

# The Historians' Corner

Ronald W. Walker and David J. Whittaker

This Historians' Corner deals with Brigham Young—the man who dominated Mormonism from Joseph Smith's death in 1844 until his own demise thirty-three years later. He was a complex man, and biographers have struggled to capture his variety.

The two Brigham Young documents printed here for the first time in their entirety emphasize this point. The first is a three-and-a-half page letter that Young wrote to his wife, Mary Ann Angel, just months before the portentous events of June 1844. The letter is full of Young's interests and activity. He frets about his never too robust health. He mentions his religious feeling and expresses concern about his home and friends ("there is no place like home to me"). While an ardent and devoted missionary, Elder Young's preaching zeal clearly did not supplant his tenderness for hearth and companions.

Brigham Young wrote this letter while he was in the East raising money for Nauvoo's public buildings and trying to encourage emigration to what was then the LDS Church's capital. His letter conveys these goals as well as his larger Mormon faith. But what seems especially interesting are the kinds of things that delight him: bathing in a discrete place on the Coney Island beach, spending a few days fraternizing with Mormon sympathizer James Arlington Bennet, preaching to the Saints in novel ways to make them understand the will of the Lord, or observing, with his typical enthusiasm for detail, Philadelphia's Fairmount Waterworks. He was an animated, physical man, who liked useful things.

He was more. The second letter tells of Young's spiritual dimension. It is addressed to Elder Hiram McKee, a Methodist lay

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minister, who was then living in Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin. Thirty years earlier, Young and McKee were neighbors in Oswego, New York, where the two were close spiritual allies as each searched for a satisfying faith. “How sweet was our communion in old Oswego,” McKee remembered, “how encouraging our prayers, and enlivening our Songs, when we used to sing.” The future Mormon leader gave McKee “advise, counsel, [and] prayers” and showed “deep piety” and “faith.”<sup>1</sup>

The intervening years separated the two men not only by time and miles, but also by religious profession. Young moved to Mendon, New York, and converted to Mormonism. During one of his first missions for his new church, he sought out and attempted to convert McKee, who by this time was living in Sackets Harbor, New York. Young’s preaching left McKee unconvinced, and the two parted, firmly disagreeing.

Now, after the lapse of so many years, McKee wondered about Young’s spiritual state. The Methodist had followed his former friend’s career in the national press, and what he read deeply disturbed him. “Disclosure after disclosure” seemed to indicate Young’s need for repentance. As Brigham Young had once helped McKee in his “dark hour of sin,” perhaps he, McKee, could now help his old friend.<sup>2</sup> In April 1860, McKee wrote Young inviting him to do penance.

McKee’s letter summoned the response from President Young that is reproduced here. In his reply, the Mormon leader not only defended his character and career, but spoke revealingly about how he, as a Mormon convert of almost thirty years, had come to see himself. He remained a sincere, believing Christian, he assured McKee, whose religious faith had grown—not ebbed—with the passing years. Indeed, President Young believed that Mormonism had given him the strength to endure the slander that swirled so violently around him.

The matter did not end here. Additional letters passed between the two men that suggest McKee probably accepted Young’s invitation to visit Salt Lake City.<sup>3</sup> While their religious disagreements likely continued, we can hope the two old religious seekers renewed and even strengthened the ties of their youth.



