of the man's wives had threatened to leave him because of his quarrelsome, abusive nature, he had beat her in the head until blood ran from her ears and one eye was blackened. She testified that he had struck her "as though he was going to knock down an ox." In the course of the proceedings, Brigham Young commented, "I would not trust a dog with Brother [—] or put one in his Care for he does not know how to treat either man or beast." To emphasize his point, he added, "I govern my family by kindness. I tell them what is right & I get them to obey me without whipping them. If I cannot get my family to do as I wish them without Quarreling with them I will not say a word about it."³⁴

Those who knew him and observed him at close range commented on his patience and kindness. His daughter Clarissa (fig. 8), for example, wrote that "no child ever loved, revered, and cherished a father more than I did mine. . . . He had the affection



FIG. 8. Clarissa Young Spencer (1860–1939). Brigham Young's daughter Clarissa Young, shown in an elaborately gathered dress (ca. 1866), affectionately described her years growing up in the Lion House as "one long round of happiness." Photograph by Charles R. Savage. Church Archives.

and tenderness of a woman for his family and friends. . . . Each day of my childhood stands forth in my memory as one long round of happiness.”³⁵

Brigham Young’s close associates used his behavior at home as a model for others to follow. Lorenzo Snow, who had close personal contact with Brigham Young and his family, urged the seventies in 1857 to “arm yourselves with all the power of God you can get in order to save your families.” He told them that when domestic problems arose in their homes they would have to show themselves “master spirit[s]” in “Fathers care & kindness” in order to save their wives and children. As an example, he referred to Brigham Young: “Go into his house & take lessons. See him with his great family of wives & Children & see the God like Character & example of that man & the order which he manifests in his family. . . . They all respect him & obey his law for the wisdom of God is with him. Now brethren strive to bring yourselfs to the same standard.” He concluded, “Almost any fool can go & preach the gospel but it requires a vary wise man to be a patriarch & save his own household.”³⁶

Brigham Young outlined his standard in an 1860 discourse:

I will relate a little of my course and experience in my family. I have a large family of children, many of them small, and yet I do not think that you ever saw even four children in one family live together with so little contention. Watch them, and their conduct will prove that there is a good spirit influencing them. I never knew one of them to be accidentally hurt, without more sympathy’s being extended to that one than the whole of them needed. You may ask how I manage to bring about this result. I seldom give a child a cross word; I seldom give a wife a cross word; and I tell my wives never to give a child cause to doubt their word. A child loves the smiles of its mother, but hates her frowns. I tell the mothers not to allow the children to indulge in evils, but at the same time to treat them with mildness. If a child is required to step in a certain direction, and it does not seem willing to do so, gently put it in the desired way, and say, There, my little dear, you must step when I speak to you. Children need directing and teaching what is right in a kind, affectionate manner.³⁷

President Young’s children not only experienced firsthand the kindly qualities of their father’s personality but also saw the way he extended his kindness to widows, orphans, and others of limited circumstance as if they were his own kin. Jemima Angell Valentine, whose husband had died, leaving her with several children, was among the disadvantaged Brigham took into his family to support and provide for. In 1866 she wrote him, “I wish to hold you in reverenc[e] & true respect as a Man of God & a good kind Father to my children for you have be[e]n a good kind friend to me & may the Lord bless you for ever.”³⁸

Heber J. Grant, whose father died when he was eight days old, spent much time in the Young household in his early years. Later in life, he wrote

to Brigham Young's daughter, "Never have I known a man more kind and loving to his children, and those of the saints generally, than was your father. . . . When I think of your father and his kind love for me and my brother Brigham F [Grant] I could easily write another 'continued story.'"³⁹ Heber's brother, Brigham Frederick, after the death of their father, was left with his grandmother and later was placed in a foster home, from which he ran away to work in the mines in Montana. He eventually returned to Salt Lake City and was working in a coal yard when Brigham Young learned about him and sent for him:

The president greeted B.F. with "a father's handshake," and learned what he had been doing. When Brigham offered him easier work—a job in one of his stores—B.F. replied, "I haven't got sense enough to work in a store—I can't read or write." "Tears rolled down the president's cheeks," wrote B.F. as he remembered the interview. "He took out his handkerchief, wiped them off, and said: 'My boy, come and live with me. I will give you a home, clothe you, and send you to school. You can work during the vacation for me.'"

