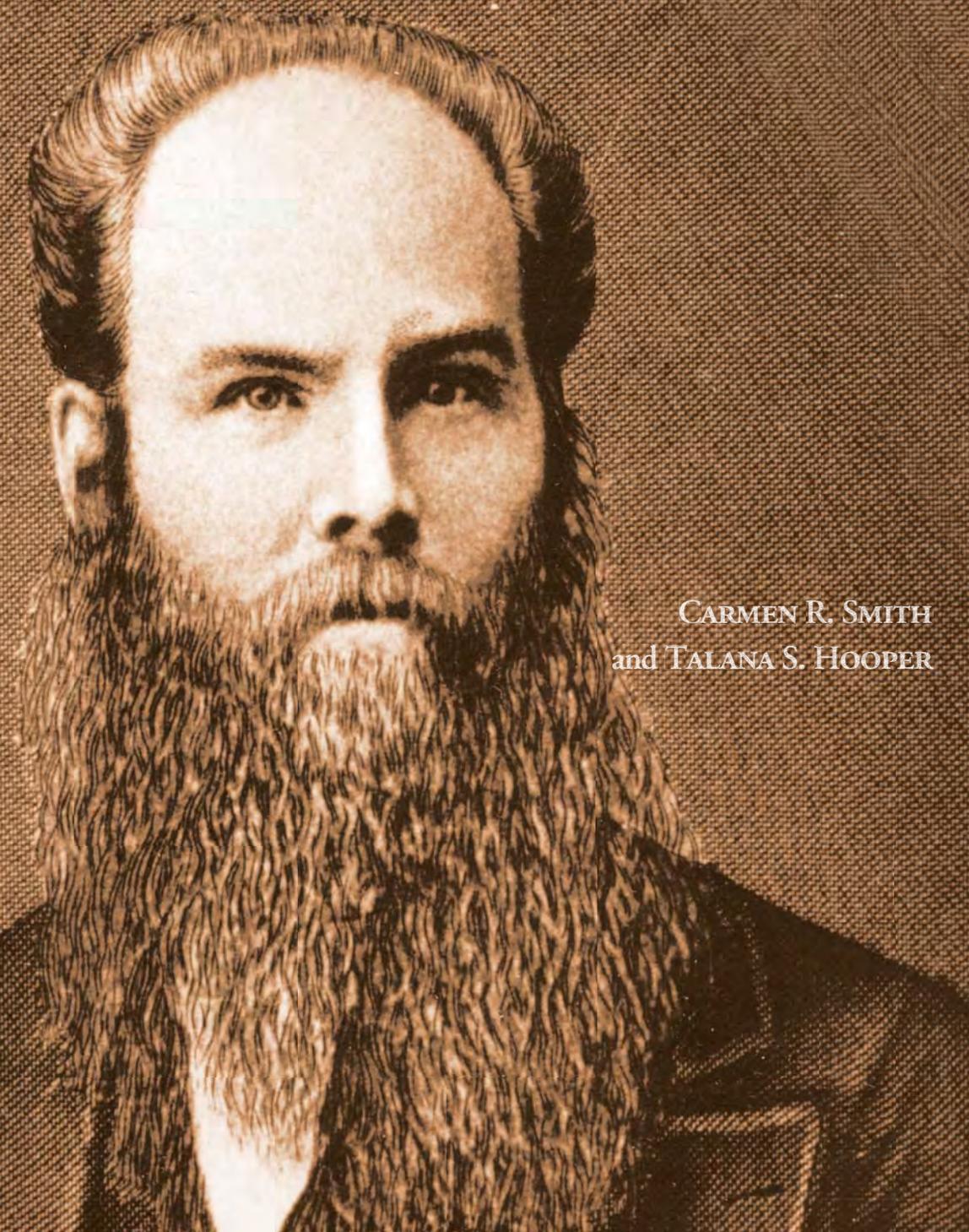


# LOT SMITH

MORMON PIONEER and AMERICAN FRONTIERSMAN



CARMEN R. SMITH  
and TALANA S. HOOPER

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MORMON PIONEER and AMERICAN FRONTIERSMAN

CARMEN R. SMITH and TALANA S. HOOPER

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To my husband, Omer J. Smith  
—Carmen R. Smith

To my husband, Steve,  
and my children, Melynde, Ryan, James,  
Lorianne, Julee, and Morgan  
—Talana S. Hooper

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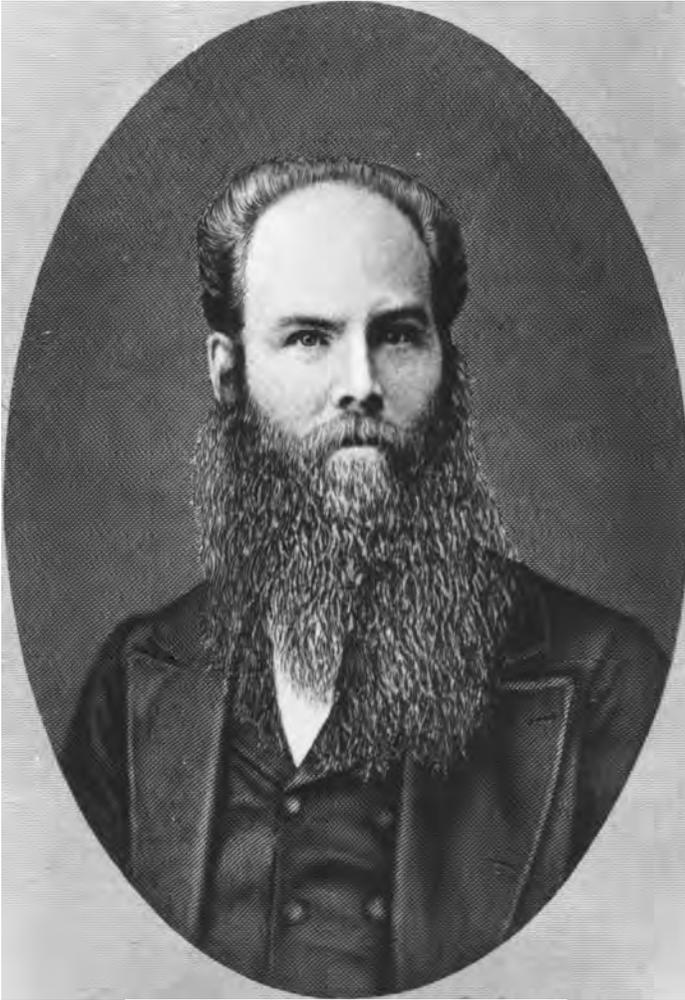
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*Lot Smith*

Major Lot Smith, in charge of a Command of Utah troops in the Echo Canyon War. Steel engraving by Chas. B. Hall, NY, reprinted by permission of the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

Signature of Lot Smith, Letter to John Taylor, July 12, 1879, John Taylor 1808-1887. LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

# Introduction

*I live for those who love me, for those who know me true,  
For the heavens that shine above me and await my coming, too,  
For the cause that needs assistance,  
For the wrongs that lack resistance,  
For the future in the distance,  
For the good that I can do.<sup>1</sup>*

Lot Smith's last and fifty-second child was born six months after his father was killed by a renegade Navajo in Arizona. This son, James "Jim" Martin Smith—my grandfather—longed throughout his life to learn anything and everything about the father he never had the privilege to know. He sought and acquired stories of his father for years and learned that his father's life had generated many myths and legends. Lot Smith was a daring man of strong passions and character who had a temper to match his fiery red beard. Ten years after his death, the *Deseret News* published: "Like all brave and martial men, [Lot Smith] could not tolerate a coward. He had no patience with them, and of course, they thought him to be the most tyrannical of men. But with those who possessed bravery and honesty he was true as steel."<sup>2</sup>

Smith was born in New York in 1830, not far from where the Mormon church had been organized only one month before. At the age of sixteen, Smith volunteered to serve in the Mormon Battalion—an experience that significantly shaped his life. He developed endurance and an ability to survive on shortages of food, water, and clothing. In the Territory of Utah, Smith joined the cavalry corps known as Minute Men, or Life Guards, of the Nauvoo Legion. This group defended the Mormon pioneers in the Rocky Mountain region. Smith fought in several skirmishes that arose between the settlers and the Indian tribes of the area. Smith was appointed Color Bearer General of the Nauvoo Legion with the rank of captain when he had barely reached manhood. Three years later, he was elected as Davis County's first sheriff, a position he served in for roughly ten years. As a captain of the Life Guards in the

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1. George Linnaeus Banks, "What I live For."