## Brigham Young to Mary Ann Young: August 17, 1843

Pheledelpha August 17<sup>th</sup> 1843<sup>4</sup>

My Dear Mary ann.<sup>5</sup> I am thankful to have the oppertuny to wright once more to you. Yesterday I posted a letter to you and shal continue this till I fil it and then post it for Nauvoo. I have ben verry sick with my old complaint feele some better to day. I have ben out to the Fairmount waterworks that waters the city of Phele 'tis a butiful place.<sup>6</sup> 'tis elevated about 95 feet a bove the school chil River<sup>7</sup> out of which the water is taken. Br Hess<sup>8</sup> was with me. I think it is about as good apiece of work as I have seene in all my travels the little yard that is atached to the house where the keeper lives is verry nisley laid out and fild with srubery. We went on to the wire bridge which is a bout 360 feet from one butmand to the other. it is all suported by small wires put together. it is about 2 1/2 9r 3 miles out. to morrow we shall goe to mount Holly and so on to New York. We have ben here a most 2 weaks. the saints feele perty well and a good meny think they will goe to the West this season,<sup>9</sup> as soon as the water rises in the ohio river. When I was so sick I thought if I could only be at home, I should be thankful there is no place like home to me. I due not value leveing home and all that is deare to me for the sake of the gospel if I could onley injoy my helth. you and I must take som masurs to re /recover/ cut our helth or we shall not last a grate meny years; and I want that we shou -ld live meny years yet and due much good on the earth.<sup>10</sup> we leff Pheledelpha last frida[y]<sup>11</sup> on the steam Boat came to Burlington 28 miles took stage for mount Holly<sup>12</sup> Br H. C. Kimball<sup>13</sup> and B. Winchester<sup>14</sup> was with me. we stoped with Judge Richards<sup>15</sup> we ordained him an Elder gave him Charge of the church in that place, had meeting frida[y] and Saterdag nights with the Bretherin. left Suday morning came to a place cold rising Sun a bout 10 miles, to a woods meeting, here we found Br Wm Smith.<sup>16</sup> Br Page<sup>17</sup> Preachd in the morning Br Kimball and my self in the afternoon.<sup>18</sup> we had a perty good congration and a good meeting. I saw a good meny that I knew sted all night with Br Athinson<sup>19</sup> came on monday morning to

Bordon town<sup>20</sup> 2 miles, took the rales cares for New york arived a 6 P. M. it commencd raining in the after noon we had a grate flood in this place. my teth commencd aking about the time it commenced raining.<sup>21</sup> I was sick and destresed about 4 day & nights hardley got enny sleep. I sufferd much

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New york August 29 this morning I set down to finish my letter and post it for Nauvoo. to returne to my helth I took som pill, was anointed had hands laid on me thursday night. my distress continued till a bout 12 o.c. I laid down went to sleep had a good night's rest have ben perty well ever since. our confrence commenced on saterday 1/2 past 10 in the morning.<sup>22</sup> I laid before the Bretherin the object of our mision. We had a good meeting but did no buisness there no man to take a share of nauvoo stock So all we could due was to invite the Bretherin to goe to Nauvoo and assist in building the houses and building up the place we felt allmost like strang men in a strang place we could hardly teach the church enny thing they seamed to know all a bout it. they have had such grate men amoung them here from Nauvoo, that Br Foster<sup>23</sup> could not teach them much and it was hard for us to teach them only by paribles and we had a good menny of them. Som of the Brs thought it was courous teaching and I thought jest so to. and I find that the Churches need courious teaching to make them understand what the Lord wants of them. the Saints seeme to have som faith here a bout going up to Nauvoo we leave the saints yesterday with the best of feelings they are jenerly verry poore and it is hard for us to get expence monny to carey us from place to place. tel Doct. Willard I recived his letter and I thanke him for it. I expect to goe over to the arlington house to day with Br Foster. I hope to [see?] the General,<sup>24</sup> give my warm respects to Brs L. and W. and sisters Rhoda and Jennett. tel Br W. I herd his salut saw the token when I past by on the Steam Boat. I have not herd a word direct from you sence I left home. I was in hops to have recived a letter from you at this citty. I still look for one it would be a grate satisfaction to me to have a line from you. if you see enny of Br Fars famely tel them Br Lorin is here is well and in good spirits will go on to New London in Connecticut to morrow. I think I Shal make my Way home home as soon as convenent after the Boston Confrence<sup>25</sup> for all the Saints that



have faith and means to goe west or build up the kingdom is going emeditly and it is of no use for us to stay here, that is if and if I can get means to goe home with