B.F. accepted the offer and remained with the president's family for two years. He reported that there were six other orphaned boys and girls living in the family at that time, and he, for one, was "a real member of the family."⁴⁰

The fact that additional acts of kindness can be documented in obscure sources suggests that Brigham Young's benevolence was probably more extensive than we will ever know. In a newspaper published in Hailey, Idaho, an immigrant woman whose husband was employed by Brigham wrote that after they were married by the President they lived for several months in his household. "I will say," she noted, "that during the time my husband and I were under that roof we never heard Brigham Young raise his voice in anger. He was kindly to everyone within his home."⁴¹

Guidelines Established

Expressions of admiration and praise for kindness should not be taken to imply that regulations were unnecessary or that a firm hand was not needed in the Young household. To the contrary, precise rules regulated many aspects of life in the Lion House, including daily family prayer, school attendance, and Sabbath-day conduct. Mealtimes and the hours for arising and retiring followed a regular schedule. Card playing was strictly forbidden, as were "games of chance that encouraged or suggested gambling in any form." Checkers and chess provided enjoyable entertainment but were not permitted on Sunday; neither were secular reading, secular music, and "roaming the hills." The outer gates of the stone wall around the Lion House were locked each night at 10 P.M. Children out later than that gained access to their quarters only through the office door and faced the

prospect of being reported by the watchman.⁴² Susa recalled that her father “could be very stern . . . and he maintained the utmost discipline in the family.” The only time she ever saw her father strike a child was when her baby sister became unruly during prayer time one evening. After the child twice disrupted the devotional by “running about . . . screaming with laughter,” Brigham interrupted his prayer, got up, caught her, spanked her lightly, laid her sobbing in her mother’s arms, then returned to his knees and finished the prayer.⁴³

He occasionally exercised a firm hand with the older children. One Sunday night during the courting years of the older girls, eight or ten couples had gathered in the parlor of the Lion House to enjoy each other’s company. To increase their sense of privacy, they had darkened the room somewhat by slightly turning down the lamp and stacking books around it. A short time later the door opened, and the stout figure of Brigham Young emerged. Setting his candle on the table, he unstacked the books and dismissed the girls to their rooms with the announcement that he would say good night to the boys.⁴⁴

Although strict rules and occasional stern measures were necessary to maintain order and stability in his home, Brigham Young did not rule with an iron hand. “I do not believe,” he declared, “in making my authority as a husband or a father known by brute force; but by a superior intelligence—by showing them that I am capable of teaching them.” He followed these ideals:

If the Lord has placed me to be the head of a family, let me be so in all humility and patience, not as a tyrannical ruler, but as a faithful companion, an indulgent and affectionate father, a thoughtful and unassuming superior; let me be honoured in my station through faithful diligence, and be fully capable, by the aid of God’s Spirit, of filling my office in a way to effect the salvation of all who are committed to my charge.⁴⁵

Kind looks, kind actions, kind words, and a lovely, holy deportment towards them, will bind our children to us with bands that cannot easily be broken; while abuse and unkindness will drive them from us, and break asunder every holy tie, that should bind them to us, and to the everlasting covenant in which we are all embraced. If my family; and my brethren and sisters, will not be obedient to me on the basis of kindness, and a commendable life before all men, and before the heavens, then farewell to all influence.⁴⁶

Using his own experience to illustrate, Brigham taught the Saints:

My children are not afraid of my footfall; except in the case of their having done something wrong they are not afraid to approach me. . . . I could break the wills of my little children, and whip them to this, that, and the other, but this I do not do. Let the child have a mild training until it has judgment and sense to guide it. . . . It is necessary to try the faith of children as well as of grown people, but there are ways of doing so besides taking a club and knocking them down with it. . . . There is nothing consistent in abusing your wives and children.⁴⁷

Brigham Young could counsel the Saints on the subject of overcoming passion and anger because he had largely conquered these passions himself. He suggested that the Saints put a piece of India rubber in their mouths when they became angry and bite it until they could get control of themselves: "If you will keep your thoughts to yourself when you are angry they will not become the property of another." He added, "Any person who is acquainted with me knows that I have Controll over myself. I do not speak in anger to my wives, Children or the people. I make all my Passions be in subjection to the priesthood & the spirit of God."⁴⁸