2. *Deseret News*, April 5, 1902.

fall of 1856, Smith was among the leaders who helped rescue the Willie and Martin Handcart Companies in the blizzards of Wyoming.

Smith is best remembered for his role in the Utah War of 1857 when the US Army was sent to invade Utah Territory. His reputation of fearlessness was reinforced by the daring acts of burning the supply wagons of the US Army and working alongside legendary Mormon gunfighter Porter Rockwell to stampede the US Army's cattle. Smith's next military campaign in 1862 was not against the US Army but was a part of the Union Army during the American Civil War. Communication across the country was vital to the preservation of the Union. Commissioned by President Lincoln, Smith led the Utah Volunteers in protecting, repairing, and rebuilding the transcontinental telegraph lines and mail lines from Fort Bridger to Independence Rock.

Brigham Young had long sought to colonize in the Arizona Territory. After several years of failed efforts, he appointed Smith to the task. Leading the missionary colonists on the seven-week journey to the site designated by Young at Sunset Crossing on the Little Colorado River, Smith instituted the United Order, the Mormon communitarian system, within a stable society. He established a dairy in Pleasant Valley at Mormon Lake, initiated the Circle S Ranch, was called as the first Latter-day Saint stake president in the Arizona Territory, and developed goodwill with the Hopis and Navajos. When Apostle Wilford Woodruff fled to Arizona, Smith and the settlers helped Woodruff elude capture by federal authorities several times.

Polygamous men in Arizona and Utah became targets for arrest, including Smith, who had eight wives. Smith, along with apostle Moses Thatcher and the three other Arizona stake presidents, was commissioned by President John Taylor to purchase land in Mexico as a refuge for polygamous families. When he eventually returned to Arizona, he still faced arrest and further dangers as a stockman. As he defended his ranch interests against those who would rustle his stock or steal his range rights, he acquired the reputation as the most feared gunman in Arizona with several notorious acts wrongly credited to him, including participation in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, acting as one of Brigham Young's destroying angels, and the branding of his wives. Near his home in a remote four-mile box canyon, Smith suffered the bullet which took his life. Ten years after his death, his body was exhumed from Arizona and reinterred in his old hometown of Farmington, Utah.

\*\*\*\*\*

My grandfather passed his passion to know his father onto his posterity and extended family. Jim Smith's oldest son, my father Omer, recorded the stories and enlisted the help of my mother Carmen to research Lot Smith's history in libraries around the country. When Omer unexpectedly passed away, Carmen continued to research, interview, and compile for another thirty years. Many anxiously awaited this biography. When my mother's eyesight, and therefore her ability to use the computer, began to fail, I resolved to not allow all the love, sacrifice, and labor of my mother, father, and grandfather to collect and preserve Lot Smith's story to be wasted. As a legendary, Old West figure entwined in the early events of Mormon history, I felt that his incredible story was worth every effort to preserve. As I became more familiar with Lot Smith's narrative style—so compelling and touched with humor—I wished he had taken the time to write more of his life and keep a journal. However, he was much too active *living* to write about life. I feel deep gratitude for his contemporaries who wrote of him and for those who preserved his letters.

My mother and I gratefully acknowledge those who have graciously assisted over the years in acquiring the substance for this biography and—in her words—“who made research so exhilarating”: archivists Ron Esplin, Irving Golding, Randy Dixon, Ron Barney, and Gladys Noyce at the LDS Church History Library; the late A. J. “Jeff” Simmonds at the Merrill-Cazier Library at Utah State University; Chad Flake at Brigham Young University Library; and John Irwin and Bonnie Greer at Northern Arizona University Special Collections. We feel indebted to many members of the Lot Smith family, especially Alden B. Smith II, Alvin V. “Mike” and Fern Steed, Karl Smith, Willard Smith Jr., Kenneth B. Smith, Jessie Smith, Arza Lavell Smith, Georgia Smith Buss, Nona Smith Rhead, Dan DeWitt, Alene Sessions, Rock M. Smith, Ralph Smith Burton, Grant Gill Smith, Ellis Craig, and Bert Smith. We also deeply appreciate others who have supported the research and project, including Maury Jones (Snake River Expedition), Glen Leonard (Farmington), Ken Evans of Homolovi Ruins State Park (northern Arizona and Sunset), Southwest Indian mission president Ralph Evans, Southwest Indian mission president S. Eugene Flake, the late Charles S. Peterson for enthusiastic support, Ruth Dorsett for housing in Salt Lake City, and the expertise of JoJean Loflin and Brian Whitney.

Talana S. Hooper  
Gila Valley, 2015

# Mormon Battalion

Lot Smith, the fifth of seven children born to William Orville Smith and Rhoda Hough Smith, was born May 15, 1830, in a log cabin in the tiny wooded village of Williamstown, Oswego County, New York. According to his descendants, when Lot Smith was asked of his early childhood, he replied that he was just a blue-bellied Yankee. The term *blue-bellied* referred to the New Haven Colony in Connecticut, home for generations of Smith's mother's people, the Houghs.<sup>1</sup> These early people had Puritan roots and chose to be governed by strict "blue" laws based on the admonitions in Holy Writ.<sup>2</sup> As with most Yankees, Smith's father taught his sons the rudiments of making a living from the land. Before Lot was ten, William O. allocated a few acres to him to be planted in corn.<sup>3</sup>

Their life changed when they embraced a new religion in 1839.<sup>4</sup> In April 1830, the month before Lot Smith was born, the Church of Christ (now known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) had been organized in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, sixty-five miles southwest of the Smith's homestead. Followers became commonly known as Mormons, named as such for Joseph Smith's "gold bible"—The Book of Mormon. Roughly thirty-five people joined the Mormon Church in the area of the William O. Smith family.<sup>5</sup> The Smiths and Houghs attended the small Richland Township branch.<sup>6</sup> In this branch, the Smiths became

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1. Donald Lines Jacobus, *Families of Ancient New Haven*, 4.

2. Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District*, 6.

3. Alice Ann Richards Smith, letter to Lula Greene Richards, July 21, 1921.

4. Records of the 56th Quorum of the Seventy of the LDS Church list the baptism of Jesse Wells Smith, Lot's brother, on November 18, 1837, by James Blakeslee. If Blakeslee baptized him, the year is almost surely 1839, for Blakeslee spent the entire year of 1837 in Upper Canada and did not return to Oswego County until the fall of 1839. Ambrosia Branch Records lists baptisms: Emily Jane, April 17, 1839; Joel Hough, April 18, 1843; Jesse Wells Smith, November 18, 1837; Abiah Ann Smith April 17, 1841.

5. Minutes of the Ward Teachers Meetings of the Farmington Ward 2 (1868–73), February 4, 1872.

6. James Blakeslee, letter to Parley P. Pratt, Journal History of the Church (hereafter cited as Journal History), October 12, 1839, 2.

## 2 *Lot Smith*

acquainted with the Woodruff family, where Wilford Woodruff served as a teacher.

In June 1841, the Smith family left New York to gather to Nauvoo, Illinois, with other faithful Saints. Members of the family included father William (41), mother Rhoda (39), Emily Jane (19), Joel (17), Jesse Wells “Nick” (15), Abiah Ann (13), Lot (11), William “Bill” James (8), and Hyrum (6). They drove their wagon approximately thirty miles toward Rome, then westward on the old Iroquois Trail to Buffalo, traveling for seven weeks along the shore of Lake Erie to Kirtland, Ohio. While there, they met in the Kirtland temple for a Sunday meeting. The wagons continued through Ohio, onto the National Road through Indiana, and into Illinois. After a journey of nine hundred miles, the Smith family reached Nauvoo in early August.<sup>7</sup>

Most of the incoming Latter-day Saints flocked to the Illinois side of the Mississippi River where the prophet Joseph Smith (no relation) resided. However, the William O. Smiths chose the west side of the Mississippi in Iowa for their home. Three miles west of Montrose was a cluster of Latter-day Saints known as Hawley Settlement. William O. built his family a log cabin one mile west of Hawley Settlement (renamed Ambrosia) from the timber on Sugar Creek. On the morning of September 24, Lot’s Hough grandparents arrived from New York in the village. The first winter (1841-1842) that the Smiths were in Iowa was comparatively mild, but the following season was less hospitable. Ice on windows was half an inch thick by November and did not melt until April.<sup>8</sup>

Persecution and distrust of the Mormons followed the Saints as they continued to gather in Illinois and across the river in Iowa. After the prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum were both murdered on June 27, 1844, the William O. Smith family mourned with their fellow Saints. Hostilities worsened between the Mormon and non-Mormon residents. Consequently, the Latter-day Saints began preparations to leave and travel west across Iowa. The exodus began in February 1846. As each group of Saints crossed the Mississippi River, they camped temporarily just north of the Smith home in the Sugar Creek Camp.<sup>9</sup>

The Smith family did not join the exodus west until after the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple. They gathered with the Ambrosia Latter-day

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7. Joseph Lee Robinson, *History of Joseph Lee Robinson (February 18, 1811–January 1, 1893)*, 10.