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Sept 2 I now set down to finish my letter to you. Br Foster and my self went to the Arlington house on L. Island on tusday,<sup>26</sup> we had a good visit With Generel Bennet we staed all night the next day we went over his farm vued his fine felds, took a veu from the top of his house, could see out on to the osion Sandy hook Straton Island, &c\_ a bout 5 o.c. P. M. the Gan took his wife Daughter and little son in to his caredge with my Self. firmished a hors for Elder Foster to ride on hors back we all wen down to cony Island 2 or 3 miles the hansomist Beach I ever saw. we drove to where we could get out of sight Bathed in the salt water and returned home to his house the next day in the after noon he took us in to his caredge Brought us to New York the Ganeral wished to be remembered to Ganeral Smith and famely. Mrs & Miss Bennet with the Gan Join in Sending there warm respects to Doct Richards<sup>27</sup> and wife. I never injoind a visit Better in my life. let Doct Willard see this—. this day the Bretherin leve for L pool viz R. Headlock John Carns James Slone & wife James Houston and Br Jarmond they are all well.<sup>28</sup> they sale on the ship Columbus. Br Stone wish me to say to his famely as he could not wright that Br Foster from N. York would soon be there and would bord with [page torn] [Br?] Lurish [?] you to get Edmond to convay word to the famelis of the Elders. Br. Kimball has a savere a tact of the corley morbus but is better the rest of the Brethern are well, we shall goe to Boston on Monday net if all is well. my heth is good at present. I hope you and the children are well. I have herd that 4 of the children have ben severley atacted with the Canker but was better. I pray the Lord to keep you and the children in good helth<sup>29</sup> I think to see you in the corse of 6 weaks or 2 months. I understand Judy Adams<sup>30</sup> ~~is did~~ died with the colery. I was sorey to here that it was sickley in and about Nauvoo I expect to wright one letter more before I reach home. I have not recived one line from you. you know how anxious you are to here from me when I am gon you if you was here and the children with me in Nauvoo, you could ges how much I want to here from you. give my love to Edman, /&/ Elizabeth Vlate Joseph Brigham Mary ann Rocksey Emma

Alas and especely to U. Carolina, to Br J. Young L. Young & famely sister Laney Susand. Br Deckers famely<sup>31</sup> and finely all that you have an oportunity may the Lord Bles you and the children and I Bless you. take the first Share of my Love to your self and then to the rest.<sup>32</sup>

to M. A. Young [s] Brigham Young

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this is the six letter I have writton to you, I think you will not complane of my not wrighting to you give my love to Sister Haritt<sup>33</sup> if she is there Br James Muntoss Mother Sister and Daughter came down from Utica on a visit She is a fine wooman. I shall wright from Boston I expect. we have not don enny thing for the houses as yet I due not think we shall.

## **Brigham Young to Hiram McKee: May 3, 1860**

Gt. S. L. City, May 3, 1860

Elder Hiram McKee<sup>34</sup>

Brandon, Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin,

Dear Brother:

Your very friendly, frank, and interesting letter of April 4 came safe to hand. I was highly gratified with its perusal, and will endeavor to reply with at least an equal degree of kindness and frankness.

As you state, I could hardly expect that you would so distinctly bear in mind the long past scenes in our acquaintance in Oswego and our last interview at Sacket's Harbor, especially since our views of Scripture and consequent courses have cast our lines so differently, and have at present located so remote from each other. I also vividly remember the scenes, feelings and experience of the times to which you kindly allude, when we were fellow seekers after the truths revealed from Heaven for the salvation of the human family. You state that in Oswego



you deemed me sincere in my efforts to secure salvation, and exemplary in my conduct and conversation. I daily examine my desires, efforts and views by the best light I can obtain, which I most confidently trust is the light sent from above for our guidance, and, so far as I am able to determine, I feel that I am and ever since have been as honest a seeker after truth as I was during our acquaintance in Oswego, and as my information and experience increase I feel constrained at times, to exclaim "What is man, that thou art mindful of him and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"<sup>35</sup>