Regular Evening Prayer Held

Limited as he was in the time he could spend with his family, Brigham Young sought to make those occasions meaningful, quality experiences. An important institution in this respect, one that added to the atmosphere of goodwill and was a focal point for instruction and bonding with his family, was the daily evening prayer, a ritual akin to family home evening for a later generation of Latter-day Saints. At about seven o'clock each evening, Brigham would ring the prayer bell to call his family to the large sitting room on the main floor in the Lion House. "No matter what we were doing or who was there, we dropped everything" and assembled for prayer, wrote a daughter. In addition to prayer, events of the day were discussed, "golden words of wisdom" were uttered, plans made, family policies reviewed, and sometimes "there were juvenile troubles to settle, with father as judge of the Juvenile Court."⁴⁹

As the children grew and other activities came between them and this important family tradition, Brigham found it necessary in 1866 to remind his family members of their daily obligation:

There is no doubt but that my family, one and all, will acknowledge that my time is as precious to me as theirs is to them. When the time appointed for our family devotion and prayer comes, I am expected to be there; and no public business, no matter how important, has been able to influence me to forego the fulfilment of this sacred duty which I owe to you, to my self and my God.⁵⁰

Not wishing to complain "without a cause," Brigham nevertheless felt he had a case that needed to be made. He observed that at prayer time only a portion of his family might be present: "My wives are absent visiting a sister, a neighbor, a mother or a relative; my children are scattered all over town, attending to this and that; and if at home, one is changing her dress, another her shoes, another getting ready to go to the theatre; another has

gone to see Mary, and another to see Emily, and I may add, etc., etc., etc.” He concluded with a “few words of counsel” that he expected his family to “receive kindly, and obey”: when prayer time came, everyone must be at home “ready to bow down before the Lord to make their acknowledgments to Him for His kindness and mercy and long-suffering towards us.” He closed with this assurance: “Your strict attendance . . . will give joy to the heart of your Husband and Father.”⁵¹

The seriousness with which President Young took the evening devotional is seen in instances when he interrupted other things to attend. Early one evening after the Church Historian called to see him, the President cut off the discussion and excused himself, remarking that “the hour for praying with his family had arrived.”

Brigham Young commented that he “always thought it would be of great benefit to his family . . . if he set the example to pray punctually with them.”⁵² Another time, on a day when it was impossible for the Church leader to meet with his family at the appointed hour, he sent his son Brigham Jr. (fig. 9) to the Lion House “to attend prayers for him.”⁵³

An eyewitness described the sense of urgency Brigham Young exhibited in the devotional hour. George A. Smith and his wife Bathsheba arrived at the Young home at prayer time. George A. reported that “after a very fervent prayer” Brigham addressed his family on the importance of living exemplary lives: “He said, the eyes of the world were upon them also the eyes of the Saints. The influence of his teaching was affected by [his family’s] example.” He also urged his family to live the Word of Wisdom and his wives and daughters to be examples in their dress, and “as far as possible to manufacture what they wore.” When he finished, his wife Mary Ann followed with an “interesting address,” and George A. and Bathsheba Smith “bore testimony.”⁵⁴

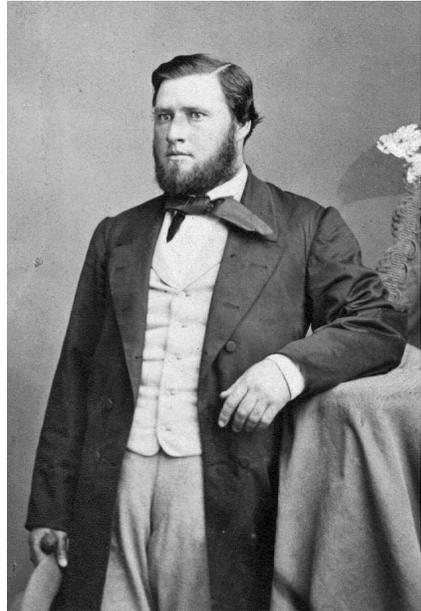


FIG. 9. Brigham Young Jr. (1836–1903). Brigham Young Jr., or “Briggy,” as friends and family called him, was a life-long devotee of his father’s teachings. This photograph was taken in New York City in 1863, a year before he was ordained an Apostle. Photograph by Charles D. Fredericks Co.