8. Belle Bailey, “Severe Winters,” 1.

9. Stanley B. Kimball, “Nauvoo West: The Mormons of the Iowa Shore,” 140.

Saints on May 6 at Montrose, Iowa, in a wagon company led by Captain Daniel C. Davis. During the northward journey, Lot's uncle Riley Hough's first bugle call of the day roused the camp at six o'clock. Subsequent bugle calls announced morning prayer, cooking breakfast and milking, hitching up the teams, starting the day's journey, and halting. The Davis Camp wagons first passed through Charleston over a roadbed of logs withed together with willows and then moved on toward Farmington on planks laid for some miles. The company endured fierce storms of lightning, thunder, wind, and hail that scattered their stock and blew down their tents, but they persisted. The wagons on the prairie—saturated with spring rains—sank hub-deep in the sod-covered quagmire and required double teams at nearly every ravine. On May 16, the Ambrosia Saints arrived at Garden Grove on Grand River where they held Sunday services the next day. Among the speakers were Lot's father and Captain Davis. The following day, the Davis Camp planted their temporary settlement in a spot named Hickory Grove about twenty miles away from Garden Grove.

Two months later, in July 1846, Brigham Young dispatched Samuel L. Gully as a special messenger to the Hickory Grove Camp. Gully arrived late in the evening, after the camp had retired to bed, but they all were nonetheless called to assemble by Hough's bugle. Gully informed the group that Captain James Allen of the United States Army had advised Young that the president of the United States had authorized the muster of five hundred Mormon volunteers into the war between Mexico and the United States. Young had vigorously sought recruits for two weeks; yet more were needed. Five hundred men were to be provisioned and paid to march westward. Their wages, Gully explained, could aid the fifteen thousand destitute Latter-day Saints who were stranded beside the Missouri River, assisting them in moving westward in the spring. Pay was seven dollars per month with rations furnished, including a clothing allowance and the promise of their guns and equipment at discharge. The term of service was twelve months. Furthermore, Young had information from a reliable source that Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri intended to charge the Mormons with treason if they refused to volunteer, granting him authority to organize a militia to exterminate them. Gully closed his speech with Young's earnest appeal that the Mormon men volunteer to prevent the spilling of blood. Young said that the Church's opportunity to

serve in the US Army “was like a ram caught in a thicket and it would be better to sacrifice the ram than to have Isaac die.”<sup>10</sup>

When Gully finished, the camp exploded into indignation. They had just been driven from their homes. Why should the Saints volunteer for a government whose president had refused Joseph Smith’s pleas for justice? Yet how could they ignore the counsel of their current leader? After Captain Davis reemphasized the urgency of Gully’s message, a dozen or so men volunteered. Gully urged the volunteers to hurry westward to the Missouri River to join the battalion before their departure. The entire Hickory Grove group broke camp and accompanied the volunteers to the river. The day before they arrived at the Bluffs, another call came for more volunteers. Lot’s father stated that others might do as they pleased, but as for him, he would not volunteer—neither would he encourage any of his sons to enlist.<sup>11</sup> However, sixteen-year-old Lot did volunteer to join the group of seventeen men and boys.<sup>12</sup>

About noon on Sunday, July 19, the Davis Camp wagons pulled up at Miller’s Hollow—later known as Council Bluffs and Kaneshville.<sup>13</sup> Captain Davis told the Hickory Camp volunteers to hustle to the rendezvous on the Missouri River near Trader’s Point. Smith and the others hiked eleven miles down the Missouri River for muster the next day. As some of the last to arrive, the Hickory Grove volunteers completed the ranks of Company E under the leadership of Captain Davis.<sup>14</sup> Lot’s name was recorded as Luther Smith. Whether Luther was a nickname, or if he used the name to not displease his father, Smith was now one of the youngest privates in the Mormon Battalion.

The Hickory Grove Camp volunteers hiked downriver through rain to the whitewashed log trading post at Sarpee’s Point to receive their personal supplies. Trader Peter Sarpee supplied the Mormon Battalion enlist-

10. Samuel Hollister Roger, *Journal of Samuel Hollister Rogers*, July 5, 1846.

11. James Van Nostrand Williams, “Life Sketch of James Van Nostrand Williams,” 24.

12. Williams, 25. Along with Captain Davis (42), other recruits were Edward Bunker (23), Edwin Calkins (26), Newman Bulkley (28), Abraham Day (28), Daniel Q. Dennett (37), Isaac Harrison (30), Charles Hopkins (36), Hiram Judd (24), Zodak K. Judd (18), William Lance (Lancehall) (17), Harlum McBride (21), David Pettigrew (54), Alva Phelps (31), Thomas Richardson (42), and James V. Williams (15).

13. Williams, “Life Sketch of James Van Nostrand Williams,” 25.

14. Zodak Knapp Judd, “Reminiscences of Zadock Knapp Judd,” 17.

ees with one blanket each, as well as coffee, sugar, flour, and bacon drawn in bulk for each six-man mess. Sarpee also provided utensils for each mess of one tin pan, one frying pan, one spoon, and one butcher knife. Each man received a tin cup.<sup>15</sup> Rain continued the next morning. In sodden clothing, Smith's Company E formed a column and marched five miles to join the other four Mormon companies who were camped at Mosquito Creek. From there, the battalion began their southward march along the Missouri River's east bank toward Fort Leavenworth—headquarters of Stephen W. Kearny's Army of the West.

Eight days later the battalion marched double file onto the main street of St. Joseph, Missouri, where many of the residents were astonished that the Mormons had responded to the government's offer to accept volunteers.<sup>16</sup> They taunted the Mormon soldiers with phrases like, "You'll never see California," and "The government intends to send you to Old Mexico, and you never need expect to see home again."<sup>17</sup> On the evening of July 30, a wild windstorm tore through the encampment. Lightning struck and trees crashed to the ground in every direction around the camp, but not one tree fell within the camp—only the tents were blown down.<sup>18</sup> Early the next morning, the battalion marched through the riverside town of Weston, Missouri, in a double column with three fifers and two drummers at the head.<sup>19</sup> The next afternoon, the battalion crossed over the Missouri to Fort Leavenworth.

On August 4, Smith with the boys of Companies C, D, and E crowded around the quartermaster's storehouse for issuance of arms. Smith was issued a musket. Additional equipment included a large cartridge box with a heavy two-and-a-half-inch-wide leather belt to carry over the left shoulder, a similar belt with bayonet and scabbard attached to carry over the right shoulder, and a wide waist belt. Each soldier was also issued a knapsack for clothing with straps over the shoulders and under the arms with a long strap to hold the soldier's bedding. Also to be swung over the shoulder: a powder flask, a round three-inch canteen which held three

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15. Henry Bigler, "Extracts From the Journal of Henry W. Bigler," 36.

16. Elijah Allen, "Elijah Allen Autobiographical Sketch, circa 1848"; William Hyde, *The Private Journal of William Hyde*, 19–20; Henry Standage, diary, July 30, 1846.