Through the mercies of our God my hope of heaven and knowledge of truth and heavenly things has increased in a manifold degree since I last saw you, and, like yourself and the ancient prophets, and apostles, I esteem this world, with all its wealth and power, but a poor exchange for the gift of eternal life or the loss of one's soul, could a person even secure it by so inconceivable a sacrifice. And I have striven and am striving, through the help of Israel's God, to ever keep my gaze steadfastly fixed upon Salvation's port, and to steer my bark safely to anchor in "heaven's broad bay." As to ambition, love of fame and property, could we both be thoroughly understood, I am of the opinion that you think more of a dollar than I do. And facing the storm of villification, slander, abuse, and persecution of the most vile and cruel character, from the period of my joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints until this moment, is very strong proof that I do not trim my sails to catch the popular breezes of this world's cliques and circles, whether they be blown by individuals, communities, or nations. No, br. McKee, I do not put my trust in man, realizing how frail we are; but endeavor to so order my ways as to meet the approbation of Heaven, knowing that by so doing the Author of our existence will temper to my weaknesses the trials I am called to pass through, and enable me to overcome the allurements of the adversary.

As you truly mention, our "communion" in Oswego was sweet, our prayers were "encouraging," our songs "enlivening," according to the belief, obedience and understanding we then had. But I am not able to express to you in writing, short of volumes, the increase of faith and understanding that I now feel

that I am blessed with; nor to now explain the steps taken to obtain so great blessings, further than to briefly state that they have been vouchsafed to me upon conditions of faithfulness and obedience to the commandments revealed from Heaven for our salvation, and are equally free to all upon like conditions, "without money, and without price". I am pleased to learn that you still recognize the "all-seeing eye of God," and under its searching glance I can truly answer that "my hope of heaven" is not simply "as good" now as it was then, but is as much better as the gospel plan is better than the prevailing and popular man-made plans. Under that "all seeing eye" I can also truthfully inform you that I have ever aimed to so order my ways as to enjoy a conscience void of offence toward God, Angels and all men, especially since making a profession of religion. And I take the liberty to further inform you that most of the crimes you mention as being charged to me were never before so much as heard of by me; and I can hardly persuade myself that you need my assurance, which you may implicitly reply upon, that I am strongly of the opinion that I abhor such crimes far more than you possibly can at present, and that I am as innocent as a nursing babe of committing, counseling, in any way, having anything to do with such deeds—they are most excruciating and horrifying to all my feelings and natural organization.

Can you now judge of my astonishment at reading in your letter of the murder of a daughter of mine, by "Danites" as you term them, on her way to California. All the daughters I have been blest with, except one who when a child, died a natural and peaceful death by disease, are now living in this Territory, and in the enjoyment of the faith I profess and strive, so far as they have arrived at years of accountability. Your story of a murdered man found in N. V. Jones' meat-market was also entirely new to me, and also the murder of one Dr. Roberts.<sup>36</sup> To my great regret Indians and wicked men have cruelly and wantonly killed human beings within our borders,<sup>37</sup> but not to the number indicated in your letter, and certainly far more repugnant to my feelings than I suppose it can be to yours.

The "disclosures" you mention, so far as they have come under my notice, are a tissue of gross, death-designed lies,



larded here and there with a little truth, when telling that truth does not militate against the effect of those lies concocted with the well known and express design to exterminate us from the earth. But the Lord God of Israel overrules and will continue to overrule the results of the acts of the children of men to accomplish His purposes, and no power can hinder. In that Being I put my trust, and Him I strive to serve.

In regard to plurality of wives, I will merely ask you how you expect to reach Abraham's bosom, except you do the works of Abraham?

Is the Gospel the same as it was in the days of the Apostles? Is baptism instituted for the remission of sins? Was the laying on of hands instituted for the reception of the Holy Ghost? Is God a personage of tabernacle? Has heaven a location?

On the 26th inst. I took the liberty to give Capt. Gibson, a friend of mine, a letter of introduction to you.<sup>38</sup> He has traveled extensively in different climes and among many people, is a gentleman of a good share of intelligence and general information, and in his travels has sojourned a few months in this City. He started for the States on the 27th inst. and thought he would be able, in his round, to pay you a visit. I trust he will, and should he do so you will have an excellent opportunity to derive from him much reliable information concerning myself, Utah, and our affairs and modes of managing them, especially should you wish him to lecture upon his travels, other topics of general interest, and what he has seen and experienced.<sup>39</sup>

I have cheerfully complied with your request for an answer to your very welcome letter, but in a manner by no means so minute and satisfactory as I could had I the opportunity to see you "face to face". Where I at liberty, as I presume you are, I would glad[l]y visit you and many other friends in the States, but numerous and important home duties prevent. If you will come here you can have the privilege of seeing and knowing for yourself. The journey is not so long, tedious nor expensive as to preclude your being an eye witness of our sayings and doings in Utah, where you can have an opportunity for learning our faith, conduct and conversation as they really are.