Education and Recreation Encouraged

Another binding element in the Brigham Young home grew out of his concern, not only for the spiritual welfare of his family, but for the development of their social and intellectual needs as well. He believed:

When parents whip their children for reading novels, and never let them go to the theatre, or to any place of recreation and amusement, but bind them to the moral law, until duty becomes loathsome to them; when they are freed by age from the rigorous training of their parents, they are more fit for companions to devils, than to be the children of such religious parents.⁵⁵

Therefore, he assured his listeners, “My little children . . . shall go to the dance, study music, read novels, and do anything else that will tend to expand their frames, add fire to their spirits, improve their minds, and make them feel free and untrammelled in body and mind.”⁵⁶

During the early years of Brigham’s married life, poverty, extensive periods of absence from his family, and disruptive conditions among the Saints limited the opportunities for social, recreational, and educational pursuits. Available sources pertaining to his pre-Utah years reveal little about the day-to-day activities of his children. His thirteen-year-old daughter Vilate studied music in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1843–44, where she learned to play the piano, but otherwise there appear to have been few exceptional cultural or educational opportunities for his children outside of the home.

After the family was established in Utah, one of Brigham Young’s concerns was the education and training of the youth. Addressing the legislature in 1852 in his capacity as governor of the territory, eager to build a thriving community, he lamented that he scarcely knew of apprentices in Utah in any trade—“no young mechanics arising to fill the places of those now at labor, when they shall have gone to their rest.” He added, “Deplorable indeed must be the situation of that People, whose sons are not trained in the practice of every useful avocation, and whose daughters mingle not in the hum of industry. . . . It well becomes us to give the proper direction to that labor.”⁵⁷

For Brigham, the responsibility to educate lay squarely with parents. Thus, Brigham spared no effort to provide for his own children’s education. When the schoolteaching facilities in the lower floor of the Lion House became inadequate for his family, he built a family schoolhouse (fig. 10) and recruited the German educator Karl G. Maeser as tutor because he wanted the children to be “better schooled than they can be by schoolmistresses.”⁵⁸

Brigham Young’s interest in education extended beyond the rudiments. After the University of Deseret reopened in 1867, his older children



Church Archives

FIG. 10. Young schoolhouse, 1868–69. The octagonal bell tower of the Brigham Young family schoolhouse rises in the background of this view. Here Brigham Young had his many children educated in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Several of his children went on for higher education. Photograph by Savage and Ottinger.

filled many of the desks. Records show that in the two-year period 1869–71 the Church leader spent more than \$1,500 on tuition for forty-six members of his household. He hired private tutors in French, shorthand, and music for “any and all of his children who cared to avail themselves of this privilege.”⁵⁹ In addition to local schooling, he gave his children who so desired the opportunity of studying professions of their choice at educational institutions in the East. Four of his sons did so. Comparatively few colleges were open to women at that time, and it was not expected that young women would be sent away to school, but at least six of his daughters did attend local academies and colleges.

Brigham also addressed his family's needs for physical exercise and recreation. After completion of the Lion House in 1856, when most of his family were living there, Brigham built porches along the west side, where "every contrivance" of that day was available for physical exercise. "We had horizontal ladders and straight ladders, horizontal bars, back boards to straighten our shoulders and make us walk upright, jumping ropes, wands, hoops, roller skates, wooden swords, dumbbells, swings, and big balls to kick and roll about," recalled Clarissa. Instructors were hired to teach gymnastics, fencing, and solo dancing. As a result, his daughters were in demand as dancers after the opening of the Salt Lake Theater in 1862. In addition to these forms of exercise, a family swimming pool was built, fed with water from a nearby canyon stream. Summarizing their recreational activities, Clarissa noted that "besides all the fun we had we gained poise and developed fine, strong bodies."⁶⁰

For Brigham Young, deviation from strict daily routine was an important part of life:

Our work, our every-day labor, our whole lives are within the scope of our religion. This is what we believe and what we try to practice. Yet the Lord permits a great many things that He never commands. I have frequently heard my old brethren in the Christian world make remarks about the impropriety of indulging in pastimes and amusements. The Lord never commanded me to dance, yet I have danced; you all know it, for my life is before the world. Yet while the Lord had never commanded me to do it, He has permitted it. I do not know that He ever commanded the boys to go and p[l]ay at ball, yet He permits it. I am not aware that He ever commanded us to build a theatre, but He has permitted it, and I can give the reason why. Recreation and diversion are as necessary to our well-being as the more serious pursuits of life.⁶¹