17. Allen, "Autobiographical Sketch."

18. Henry Standage, diary, July 30, 1846; Azariah Smith, journals, July 30, 1846.

19. William Bryam Pace, journal. 10–11.

pints of water, and a haversack to carry rations.<sup>20</sup> Altogether, the soldier was nearly covered from shoulder to waist, “harnessed like a mule” and “burdened too much to either fight or run.”<sup>21</sup>

After almost two weeks at the fort, the Mormon Battalion marched out of Leavenworth down the dusty Santa Fe Trail to join General Kearny in the conquest of California in the Mexican-American War. The battalion companies wound over the prairie in alphabetical order to the Kansas River. “The road was a foot deep with sand and dust,” Henry W. Bigler later wrote.<sup>22</sup> The soldiers learned what it meant to carry a heavy musket and all the encumbrances of a foot soldier on a hot, dusty day.<sup>23</sup> At the Council Grove camp, Lieutenant Andrew J. Smith brought orders that he was to lead the battalion to Santa Fe. With him was surgeon George B. Sanderson of Missouri. A letter also arrived from Young that cautioned the soldiers about remedies for illness. He said to “let calomel alone, and to use faith, that there was no promise of life if we did use it.”<sup>24</sup> The column of infantry had hardly left Council Grove before Doctor Sanderson prescribed his cure-all drug: calomel. The soldiers followed Young’s counsel and threw away the paper cachets that contained the powders.<sup>25</sup> When the doctor discovered their actions, he swore he would cut the throat of anyone who refused his calomel and arsenic.<sup>26</sup>

The daily marches were extended from twelve to fifteen miles, and then to twenty to twenty-five miles. On September 8, the battalion began a more than one-hundred-mile march up the Arkansas River. At this point, Lieutenant Smith reduced the food rations to two-thirds.<sup>27</sup> To shorten the distance to Santa Fe by a hundred miles, Lieutenant Smith led the battalion on a waterless fifty-mile march across the Cimarron Desert, a dangerous section of the trail inhabited by marauding Comanche.<sup>28</sup>

20. Judd, “Reminiscences,” 24.

21. Azariah Smith, journals; James S. Brown, *Giant of the Lord*, 40.

22. Henry William Bigler, *Diary of a Mormon in California*, August 13, 1846.

23. Robert W. Whitworth, “From the Mississippi to the Pacific, An Englishman in the Mormon Battalion, the Journal of Robert Whitworth,” August 15, 1846.

24. Henry Standage, diary, August 29, 1846.

25. Henry Standage, diary, September 12, 1846.

26. Hyde, *Private Journal*, September 3, 1846.

27. Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War 1846–1847*, 161.

28. Rogers, *Journal*, September 16, 1846.

Early in the morning of September 17, Howard Egan and John D. Lee drove a mule-drawn trap into camp. Lee and Egan had been sent as agents to receive the pay due the battalion. Since the paymaster had no cash to disburse, Lee and Egan accompanied the battalion to Santa Fe.<sup>29</sup> After they crossed the Arkansas River, the thirsty soldiers gratefully found rainwater still standing in several buffalo wallows mixed with buffalo urine and dung. Only a few sickened.<sup>30</sup> For the next five days, the Mormon foot soldiers slogged up the Cimarron River bottom, pulling their weakening mule teams through the heavy sand.<sup>31</sup> As they continued across the desert, only the wide path of wagon ruts marked the trail. Two tiny elevations known as Rabbit Ears peeped over the horizon to guide the travelers.<sup>32</sup> About ten days out of Santa Fe, the soldiers' march increased to an average of twenty-seven miles a day. The soldiers were sore-footed and gaunt, their coats were worn through, and their shoulders galled from carrying muskets and cartridge boxes.<sup>33</sup>

The battalion camped near Wagon Mound, a landmark that resembled the silhouette of a covered wagon and team. Lieutenant Smith proposed that the fifty ablest men from each company take the best teams and proceed by forced march the last hundred and forty miles to Santa Fe. All sick, disabled men and weakened teams were to be left behind.<sup>34</sup> The soldiers grieved at the separation and named the place the Vale of Tears. The column of the forward division wound up the valley of the Pecos River past an adobe and stone ruin of many compartments now known as Pecos National Historical Park. The tall doorways in the sometimes thirty-foot-high walls were topped with lintels carved with strange writing. Some of the battalion members attributed the building to the Nephite civilization referred to in *The Book of Mormon*.<sup>35</sup>

The battalion arrived in Santa Fe on October 9. Three days later, a new commander for the Mormon Battalion was announced. Captain

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29. Henry Standage, diary, September 17, 1846.

30. Rogers, *Journal*, September 18, 1846; Henry Standage, diary, September 18, 1846.

31. Alexander Majors, *Seventy Years on the Frontier, Alexander Major's Memoirs of Lifetime on the Border*, 75.

32. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 161.

33. Hyde, *Private Journal*, September 30, 1846.

34. Hyde, October 3, 1846.

35. Robert S. Bliss, "Journal of Robert S. Bliss with the Mormon Battalion," October 11, 1846.

Philip St. George Cooke, now Lieutenant Colonel appointed by Kearny, replaced Lieutenant Smith. While in Santa Fe, Colonel Cooke suspected that a company of U. S. cavalry might steal some corral fence poles to use for firewood, and ordered Lot Smith to bayonet any thieves. The task proved impossible. While Smith guarded one side, the cavalry hitched poles on the other side and rode off. When Cooke saw the poles gone, he asked Smith why he had disobeyed orders. Smith replied, "If you expect me to bayonet United States troops for taking a pole on the enemy's ground to make a fire of, you mistake your man."<sup>36</sup> Smith expected punishment but was only placed under guard.<sup>37</sup> The battalion remained in Santa Fe about ten days while Cooke tried to assemble adequate supplies for the march westward; however, he was only able to gather a sixty-day ration of flour, sugar, coffee, and salt; a thirty-day ration of salt pork; and a twenty-day ration of soap.<sup>38</sup> As the battalion prepared to leave Santa Fe, Doctor Sanderson determined the fitness of the men for further service. The eighty-six disqualified men, along with most of the women and children, were ordered to Bent's Fort [Pueblo, Colorado] to winter on the Arkansas.<sup>39</sup> On the same day, the enlisted men each drew two dollars and sixty cents in cash and the balance of two-and-a-half-months' pay in checks.<sup>40</sup> Lee and Egan left to carry the payroll to Council Bluffs.<sup>41</sup>

The battalion soldiers marched out of Santa Fe to begin their trek down the Rio Grande and on across the continent to the Pacific Coast. In addition to the assignment to bring a fighting force to California, Cooke received orders from General Kearny to lay out a wagon route across the continent.<sup>42</sup> The general sent to Cooke three experienced guides to assist: Pauline or Paulino Weaver, Antoine Leroux, and Jean Baptiste Charbonneau. Since Colonel Cooke had been unable to obtain sufficient provisions in Santa Fe, two days after departure he cut the rations from two pounds of beef per day to a pound and a half and reduced flour from a pound to three quarters.<sup>43</sup> Before the battalion turned from the

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36. B. H. Roberts, *The Mormon Battalion: Its History and Achievements*, 85.

37. Roberts, 85.

38. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 174.

39. Andrew Jensen, *Documentary History of the Church*, October 15, 1846. .

40. Elijah Elmer, journal, October 16, 1846.

41. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 174.

42. Philip St. George Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California: An Historical and Personal Narrative (1878)*, 86.

43. Guy M. Keysor, journal, November 7, 1846.

Rio Grande, the commander twice more cut the rations. Consequently, as they marched through the towns along the Rio Grande riverside, the hungry soldiers traded clothing, combs, pocket mirrors, brass buttons, and the like for peaches, grapes, apples, melons, and onions.<sup>44</sup> The heavily-laden wagons sank a foot deep in the soft sand in the march along the Rio Grande. With long ropes attached to the wagons, as many as thirty men heaved and hauled with the mules. Near the current town of Derry, New Mexico, the colonel further lightened the baggage wagons by discarding one-third of the tents, one-third of the mess pans and heavy camp kettles, and all the tent poles. The soldiers cooked nine to a mess, slept nine to a tent, and muskets were used for tent poles.<sup>45</sup>

The battalion made the arduous fifteen-mile climb out of the valley of the Rio Grande up to the semi-arid high plateaus of what is now western New Mexico to a waterhole hidden under the north rim of a steep-walled canyon. Members of the battalion named it the Lost Well. At the base of the north wall, a nine-foot wide round hole provided a seemingly inexhaustible supply of water. Huge masses of volcanic rock blocked the passage of men and animals through the short canyon to the waterhole.<sup>46</sup> Cooke sat for two hours on an overhang above the well, directed the watering, and cursed its slowness.<sup>47</sup>

Water determined the battalion's route. The command camped at Ojo de Vaca (Cow Spring) beside the Copper Mine Road that led south to Janos in Sonora and north to the Santa Rita copper mines. With no known water on the proposed route, Cooke and his council decided to turn south to Janos in the morning.<sup>48</sup> David Pettigrew and Levi W. Hancock, both older men of Company E, could not support the decision. They believed Doctor Sanderson and some of the officers wanted to go deeper into Mexico for tobacco, wine, whiskey, and other amenities of civilization. That night the two visited each tent in the encampment and asked each mess to pray that the battalion might not go farther into Mexico but on to California.<sup>49</sup> The next morning, the battalion had hardly marched two miles before the road veered slightly to the southeast. Cooke

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44. Bigler, *Diary*, October 29, 1846.

45. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 202.

46. For expanded details, see Carmen Smith, "The Lost Well of the Mormon Battalion Rediscovered," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 57(3): 277–86.