This Fall will be an excellent time for you to journey across the plains, having so arranged your business as to admit of your

tarrying here during the winter. Should you do so, I will gladly give you opportunity to preach to the assemblies in the Tabernacle in this City, and will guarantee you the candid, careful attention of your audiences.

I shall be much gratified if you will accept of my now kindly proffered invitation to pay me a visit at your earliest convenience—to see and hear for yourself—and trust you will rest assured that you will meet a hospitable welcome and kind entertainment in my house, by

Truly Your Friend and the Friend of all  
who love the Truth,

Brigham Young

P. S. I shall be pleased to have you write to me again at your earliest convenience

I have seen and heard of several “anti Mormon” publications, —the ‘Spaulding story,’ E. D. Howe’s book written by one D. P. Hurlbert, Dr. J. C. Bennets book, the publication of John Hyde Jr., “Female life among the Mormons”<sup>40</sup> and the saying of one or two women, professing to have been my wives, that I have heard have been lecturing against us in different parts of the States, &c., &c, all written at the instigation of the Spirits of the Devil—but the statement in your letter, mentioned in my reply as entirely new to me, I had never before heard of, and they are utterly and maliciously false, like the other exceedingly numerous lies that have been so widely and zealously circulated against us. One thing is a consolation, the Lord will overrule all these things for the good of those who love and serve him, and the Enemy of all righteousness cannot help it.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Hiram McKee to Brigham Young, April 4, 1860, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Archives, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Brigham Young Papers).

<sup>2</sup> McKee to Young, April 4, 1860, Brigham Young Papers.

<sup>3</sup> For example, David McKenzie to Hiram McKee, July 18, 1871, Brigham Young Papers. McKee was then living in Arcata, Humboldt County, California. McKenzie, one of Brigham Young's secretaries, wrote with a familiarity that implied he had made McKee's acquaintance.

<sup>4</sup> This letter is reproduced here with the kind permission of the Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, the owner of the original. It was written on various dates, although the manuscript itself only mentions three different dates: August 17, 1843, in Philadelphia, and August 29 and September 2, 1843, in New York. The letter is postmarked New York, September 4, 1843, and is addressed, "Mrs. Mary A. Young, Nauvoo Hancock Co., Ill." The original spelling is retained. At this time, Brigham Young (1801–1877) was serving a short-term mission to the east coast to collect funds for the building of the Temple and Nauvoo House. See *Times and Seasons* 4 (May 1, 1843):180–83, for an account of the April 6, 1843, special conference in Nauvoo assigning the Apostles this mission. Elder Young, with several others, left Nauvoo on July 7 and returned on October 22, 1843. He arrived in Philadelphia on the morning of August 5; in addition to doing missionary work, he visited a variety of local sites in the area, including Independence Hall and Peel's Museum, prior to his departure on August 18. The most detailed account of his experiences is in Elden Jay Watson, comp., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1801–1844* (Salt Lake City: Smith Secretarial Service, 1968), 130–54. See also Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 105–8.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Ann Angell Young (1803–1882) was the second wife of Brigham Young. They were married on February 18, 1834. Brigham's first wife, Miriam Works, died on September 8, 1832, leaving him with two daughters to care for. Mary Ann bore Brigham six more children, five of which were born by 1843.

<sup>6</sup> Originally called Morris Hill, by the time Brigham Young visited there in 1843 it was called Fairmount. The waterworks he describes in his letter had been completed in 1822, and they were one of the principal attractions of the city. An engraving of the Fairmount Waterworks is reproduced in Russell F. Weighley, ed., *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 229.