In keeping with this conviction, Brigham found time to participate occasionally in a variety of social and recreational activities with his family. Reports have him taking his family to the Tabernacle to hear the organ, dancing with them to celebrate the New Year, and taking them to the territorial fair. Moreover, holidays and birthdays offered a break from the strains of everyday work. On three holidays in July 1863—the Independence Day celebration on the fourth, the Mormon Battalion Reunion on the sixteenth, and the Pioneer Day party on the twenty-fourth—Brigham and his daughters danced all night at the theatre. And on January 23, 1865, he visited Feramorz Little's place of entertainment in Salt Lake City with twenty-three of his daughters to celebrate one of their birthdays.⁶² Susa Young related that her father was "so understanding in the vagaries of the child heart" and solicitous of his children's "childish needs in education, amusement and social ways" that they all loved him and even though he

was too busy to spend time with them on a daily basis he was their “hope and delight” at meal time, prayer time, and on holidays.⁶³

For Brigham Young, recreation played an integral role in fulfilling the purposes for which mortals were created. His motto for the Latter-day Saints was not that they “prepare to die, . . . but prepare to live is the word with us, and improve all we can in this life that we may be the better prepared to enjoy a better life hereafter, wherein we may enjoy a more exalted condition of intelligence, wisdom, light, knowledge, power, glory, and exaltation. Then let us seek, to extend the present life to the uttermost, by observing every law of health, and by properly balancing labor, study, rest, and recreation, and thus prepare for a better life.”⁶⁴

Confidence in God Maintained

More than anything else, the guiding force behind Brigham Young’s commitment and dedication as a parent was his faith in the overruling providence of God. After his conversion to Mormonism, religion motivated his every act and colored everything he saw and did. None who knew Brigham were ignorant of what was important in his life. He declared:

I am proud of my religion. It is the only thing I pride myself in, on the earth. I may heap up gold and silver like the mountains; I may gather around me property, goods, and chattels, but I could have no glory in that, compared with my religion; it is the fountain of light and intelligence; it swallows up the truth contained in all the philosophy of the world, both heathen and Christian; it circumscribes the wisdom of man; it circumscribes all the wisdom and power of the world; it reaches to that within the veil. Its bounds, its circumference, its end, its height, and depth, are beyond the comprehension of mortals, for *it has none*.⁶⁵

An authority on child behavior has noted that for children to increase their faith in God “they need to hear their parents render unto him that which is his. . . . Parents who themselves are filled with the consciousness of God’s hand in all things will transmit this feeling to their children.”⁶⁶ Brigham Young’s children had ample opportunity to cultivate this perception. As the Black Hawk War, Utah’s most costly confrontation between settlers and Indians, raged in the mid-1860s, striking fear and alarm in hearts of many of the Saints, Brigham shared with his namesake son his confidence that the hand of God was in the conflict:

I view this chastisement as necessary to unite the Saints and to cause them to pay more heed to counsel than they have been doing. Their hearts have gone after riches, and the lust of the world has blinded their minds. This is really but a light chastisement to what we might receive, and I would rather have the Lamanites stir us up to diligence than some other chastisements that might come upon us. The Lord has the hearts of the Lamanites, as well as the hearts of others, in his keeping. He can move them any way that he pleases to

suit his own good pleasure, and when he sees that enough has been done, and that his people are humble and penitent under his mighty hand, he can turn their hearts to peace.⁶⁷

Even when circumstances as unhallowed as what Brigham called “that interminable alimony outrage” pressed upon his mind in the wake of divorce proceedings by a plural wife, he still saw the hand of God. Brigham Jr. reported visiting his father one day as the case was being adjudicated and finding him “in excellent spirits[,] confident in God and willing to submit to his providences.” He noted that his father had just paid \$3,000 to lawyers in the case “and [he] assures me that he will pay the [\$]9500. alimony if necessary without any fuss. He said the Lord has given me all I have. If He permits this why should I complain?”⁶⁸

Brigham reminded his son Willard, who was serving in the military (fig. 11):