47. David Pettigrew, journal, November 13, 1846.

48. Philip St. George Cooke, "Cooke's Journal," November 19, 1846.

49. David Pettigrew, journal, November 20, 1846.

called a halt. He looked down the road to the southeast and then to his intended direction to the west. He then rose in his stirrups, and ordered his bugler to blow the right, saying that he was not going all around the world to get to California. He was ordered to go to California, and would go there or die in the attempt.<sup>50</sup> Pettigrew heard the end of the pronouncement and exclaimed, “God bless the Colonel!” The colonel’s pleased look at Pettigrew’s remark is one of the few instances when his face betrayed anything but sternness in the battalion’s presence.<sup>51</sup>

The battalion experienced extreme temperatures as they crossed the desert. The sun blistered the soldiers’ faces in the day and, at night, water froze an inch thick.<sup>52</sup> After two full days of marching without water, Charbonneau promised the battalion they would find water in six miles.<sup>53</sup> They marched twelve miles before suffering a painful disappointment.<sup>54</sup> There was water—or rather, there *had* been about a barrelful of water in a hole in some rocks at the foot of a mountain (probably Black Mountain). But the rocks contained no water when the infantrymen arrived. The colonel and his staff had reached the water first and served themselves. Then they had allowed their mounts to finish it off. The foot soldiers crowded around the hollow and dipped with spoons and sucked through quills for a mouthful of water.<sup>55</sup> The lack of water began to be critical to survival.

The soldiers arrived at a mile-wide and thirty-mile long smooth bed of white sand called Las Playas (Sand Beaches). Smith recalled:

One day when we had marched a long distance without water, and nearly famished, we beheld a dry lake at a distance, sometimes called a mirage. It looked so much like a lake of water to those who never saw one that we had full assurance of speedy relief. . . . It stimulated us to press on, but to our horror it was only dry land, and we traveled fully six miles across this delusion and still found no water, and night had fully come.<sup>56</sup>

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50. Bigler, *Diary*, November 20, 1846.

51. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 207.

52. Cooke, “Cooke’s Journal,” November 19, 1846.

53. Cooke, November 22, 1846.

54. Henry Standage, diary, November 23, 1846.

55. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 208; Frank Alfred Golder, Thomas A. Bailey and J. Lyman Smith, *The March of the Mormon Battalion From Council Bluffs to California, Taken from the Journal of Henry Standage*, November 23, 1846.

56. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:803. See also Henry Standage, diary, November 23, 1846.

When the men found willow or wire grass, they began to dig. Private Smith helped dig with energy. A ragged shirt hung from his shoulders, an Indian blanket wrapped around his lower torso substituted for pants, and rawhide cut from the hocks of an ox encased his feet.<sup>57</sup> Smith recalled: “[D]igging down about eight feet . . . we found abundance [of water] to supply all our wants.”<sup>58</sup>

Smith was sent with a keg of water on a mule to the many soldiers who lay back on the trail. He was ordered to give the first drink of water to the last man and then to continue back to the company. He passed the first few soldiers but soon relented to the pleading men.<sup>59</sup> Four battalion men—William J. Johnston, Azariah Smith, Henry Bigler, and a battalion member identified only as Brown—related their experience with Smith and the keg of water. They told that one of the men played dead until Lot poured a little water on his mouth. Suddenly revived, the man grabbed the canteen and began to gulp. He held on so forcefully that Lot dragged the man along the ground and finally put his foot on his chest to pull the canteen away.<sup>60</sup> Lot Smith later related:

I watered them all and had some left, so I had a drink when I got through a distance of twelve or fourteen miles. I was careful in giving them water, though many drank quite heartily. The Lord surely blessed my little keg of water in a marvelous manner. For my disobedience to orders, I was tied behind a wagon and made to walk in trying circumstances which rather humiliated me, but I felt that I could not have done less.<sup>61</sup>

Henry W. Jackson of Company D said that Smith was tied to the wagon “until the forenoon march was ended. Colonel Cooke, informed of the situation, countermanded the order of Lieutenant George P. Dykes, sparing Smith the [afternoon’s] unjust punishment.”<sup>62</sup>

The men were not fully recovered from the ravages of thirst as they left Las Playas. After they passed through Animas Valley and on to the current

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57. Journal History, April 9, 1902; *Deseret News*, April 16, 1902. This footwear had been made by skinning a section of hide from above and below the gambrel joint of an ox leg so that it retained the shape of a tube. The lower end was sewed shut with sinews. The natural crook in the hide partially fit the heel. See Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 245.

58. Jenson, “Lot Smith,” *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:803.

59. Jenson, 1:804.

60. Samuel Claridge Young, “Treasures of Samuel Claridge Young,” 36.

61. Jenson, “Lot Smith,” *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:804.

62. Celia Smith, *The Story of Eliza Ann Dibble and Her Three Husbands*.

southwest corner of New Mexico's border with Arizona, they ascended the rugged Guadalupe Mountain Range. On November 28, they camped on the continental divide: the "American Back Bone."<sup>63</sup> The steep descent from the Backbone was pronounced impossible by the guides. Yet, for a half-mile, the soldiers let down all the wagons with ropes. Only one wagon slipped into the ravine and was demolished into kindling wood and scrap metal.<sup>64</sup>

The Mormon Battalion's only battle was fought in the San Pedro Valley. Before the battalion left the Missouri River, Brigham Young had promised that "not one of those who might enlist would fall by the hands of the nation's foe, that their only fighting would be with wild beasts."<sup>65</sup> Though Smith's role in this battle is not recorded, no one escaped the excitement. The battalion marched in loose order alongside the San Pedro River where some abandoned ranch cattle remained—mostly bulls. Cooke permitted those in the front guard who carried Yeagers to lay in a supply of beef.<sup>66</sup> The ruckus caused other bulls to rush out of the river bottom. One bull caught Amos Cox and ripped a four-inch gash under his thigh with its horn as he was tossed ten feet in the air over the beast's back.<sup>67</sup> Although the bull was shot twice, he dashed through the column and escaped. Another bull attacked the rear wheels of a loaded wagon so forcefully that it lifted the wagon and pushed it off the road. The same bull then plunged into a six-mule team, disemboweled a mule, and ran off. After the dust and smoke of the chaos cleared, someone showed Cooke the heart of one of the bulls that was shot through with two balls. Another had been shot six times.<sup>68</sup>

As the battalion marched closer to the Mexican fort at Tucson, Cooke learned that Commandant Comaduran would not allow the American battalion to pass through the town. Since any other route would cause in-

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63. Henry Standage, diary, November 28, 1846; Journal of Robert S. Bliss, November 29 and December 1, 1846.

64. Brown, *Giant of the Lord*, 65–66.

65. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 118.

66. Guy Messiah Keysor, "Battalion Journal"; Elijah Elmer, journal, December 11, 1846. A Yaeger/Yeager/Yager (from the German Jaeger) is a .54 caliber US Rifle, the first general issue percussion rifle manufactured by a government arsenal. William Dresser, letter to Carmen Smith, National Rifle Association of America, July 9, 1974.

67. Cooke, *Conquest*, 219.

68. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 219–20.

convenience and delay, Cooke decided to proceed through Tucson despite the threat.<sup>69</sup> Colonel Cooke held a parley with Mexican soldiers sent from the presidio of Tucson on December 15. The Mexican sergeant and soldiers again informed the colonel that his battalion was not to pass through Tucson.<sup>70</sup> When a treaty of the surrender of Tucson was finally negotiated, the Mormon Battalion marched eighteen miles to Tucson the next day without food or water.<sup>71</sup> No surrender took place. The commandant, his troops, and most of the inhabitants had fled.<sup>72</sup>

The Mormon soldiers established camp a half-mile beyond the town near a canal of water.<sup>73</sup> Cooke and some of the soldiers returned to the presidio where a small ceremony completed the formal possession of Tucson. Christopher Layton and Samuel Lewis of Company C stuck a fifteen to twenty-foot maguey stalk that bore the American flag into an old cannon barrel and, according to his descendants, raised the first flag of the United States in Tucson, Sonora, Mexico.<sup>74</sup>

The battalion left the Tucson campsite on December 18 to begin a march northwest across the desert to the Gila River. Water for both men and mules was almost nonexistent. The battalion abandoned all semblance of military order; each man traveled when he could and rested when he had no strength.<sup>75</sup> At the end of the second day, Sergeant Elijah Elmer pronounced the previous forty-eight hours as “the hardest pull we have had yet for man and beast.”<sup>76</sup> Cooke described his soldiers: “They are almost barefooted, carry their muskets, knapsacks, etc., and do not grumble.”<sup>77</sup> The more than hundred-mile journey toward the Gila River so exhausted the men that Cooke remarked that “any other company under like circumstances would have mutinized.”<sup>78</sup>

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69. Cooke, “Cooke’s Journal,” December 9, 12, 13, 1846; Bigler, *Diary*, December 12, 1846; Hyde, *Private Journal*, December 13, 1846.