<sup>7</sup> Schuylkill River.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Hess had been appointed president of the Philadelphia branch on October 15, 1842.

<sup>9</sup> In May 1843, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had directed the Philadelphia Saints to gather to Nauvoo. See the public notice in *Times and Seasons* 4 (June 15, 1843): 232.

<sup>10</sup> While it is not generally known, Brigham Young struggled with health problems all of his life. He refers to these problems throughout this letter. See also Lester E. Bush, Jr., "Brigham Young in Life and Death: A Medical Overview," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 79–103.

<sup>11</sup> On August 18.

<sup>12</sup> Mt. Holley, New Jersey.

<sup>13</sup> Heber C. Kimball (1801–1868), an apostle and close friend of Brigham Young.

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Winchester (1817–1901), an early leader of the Church in the Philadelphia area.

<sup>15</sup> Judge William Richards, of Mt. Holley, New Jersey.

<sup>16</sup> William Smith (1811–1894), an apostle and the youngest brother of Joseph Smith, Jr.

<sup>17</sup> John E. Page (1799–1867), an apostle.

<sup>18</sup> August 19–20, 1843.

<sup>19</sup> Probably Thomas Atkinson (1810–1863). It was while George A. Smith and Brigham Young were staying with brother Atkinson in a house that was over 150 years old that Brigham described a night with bedbugs: the house “was so infested with bed bugs that we could not sleep. Brother George A. Smith gave it as his legal opinion that there were bed-bugs there which had danced to the music at the battle of Trenton, as their heads were perfectly grey. We took our blankets and retreated to the further end of the room, and, as the bugs followed us, I lit a candle, and as they approached, caught them and burnt them in the candle, and thus spent the night.” Watson, *Manuscript History*, 146.

<sup>20</sup> Bordentown, New Jersey.

<sup>21</sup> Brigham Young had tooth problems until 1862, when his last permanent teeth were removed and replaced with dentures. See the comments in Arrington, *Brigham Young*, 312–13.

<sup>22</sup> The conference was held in Columbian Hall on Grand Street, New York City, Saturday and Sunday, August 26 and 27, 1843.

<sup>23</sup> Lucien R. Foster (1806–?) was made the president of the New York City branch in April 1841. It was at Foster’s request and expense that Brigham Young visited the phrenologist, Orson S. Fowler, on September 20, 1843. Young was not impressed with Fowler: “He is just as nigh being an idiot as a man can be, and have any sense left to pass through the world decently; and it appeared to me that the cause of his success was the amount of impudence and self-importance he possesses, and the high opinion he entertained of his own abilities.” Watson, *Manuscript History*, 150–51. Early Mormon interest in phrenology is discussed in Davis Bitton and Gary L. Bunker, “Phrenology among the Mormons,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 9 (Spring 1974): 43–61.

<sup>24</sup> General James Arlington Bennet (1785–1865). Bennet proved to be an opportunist in his relationships with the Mormons. His friend, John C. Bennett had him appointed as the inspector-general of the Nauvoo Legion in April 1842, and in 1844 he was chosen as Joseph Smith’s Vice Presidential running mate. He was the proprietor and principal of the Arlington House, an educational institution on Long Island when Young visited him. For more detail see Lyndon W. Cook, “James Arlington Bennet and the Mormons,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 247–49.

<sup>25</sup> The conference was held in Boylston Hall, Boston, September 9–11, 1843. While in the Boston area from September 4–29, Brigham Young also visited local sites such as the Bunker Hill monument, the State House, and Boston Harbor.

<sup>26</sup> August 29, 1843. On August 30, Brigham Young baptized Bennet in the Atlantic Ocean just off Coney Island. Bennet wrote to Joseph Smith on October 24, 1843, of Young’s visit. See *Times and Seasons* 4 (November 1, 1843): 371.



<sup>27</sup> Willard Richards (1804–1854), an apostle.