Our daily toil, however humble it may be, is our daily duty, and by doing it well we make it a part of our daily worship. But, whatever be our labor, calling, or profession, we should hold our skill, knowledge, and talents therein, subservient to the accomplishment of the purposes of Jehovah, that our entire lives, day by day, may be made to praise Him, and our individual happiness secured by the consciousness that we are fulfilling the purpose and design of our presence here on the earth.⁶⁹

Heartache Suffered

As diligent as he was in his role as family patriarch and kingdom builder, Brigham’s home life was not without sorrow and heartache. In addition to the anxiety associated with illness and death, some of his wives left him and not all of his children adhered to the teachings of their father. After his death, the settlement of his estate brought disunity and discord, which no doubt would have caused him much sorrow. The wrangling over the estate bespoke of deeper problems. On the seventh anniversary of his death in 1884, one of his sons lamented, “Seven years ago was a dark day for my father’s family. At the present writing there are some who have squandered the hard earnings which he left them, and are, worst of all infidel to the Gospel. I will not name them for they may see the error of their ways and I cannot perpetuate their unfaithfulness.”⁷⁰ But whatever heartache may have transpired in Brigham’s bosom due to waywardness of some in his family, he was buoyed by his faith in the mercy and justice of God. “I learned a long time ago,” he reportedly said, “not to die because my children go wrong. It has been revealed to me that every child and descendant will come to me some time, somewhere. What causes me great sorrow, however, is to know what some of them will have to go through before they get back.”⁷¹

Conclusion

Few men have approached the realm of family responsibility on a more complicated level and with greater devotion and insight than did Brigham Young. “I can say that I am not prepared to bring up a child in the way he should go,” he remarked toward the end of his life, “and yet I probably come as near to it as any person that lives.”⁷² Considering the ecclesiastical and secular responsibilities of his life, it is hard to comprehend just how he managed to provide such a high level of care and comfort for a family as large as his. Together, his many responsibilities carried a potential for extreme stress that could have easily spawned anger or violence in a lesser person. But through it all, Brigham Young maintained a level of composure that was a hallmark of his personality. He not only provided food and shelter for his family but effectively imparted the values of his faith through precept and example. As Susa concluded:

No other fact of father’s life was so profound a proof of his true nobility and greatness as his life at home and the influence which he radiated there. He was ever present in spirit. . . . The world knows Brigham Young as a statesman and colonizer; but to his children he was an ideal father. Kind to a fault, tender, thoughtful, just and firm. . . . None of us feared him; all of us adored him. . . . What his life and love meant to his family only their subsequent lives may testify.⁷³

In the privacy of his children’s own homes, in their own relationships, in the lives of his 40,000 descendants, and in the precepts and example he left for generations to follow, the parental legacy of Brigham Young would live on.



FIG. 11. Willard Young (1852–1936). While a student at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, Willard Young carried on a frequent and loving correspondence with his father Brigham Young. Taken sometime during his cadet years (1871–75), this photograph shows the dignified bearing that would help make Willard a university president. See also fig. 6. Church Archives.

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1. Historian's Office, Journal, January 31, 1857, Church Archives, Family and Church History Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

2. Helpful studies on Brigham Young's family and his views on parenting include the following: Susa Young Gates and Leah D. Widtsoe, *The Life Story of Brigham Young* (New York: Macmillan, 1930); Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Jeffery Ogden Johnson, "Determining and Defining a 'Wife': The Brigham Young Households," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (fall 1987): 57–70; Clarissa Young Spencer and Mabel Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1940); Dean C. Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family: Part I, 1824–1845," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 3 (spring 1978): 311–27; Dean C. Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family: The Wilderness Years," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 4 (summer 1979): 474–500; Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974).

3. Arrington, *American Moses*, 420–1; Jeffery Ogden Johnson, "Wives of Brigham Young," unpublished manuscript, copy in author's possession. Johnson includes Amanda Barnes among Brigham's wives. By comparison, Heber C. Kimball had 43 wives and 65 children; Christopher Layton, 10 wives and 65 children; John W. Hess, 7 wives and 64 children; and John D. Lee, 18 wives and 61 children. These figures can be found on AncestralFile.