70. Cooke, *Conquest*, 148; Henry Standage, diary, December 15, 1846.

71. Cooke, *Conquest*, 151; Henry Standage, diary, December 16, 1846.

72. David Pettigrew, Journal, December 16, 1846.

73. Cooke, “Cooke’s Journal,” December 16, 1846.

74. Max T. Layton and Ed Moody, interview by Carmen R. Smith, February 18, 1974. In author’s possession.

75. David Pettigrew, journal, December 17 and 18, 1846.

76. Elijah Elmer, journal, December 19, 1846.

77. Cooke, “Cooke’s Journal,” December 20, 1846.

78. Hyde, *Private Journal*, December 20, 1846.

The battalion reached and trailed down the Gila River. On December 28, the colonel sent five guides to travel three hundred miles down the Gila and over the desert to the ranch of Juan Jose (John Trumbull) Warner in California to bring back fresh mules and eight to ten beeves.<sup>79</sup> After they crossed the Colorado River, the troops traveled over the hundred-mile Colorado Desert where they endured more hot days, cold nights, hunger, and thirst. At some point along the march, Smith and others were so hungry that when they found a pepper tree, they peeled the bark off and ate it. It did not agree with Smith and he never wanted pepper again. Legend holds that throughout the rest of his life, Lot did not allow pepper at his table.<sup>80</sup> The soldiers anxiously awaited the beef from Warner's Ranch. At each day's campsite, Smith climbed the nearest eminence to look westward for any rising dust of the coming beef.<sup>81</sup> Finally, on the evening of January 15, a train of ten beeves and forty-two mules arrived.<sup>82</sup> A butchered beef fed the men.

The battalion arrived at Warner's outpost ranch and, after a week, ascended a bluff and viewed the Pacific Ocean for the first time. Like Smith, many of the soldiers had never seen an ocean. The marching halted for twenty minutes and hardly a diary failed to express joy and wonder at the ocean view.<sup>83</sup> Several more miles brought them to the Mission of San Diego de Alcalá (San Diego). The battalion encamped on a flat a mile below the mission—a collection of whitewashed adobe buildings with disintegrating walls and neglected gardens.<sup>84</sup> The date was January 29, 1847. Colonel Cooke's Orders No. 1 dated the following day gave an apt description of their march:

The lieutenant-colonel commanding congratulates the battalion on their safe arrival on the shore of the Pacific ocean, and the conclusion of the march of over two thousand miles. History may be searched in vain for an equal

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79. Cooke, "Cooke's Journal," December 28, 1846. The word "beeves" is the plural of "beef."

80. Maude S. Burton, as told by Melissa Packer Smith, September 24, 1980.

81. Alden B. Smith II, interview by Carmen R. Smith, audio recording, January 9, 1984. In author's possession.

82. Henry Standage, diary, January 15, 1847.

83. Henry G. Boyle, reminiscences, January 27, 1847.

84. Cooke, "Cooke's Journal," January 29, 1847; Journal of Robert S. Bliss, January 29, 1847; Nathaniel V. Jones, diary, February 1, 1847.

march of infantry.<sup>85</sup> Nine-tenths of it has been through a wilderness where nothing but savages and wild beasts are found, or deserts where, for want of water, there is no living creature. There, with almost hopeless labor, we have dug deep wells which the future traveler will enjoy. Without a guide who had traversed them, we have ventured into trackless prairies where water was not found for several marches. With crowbar and pick and ax in hand we have worked our way over mountains which seemed to defy aught save the wild goat, and hewed a passage through a chasm of living rock more narrow than our wagons. To bring these first wagons to the Pacific, we have preserved the strength of our mules by herding them ever over large tracts, which you have laboriously guarded without loss. The garrisons of four *presidios* of Sonora, concentrated within the walls of Tucson, gave us no pause. We drove them out with their artillery, but our intercourse with the citizens was unmarked by a single act of injustice. Thus, marching half naked and half fed, and living upon wild animals, we have discovered and made a road of great value to our country. Arrived at the first settlement of California after a single day's rest, you cheerfully turned off from the route to this point of promised repose to enter upon a campaign, and meet, as we believed, the approach of the enemy; and this, too, without even salt to season your sole subsistence of fresh meat.<sup>86</sup>

General Kearny ordered Cooke and his battalion northward to garrison the San Luis Rey Mission strategically located between San Diego and Los Angeles. The battalion cleaned out the mission's filthy, flea-ridden rooms and, for some time, forty-five men of Smith's Company E crowded into one windowless 18 x 20 ft. room with no fireplace, where they cooked, ate, and slept until Cooke gave them permission to use some of the other empty rooms.<sup>87</sup> The battalion had been six weeks at San Luis Rey (February 3 to March 19) when the closing acts in the conquest of California began to be played out. The Mormon Battalion marched to Los Angeles and was crucial in foiling John C. Fremont's unauthorized grasp for power in the emerging government of California when their presence forced Fremont to surrender in early April.

Lot Smith attended at least one bullfight in Los Angeles. A contemporary, Elizabeth Kane, wrote that Smith "put down a bullfight."<sup>88</sup> Smith

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85. The Mormon Battalion's infantry march was not exceeded until 1934–35 when Mao Zedong led a one-year, six-thousand-mile march from southern to northwestern China.

86. Cooke, "Cooke's Journal," January 29, 1847.

87. Bigler, *Diary*, February 3, 1847; Henry Standage, diary, February 14, 1847.

88. Elizabeth Wood Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey Through Utah to Arizona*, 23–24.

told the Spaniards that their bullfights were cruel and cowardly. To show true bravery, he said, they should ride the bull instead of killing it. The men answered that no one could ride a maddened bull. According to Kane, Smith then leaped upon the bull and, by holding onto its horns, rode it around the ring until the bull tossed him into the canopied box of the town's leading family.

The wagon road route established by Cooke and the Mormon Battalion along the thirty-second parallel profoundly affected the history of the Far Southwest. Thousands of gold seekers traveled the route to reach the California gold fields in 1849 and 1850. Political leaders promoted the building of a southern transcontinental rail line on the route, thus necessitating the Gadsden Purchase in 1853. The Mormon Battalion's year of service ended and they were discharged on July 16, 1847. Four days after the discharge in Los Angeles, Smith was one of eighty-one battalion soldiers who enlisted for six months' more service to be known as the Mormon Volunteers who were ordered to San Diego where they spent time refurbishing the town.<sup>89</sup> Henry G. Boyle wrote: "We did their blacksmithing, put up a bakery, made and repaired carts, and, in fine, did all we could to benefit ourselves as well as the citizens. . . . The citizens became so attached to us that before our term of service expired, they got up a petition to the governor of California to use his influence to keep us in the service."<sup>90</sup>

The Mormon Volunteers were relieved of duty on March 14, 1848. Smith and his friends Harlum McBride, Edwin Calkins, and Edwin Walker sought work. The group of young men took a job building four miles of adobe wall fence at Williams's Ranch located some eighty or ninety miles northwest of San Diego.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, gold had been discovered in northern California by fellow members of the battalion. When some of their former comrades brought the news to the ranch, Smith and his companions headed to the goldfields.<sup>92</sup> They passed Sutter's Fort and headed twenty-five miles up the American River to Mormon Island located ten or fifteen miles below Coloma.<sup>93</sup> Profitable placers had already been claimed, so Smith and his companions continued northward and eventually settled on Feather River. The boys found merchandise, food,

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89. Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 298; Military Service during the Mexican War, 1846–1848, Davis Company A, Mormon Volunteers.