<sup>28</sup> Reuben Hedlock (1801–?), John Cairns (1808–?), James Sloan (1792–1886), James Houston (1817–1863) and a brother Jarmine. These men had been appointed to missions to the British Isles. Most of them are mentioned in the notice of the mission published in the *Times and Seasons* 4 (June 15, 1843): 232. Their arrival in the British Isles on the ship Columbus is noted in the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 4 (October 1843): 94. Hedlock had been appointed the president of the English Mission, the details of which are given in the *Millennial Star* 4 (November 1843): 108–9.

<sup>29</sup> While Brigham Young was away on this mission, his six-year-old daughter Mary Ann died of “dropsy and canker.” She was the twin of Brigham Young, Jr. See Arrington, *Brigham Young*, 108.

<sup>30</sup> Probably the wife of George J. Adams, a church leader in the Boston area.

<sup>31</sup> Isaac Decker (1800–1873) was a native of the Netherlands and later a member of the first pioneer company in 1847. Two of his daughters became plural wives of Brigham Young: Lucy Ann Decker (1822–1890) became his first plural wife in 1842; Clarissa Decker (1828–1889) married him in 1844.

<sup>32</sup> Although Brigham Young protected his family's privacy throughout his life, even instructing the Church Historians to ignore these more private concerns, Young's correspondence leaves little doubt about his role as a devoted husband and father. For information on his family during this period, see Dean C. Jessee, “Brigham Young's Family: Part I 1824–1845,” *BYU Studies* 18 (Spring 1978): 311–27.

<sup>33</sup> Harriett E. Cook (1824–1894). She married Brigham Young in 1843.

<sup>34</sup> This letter is published courtesy of LDS Church Historical Department. Used by permission. Two copies of Young's letter are found in his correspondence. The first is a rough but complete early draft; the second is a letterpress facsimile of the actual letter sent to McKee that the clerks in Young's office failed to copy completely into the office letterbooks. So far as comparison is possible, the two versions are identical in content. See Young's Draft Letterbook and volume 5 of his Letterpress Copy Book.

Biographical data on McKee is sketchy. Censuses show a “Hiram McKee” at the following places and dates: 1830, Oswego, County, New York; 1840, Sackets Harbor, Jefferson County, New York; 1855, Lake Mills, Jefferson County, Wisconsin; 1860, Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin; 1870, Racine 1st Ward, Racine County, Wisconsin. His name does not appear on the 1850 census for either Wisconsin or New York. McKenzie's 1871 letter was directed to Arcata, Humboldt County, California. According to McKee's letter to Young, McKee was the father of six children and began his Methodist preaching in 1833, three years after the Sackets Harbor interview between the two men.

<sup>35</sup> Psalms 8:6; Hebrews 2:6.

<sup>36</sup> Nathaniel Vary Jones (1822–1863) was bishop of Salt Lake City's Fifteenth Ward and later a Latter-day Saint missionary to India and the British Isles, where he briefly presided over the British Mission. The allusion to the alleged murder at his meat market and to the atrocity involving “Mr. Roberts” are uncertain.

<sup>37</sup> The reference apparently is to the Mountain Meadows Massacre, September 1857. McKee's letter ambiguously speaks of the killing of “hundreds of others” in Utah Territory, which likely had reference to the southern Utah disaster.

<sup>38</sup> Walter Murray Gibson (1822–1887) was a world traveler, romantic, and briefly an LDS convert. He later distinguished himself as a Hawaiian adventurer and politician. Gibson was unable to meet McKee during his 1860 mission to the East. Receiving Young's instructions, Gibson was first "prostate sick" and then waylaid and injured while going to a Mormon meeting in New York City. Walter Murray Gibson to Brigham Young, October 15, 1860, Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers.

<sup>39</sup> Young hoped that Gibson's lectures on the East Indies would provide the means for also discussing Utah Mormonism, thus helping the Church's image in the East.

<sup>40</sup> President Young lists several anti-Mormon books current at the time that McKee apparently had reference to in his letter, including Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: Or, A Faithful Account of that Singular Imposition and Delusion from its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: The Author, 1834); John Cook Bennett, *The History of the Saints: Or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842); John Hyde, *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (New York: W. P. Fetridge, 1857); and Maria N. Ward [pseud.], *Female Life among the Mormons* (London: C. H. Clarke [1855]).