4. Arrington, *American Moses*, 421.

5. Johnson, "Brigham Young Households," 57–70; Arrington, *American Moses*, 420–21; Jessee, *Letters of Brigham Young*, 357–59. In 1859, Brigham Young told New York newspaper editor Horace Greeley, "Some of those sealed to me are old ladies whom I regard rather as mothers than wives, but whom I have taken home to cherish and support." As cited in Arrington, *American Moses*, 324.

6. As cited in Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family: The Wilderness Years," 475. Regarding polygamy he added, "If any man had asked me what was my choice when Joseph revealed that doctrine, . . . I would have said, 'Let me have but one wife;' . . . It was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time. And when I saw a funeral, I felt to envy the corpse its situation, and to regret that I was not in the coffin." Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 3:266, July 14, 1855.

7. For evidence of Brigham Young's constant concern, see Jessee, "Brigham Young's Family: Part I," 319–20; and Ronald O. Barney, "Letters of a Missionary Apostle to His Wife: Brigham Young to Mary Ann Angell Young, 1839–1841," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999): 178.

8. Brigham Young to Mary Ann Young, August 17, 1843, Church Archives; Brigham Young to Mary Ann Young, April 20, 1847, Church Archives; Brigham Young to Clara Young, September 8, 1847, Church Archives; Minutes Collection, February 16, 1847, Church Archives; Gates and Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 340.

9. Johnson, "Brigham Young Households," 65–68; John D. Lee, Journal, February 15, 1846, Church Archives.

10. "Record of the Organization of the Camp of Israel Which Took Place at Shariton Ford, I[owa] T[erritory] on Friday March 27th and Monday 31st 1846," Church Archives.

11. Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, *Autobiography and Diary*, 25, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

12. Emily Dow Partridge Young, *Diary and Reminiscences*, typescript, 3, Church Archives. See also Jesse, "Brigham Young's Family: The Wilderness Years," 475–500.
13. Brigham Young to Harriet Young, March 15, 1846, Church Archives.
14. Gates and Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 350.
15. Susa Young Gates, "How Brigham Young Brought Up His 56 Children," *Physical Culture*, February 1925, 138; Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 64–86. See also the Salt Lake City directories for the 1860s and 70s.
16. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses*, 171.
17. Susa Young Gates, "Brigham Young As I Knew Him," Susa Young Gates Papers, 1852–1932, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.
18. Forest Farm was a large plot of ground located on the south side of what today is Twenty-First South between Highland Drive and State Street in Salt Lake City.
19. Susa Young Gates, "Brigham Young and His Nineteen Wives," Gates Papers; Gates, "How Brigham Brought Up His 56 Children," 140.
20. Gates, "Brigham Young As I Knew Him."
21. Susa Young Gates, "My Recollections," Gates Papers. One of the reasons given by James H. Moyle for not seeking the hand in marriage of the popular and articulate Clarissa Young, one of Brigham's daughters, was her declaration to school friends that "she had never done any cooking or kitchen work even down to setting a table." James H. Moyle, *Mormon Democrat: The Religious and Political Memoirs of James Henry Moyle*, ed. Gene A. Sessions ([Salt Lake City]: Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 74.
22. Gates, "My Recollections."
23. Gates, "My Recollections."
24. Gates, "Brigham Young and His Nineteen Wives."
25. Brigham Young, "An Epistle to My Wives and Children, Grand Children and Great Grand children," March 23, 1875, Brigham Young Office Files, Church Archives.
26. More than 9,600 acres was deeded to Brigham Young College on July 24, 1877. See Jed L. Woodworth, "Refusing to Die: Financial Crises at Brigham Young Academy, 1877–1897," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 1 (1999): 107 n. 5.
27. John W. Young to Brigham Young, April 2, 1875, Brigham Young Office Files.
28. Willard Young to Brigham Young, May 22, 1875, Brigham Young Office Files.
29. Willard Young to Brigham Young, December 25, 1876, Brigham Young Office Files.
30. Brigham Young Jr. to Brigham Young, February 4, 1863, Brigham Young Office Files.
31. Clara Decker Young to Brigham Young, October 3, 1847, Brigham Young Office Files.
32. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:68, April 8, 1852. On another occasion he said:

Mothers, remember that when your husbands are engaged in the service of the Church, and are all the time occupied in the duties of the Priesthood, so that they have not time to instruct their children, the duty devolves upon you. Then bring your children up in the ways of truth, and be to them both a father and mother, until they are old enough to perform duties by the side, and under the immediate eye, of their father. (Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:21, July 24, 1854)
33. Gates, "My Recollections."

34. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 5:211–13 (August 21, 1858).
35. Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 16–17.
36. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:15–16 (February 2, 1857).
37. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:74, April 22, 1860.
38. Jemima Angell Young to Brigham Young, August 15, 1866, Brigham Young Office Files.
39. Heber J. Grant to Susa Young Gates, December 30, 1899, Church Archives.
40. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses*, 338.
41. Sophia Brasse, as quoted in Claudia L. Leach, “A Bit of History Full of Human Interest,” *Wood River News-Miner* (Hailey, Idaho), February 4, 1918.
42. Gates and Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 336–37; Gates, “How Brigham Young Brought Up His 56 Children,” 141.
43. Gates, “My Father As His Forty-Six Children Knew Him,” Gates Papers; Gates and Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 355.
44. Gates, “Brigham Young As I Knew Him.”
45. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:307, June 15, 1862.
46. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:358–65, November 6, 1864.
47. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:195–96, February 9, 1862. Brigham Young taught the Saints on this occasion that “kindness, love, and affection are the best rod to use upon the refractory. . . . I can pick out scores of men in this congregation who have driven their children from them by using the wooden rod. Where there is severity there is no affection or filial feeling in the hearts of either party; the children would rather be away from father than be with him” (195–96).
48. Young, as cited in Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:7 (January 11, 1857). Brigham acknowledged, “I may sometimes chastise my brethren, and speak to them in the language of reproof,” but, he added, “There is not a father who feels more tenderly towards his offspring, and loves them better than I love this people; and my Father in heaven loves them; my heart yearns over them with all the emotions of tenderness, so that I could weep like a child; but I am careful to keep my tears to myself.” Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:49, April 9, 1852.
49. Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 31; Gates and Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 333–34.
50. Brigham Young to his family, April 2, 1866, Church Archives.
51. Brigham Young to his family, April 2, 1866.
52. Historian’s Office, Journal, December 23, 1863, Church Archives.
53. Brigham Young Jr., Diary, January 21, 1867, Brigham Young Jr. Collection, Church Archives.
54. Historian’s Office, Journal, May 25, 1870.
55. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:94, February 6, 1853. For further discussion of Brigham Young’s views on novel reading, see Richard H. Cracroft, “‘Cows to Milk Instead of Novels to Read’: Brigham Young, Novel Reading, and Kingdom Building,” in this issue of *BYU Studies*.
56. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:94, February 6, 1853.
57. Brigham Young, Address to the Utah Legislature, December 13, 1853, Church Archives.
58. Brigham Young to Karl G. Maeser, May 20, 1865, Church Archives.
59. Susa Young Gates, “From Impulsive Girl to Patient Wife: Lucy Bigelow Young,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 45 (summer 1977): 282. This posthumous publication was written many decades earlier.
60. Spencer and Harmer, *Brigham Young at Home*, 29–30.

61. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:60–61, July 18, 1869.
62. Historian's Office, Journal, July 12, 1857; December 31, 1859; October 2, 1862; January 23, 1865; George A. Smith to John L. Smith, July 30, 1863, Church Archives.
63. Gates, "My Father As His Forty Six Children Knew Him."
64. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:132, August 1–10, 1865.
65. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* 1:39, July 11, 1852.
66. Elliott D. Landau, "How to Teach the Ten Commandments to Your Children," *Ensign* 3 (October 1973): 52.
67. Brigham Young to Brigham Young Jr., July 5, 1866, Church Archives.
68. Brigham Young Jr., Diary, March 12, 1875.
69. Brigham Young to Willard Young, November 11, 1875, in Jessee, *Letters of Brigham Young*, 191.
70. Brigham Young Jr., Diary, August 29, 1884. For further discussion of this issue, see Leonard J. Arrington, "The Settlement of the Brigham Young Estate, 1877–1879," *Pacific Historical Review* 21 (February 1952): 1–20; and Arrington, *American Moses*, 422–30.
71. Gates and Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 370.
72. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:193, June 3, 1871.
73. Gates and Widtsoe, *Life Story of Brigham Young*, 355–56.



Church Archives

Brigham Young, 1855. Photograph attributed to Marsena Cannon.