90. Henry G. Boyle, quoted in Tyler, *History of Mormon Battalion*, 330–31.

91. Andrew Jackson Workman History, 168.

92. Workman, 168.

93. Workman, 169.

lodging, and services exorbitantly priced. Flour was a dollar a pound.<sup>94</sup> According to Smith's son Alden, his father did not dig or pan gold; he instead raised vegetables in the Feather River Valley where no irrigation was necessary, freighted garden produce and supplies to the isolated miners, and took gold in pay.<sup>95</sup>

By the end of the season, they had made their pile and planned to reunite with their families in the Great Salt Lake Valley. The group included Lot Smith (18), Harlum McBride (25), Edwin Calkins (28), Jerome Zabriskie (20), Andrew J. Workman (24) and his brother Cornelius Workman, Philo Carter (20), Philander Fletcher (25), Edwin Walker (20), and Hyrum Fellows (18).<sup>96</sup> They started out in November 1848. Fifty miles into the journey along the new wagon road through the Sierra Nevadas, Calkins tried a short cut on an Indian trail. He did not return. After they hunted for Calkins for two or three days, his companions came across a "Digger Indian" riding Calkins's horse.<sup>97</sup> They shot him and took the horse. After this incident, the young men returned down the mountain to Mormon Island to buy more arms and ammunition and return to their course. However, they learned that they had started too late in the season to cross the snowy Sierras.<sup>98</sup> Still determined to go, they decided to take the southern route that was open all year. They retraced their route to the Williams Ranch near San Bernardino and, after a few weeks there, met with Ebenezer Hanks, a former sergeant in the Mormon Battalion, who had arrived from Great Salt Lake City. He informed the boys that their party was too small to defend themselves against Indians on the southern route. While they worked and waited to join a larger company, five thousand dollars in gold dust was stolen from the Workman brothers.

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94. Workman, 168.

95. Alden B. Smith II, interview by Carmen R. Smith, audio recording, January 9, 1984. It is likely that Smith provided produce to Mary Ann Blanks Smithson Harmon, who operated the first hotel in Auburn—a gathering place for Latter-day Saint missionaries. One of her daughters, Paralee America, would become the mother of Mary Merinda Garn who later married Smith.

96. Andrew Jackson Workman History, 168. All had reenlisted under Captain Daniel C. Davis as California Volunteers except Cornelius Workman.

97. "Digger Indian" was a pejorative used to refer to any number of American Indian peoples, especially of the Great Basin, California, and the Southwest, who dug roots for food.

98. Andrew Jackson Workman History, 169.

They did not want to return to Great Salt Lake City empty-handed, so the group returned to the mines for more gold.<sup>99</sup>

At the end of the summer in 1849, the group again headed for Utah over the Sierra Nevadas. Smith added several California horses to his string and for several weeks on the trail, the young men evaded robbers and Indians. As Smith's two pack mules heavily laden with gold crossed a river, one of the mules lost its footing. Too loaded to rise, it drowned. In only a moment of misfortune, Smith lost thousands of dollars and one good mule.<sup>100</sup> The small company rode their horses over the route that offered grass and water with only two small tracts of desert to cross until they reached the settlements of the Saints.<sup>101</sup> Smith and his group likely arrived in November 1849.<sup>102</sup> More than three years had passed since adventure and duty had called Smith from Hickory Grove to join the Mormon Battalion. His experiences would impact the rest of his life with his fellow Saints.

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99. Workman, 170.

100. Kate B. Carter, *The Mormon Battalion*, 139. Though circumstances point to the Feather River, some versions mention the Malad River, which at that time was a large river capable of floating away a wagon.

101. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Reproduction of Hubert Howe Bancroft's History of Utah 1540-1886*, 751.

102. William Holmes Walker, *The Life Incidents and Travels of Elder William Holmes Walker*, 16. Through research in DUP publications, a fall 1849 arrival date of Mormon Volunteers who served with Smith was found for Jerome Zabriskie, Philo Carter, and Harlum McBride. These men may have been in the same group.

## CHAPTER 2

# Minute Men

Smith's family lived in North Cottonwood (renamed Farmington) located sixteen miles north of Great Salt Lake City.<sup>1</sup> Smith's father had built two cabins on North Cottonwood Creek (later named Big Creek). The double (two-log-length) cabin of Lot's older brother, Joel, stood vacant awaiting Joel's return from the gold mines.<sup>2</sup> To the south, in a two-room log cabin by a large spring, lived Lot's oldest sister Emily Jane and her husband Allen Burk.<sup>3</sup> Lot would live with his sister and her husband, along with his younger brother Hyrum.<sup>4</sup> His father had died the previous midsummer and had bequeathed a yoke of steers to Lot upon his return from California.<sup>5</sup> Smith's mother had already passed away in January 1845 back in Iowa.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after his arrival, Smith continued south toward Great Salt Lake City to seek the office of President Brigham Young. Upon finding the Church office, a one-story, twelve-by-eighteen-foot adobe building with a slanting board roof covered with dirt and brush, nineteen-year-old Smith brought in his California earnings and offered his entire six or seven thousand dollars' worth of gold to the Church.<sup>7</sup> Though funds were critical to the new settlement, Young accepted only one-third of the gold and advised Smith to give one-third to his family and keep one-third to further his own interests.<sup>8</sup> Smith purchased a sixty-acre farm in the northern part of North Cottonwood which he soon traded in partial payment for Thomas Grover's farm on Cherry Creek (later Steed Creek) in the south-

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1. Glen M. Leonard, *A History of Farmington, Utah, to 1890*, 24.

2. Joseph Lee Robinson, *History of Joseph Lee Robinson*, July 1, 1849.

3. Leonard, *History of Farmington*, 23.

4. 1850 Utah Census.

5. Robinson, *History of Joseph Lee Robinson*, July 1, 1849.

6. George Alma Smith, records, LDS Family History Library.

7. Daniel H. Wells, "Narrative," 124; Andrew Jenson, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:629.

8. Nannie Smith Ashcroft [Lot's daughter], "Lot Smith," 1, and Miss Nona Smith [Lot's granddaughter] as quoted in Philip Smith, "Lot Smith," 3; Zelda E. Tidwell, "William Orville Smith 1800-1849," 1.



Lot Smith's two-story stone home in Farmington, Utah. Left to right: Jane Walker Smith in buggy, Jane Hess (granddaughter of Lot and Jane), Lucy Effie Smith Palmer (youngest daughter of Lot and Jane), Nephi Palmer (husband of Effie), Alta and Andrea Palmer (daughters of Jane's daughter, Margaret). Courtesy Zelda E. Tidwell.

ern part of town.<sup>9</sup> There he built an impressive two-story stone house that overlooked his pasture and the creek.

On February 2, 1850, Governor Young called for volunteers to rescue the colonists in Fort Utah in what would be known as the Provo War.<sup>10</sup> Mormons had accidentally killed the Ute called "Old Bishop," an incident later credited with inciting warfare.<sup>11</sup> When the Utes demanded the mur-

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9. Production of Agriculture in the County of Davis, State of Deseret, during the year ending June 1st, 1850, Schedule; Stephen E. Grover and Dean R. Grover, *Thomas Grover, His Ancestors and Descendants*; Margaret Steed Hess, *My Farmington, A History of Farmington, Utah, 1847–1976*, 62.

10. Writer's Program (US) Works Progress Administration (WPA), Utah, "Provo: Pioneer Mormon City," 55.

11. Marilyn McMeen Miller and John Cafton Moffitt, *Provo, A Story of People In Motion*, 8; George Washington Bean, *Autobiography of George W. Bean, a Utah Pioneer of 1847 and His Family Records*, 56. The Ute "Old Bishop" acquired his title because of his resemblance, both in looks and in gestures, to Bishop Newell K. Whitney, the second presiding bishop of the Church.

derer, and no reparation was offered by the Whites, Big Elk's Timpanogos Utes camped about a mile upriver from Fort Utah and attacked almost daily. The seventy Ute warriors also held James Bean's double log cabin located on a low hill. From the cabin, the Utes could fire on any advance to their river bottom position.<sup>12</sup> The settlers in the fort looked for assistance from the Nauvoo Legion of Utah Territory.<sup>13</sup> Smith was among the volunteers who enlisted to help in the conflict under Captain George D. Grant.<sup>14</sup> About one hundred men of Captain Grant's Minute Men—both infantry and cavalry—began a thirty-mile forced march southward on February 7, arriving after midnight.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the day of February 15, Nauvoo Legion forces on both sides of the river tried to dislodge the Utes, but the Utes resisted every attack. The next morning, the Utes shot and killed Joseph Higbee, and several others were wounded.<sup>16</sup> In midafternoon, Captain Grant asked for volunteers to attack Bean's cabin in a swift charge. To approach the rear of the cabin, the men would be exposed to the Ute gunfire. Fifteen men were chosen with Lieutenant William H. Kimball in command. Among them were Lot Smith, Robert T. Burton, James Ferguson, John R. Murdock, Ephraim K. Hanks, A. J. Pendleton, Orson K. Whitney, Elijah "Barney" Ward, Henry M. Johnson, and Isham Flynn.<sup>17</sup> The volunteers followed the course of the river under cover for a short distance, and then followed a short ravine that partially concealed them. When they reached more level ground, they spurred their horses and dashed for the rear of the cabin.<sup>18</sup> The Utes sent a barrage of gunfire from inside the cabin through chinks between the boards. Several horses were shot, and the charge was briefly curbed. Smith and Burton raced toward the cabin on unharmed mounts. Through a burst of bullets from the Utes' river bottom camp, they charged around the corner into the passageway between the sections of the cabin amid bullets splintering the wood. Inside the cabin on their horses, both Smith and Burton expected hand-to-hand fighting, but the

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12. Peter Gottfredson, *History of Indian Depredations in Utah*, 29; J. Marinus Jensen, *History of Provo, Utah*, 49; Bean, *Autobiography*; Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 426.

13. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 424–25.

14. Gottfredson, *Indian Depredations*, 29.

15. Jensen, *History of Provo, Utah*, 48.

16. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 427; Bean, *Autobiography of George W. Bean*, 62.

17. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 427–28.

18. Whitney, 428.

Utes had fled. Miraculously, not one man had been killed in the charge.<sup>19</sup> In a second charge of Captain Conover's men, Jabez Nowlin was wounded just as he entered the passageway to join Smith and Burton. The rest of the detail was held down by gunfire from the river bottom and gathered at the rear of the log house. Some of the men sawed a hole in the back wall to enter.<sup>20</sup> When it was ascertained that assault was unfeasible, the militia left the hard-won cabin.<sup>21</sup>

General Daniel H. Wells arrived at three o'clock Sunday morning and ordered a force to garrison the fort stockade. At daylight, a few defected Utes at the fort discovered that Big Elk's Utes had stolen away in the night, leaving behind their dead and dying. With the rest of the militia and Grant's larger force of mounted Minute Men, Wells followed the fleeing Utes southward. The Utes were cornered at dusk on the promontory that ran out from the southern end of Utah Lake near Peteetneet (Payson). The warriors were killed, leaving the women and children to be taken prisoner by the general. The securing of Bean's cabin by Smith and Burton became the defining event of the Provo War. Their swift charge established the two as heroes and began a lifelong friendship between Smith and Burton.<sup>22</sup>

After the Provo War, Smith joined the Life Guards of the Nauvoo Legion, also known as Minute Men. The Minute Men were a cavalry corps used from 1847 to 1869 throughout the Rocky Mountain region. Handpicked and organized into companies of sixty, the expert horsemen were first-class marksmen schooled to the hazards and hardships of the frontier. They kept their powder dry, their firearms in good condition, and their horses ready to saddle and ride at a minute's notice.<sup>23</sup> Smith's first call to military action came on September 17 through October 5, 1850.<sup>24</sup> A band of Shoshones to the north threatened a massacre following the accidental killing of their chief, Terakee (White Cloud). Only two hours after receiving notice, three companies of mounted Minute Men, one of infantry, left Great Salt Lake City and North Cottonwood; among them were Smith and Harlum McBride.<sup>25</sup> They arrived in Ogden the next morning just before sunrise—but not before the enraged Shoshones had burned

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19. WPA, "Provo, Pioneer Mormon City," 57.

20. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 428.

21. Whitney, 429.

22. *Journal History*, February 9, 1850, 3.

23. Solomon F. Kimball, "Our Pioneer Boys," 671.

24. Utah State Archives & Records, Service No. 3424B: September 17, 1850.

25. Willard Richards, letter to Lorin Farr, September 17, 1850, *Journal History*.

Urban Van Stewart's house and grain, killed the millwright, and pillaged the town.<sup>26</sup> A vigorous pursuit forced the Shoshones to abandon much of their stolen property but not the horses. The chase ended at the ford of Bear River.<sup>27</sup> After a six-day standoff, the troops returned to their homes without recovery of the horses.<sup>28</sup>

The day after their return, Smith and McBride, with twenty-five Minute Men under 1st Lieutenant William H. Kimball, were ordered to Ogden to further deal with the Shoshones.<sup>29</sup> The guards headed north for a double mission. First, they were to warn the passing immigrants on the California route that both Bannocks and Shoshones had attacked wagon trains and stolen stock; second, they were to seek peace with both tribes.<sup>30</sup> Since both bands of Indians had departed, no parley could be arranged.<sup>31</sup> After ten days, Smith returned to North Cottonwood.

Private Smith's next opportunity for military service came in February of the next winter.<sup>32</sup> A band of Gosiutes from Skull Valley had raided the Mormon settlements in Tooele Valley. After the Gosiutes stole a large number of cattle, twenty-five men of Captain James Ferguson's Company B of the Battalion of Life Guards left for Skull Valley.<sup>33</sup> After a weeklong search, they found no trace of the stolen cattle, so the men returned home. Porter Rockwell was sent as a follow-up in April. He captured and held some thirty Gosiutes for information and as hostages. However, he failed to disarm his prisoners. The hostages shot their guard, and most of them escaped. Rockwell called for reinforcements.<sup>34</sup> Smith was one of twenty-five men under Captain Ferguson sent to assist Rockwell's command.<sup>35</sup>

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26. Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards, letter to Brigham Young, September 17, 1850, *Journal History*; *Deseret News*, September 21, 1850, in *Journal History*.

27. James Henry Martineau, autobiography, 8.

28. September 17–September 22, 1850 Pay Roll of Capt. George D. Grant's Company (A) Life Guards, Nauvoo Legion employed in the Expedition against the Shoshone Indians during the Month of September 1850.

29. Utah State Archives & Records, Service No. No. 3424B: 1850 September 25.

30. Special Orders No. 12, Nauvoo Legion Orders Spl & general, September 23, 1850.

31. James Ferguson, letter to Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, March 2, 1850, Nauvoo Legion Letterbook, 46. In Nauvoo Legion (Utah) records.

32. Utah State Archives & Records, Service No. 3432: 1851, February 19–27.

33. Utah State Archives & Records, Service No. 3432: 1851, February 19–27.

34. Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell, Man of God, Son of Thunder*, 200–201.

35. Utah State Archives & Records, Service No. 3430: 1851, April 23–May 1.

On May 31, 1851, Smith and Ephraim Hanks were appointed Color Bearers General of the Nauvoo Legion with the rank of captain.<sup>36</sup> Smith enjoyed the distinction for fifteen years. They carried the flags at the head of military parades in Great Salt Lake City on majestic horses. Smith's most-remembered color-bearer horse was his steel-gray Arabian named Stonewall that he had acquired from Brigham Young. At first, the stallion could not be controlled. Since Smith possessed an unusual ability to calm and train horses, he asked Young if he could break it. Young said he didn't want Smith to risk his life, but finally relented. Not long after, Smith returned with Stonewall and astonished Young with an impressive show. The horse seemed to trust Smith implicitly as he "seized the horse by the hind legs [and] raised him up and down in wheelbarrow fashion, crawled between his legs, walked under him, made [the horse] lie down, sat upon him, and then walked across him."<sup>37</sup> When Smith bade Young farewell and started to leave, the horse followed him and could not be brought back until Smith returned. Young said, "Lot, because you broke that horse in such a wonderful manner, I will make you a present of him."<sup>38</sup>

In September 1851, Smith was appointed sergeant in Company B of the Battalion of Life Guards. The following summer, Smith joined twenty men on an expedition to explore the vicinity of Lake Sevier for lead that was much needed for ammunition, and also to quietly search for silver.<sup>39</sup> Smith and Burton left Great Salt Lake City in Albert Carrington's company and were joined by Miles Weaver and Barney Ward. The expedition thoroughly explored the mountain ranges from Salt Creek (Nephi) to Chicken Creek, the Sevier, Fillmore, and on to Beaver Creek. The trio of Smith, Burton, and Ward were sent on several exploratory tours by themselves, but no lead or silver was found.<sup>40</sup>

War brewed with Ute chief Wakara (Anglicized to Walker) in 1853. Smith joined an expedition under Major James Ferguson in April to strengthen Utah Territory's southeastern settlements.<sup>41</sup> Chief Wakara and his warriors began attacking the Mormon settlements in quick succession in July and into October—burning mills, stealing stock, and wounding

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36. Executive Record Book A 1850–1854, 310; Nauvoo Legion Muster Rolls 1851–1853.

37. William S. Burton, quoted in Margaret M. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 101–2.

38. Fisher, 101–2.

39. Journal History, June 2, 1852; Utah State Archives & Records, Service No. 187.

40. Albert Carrington, *Diary of Albert Carrington*, 126–31.

41. Carrington, 126–31.

and killing settlers.<sup>42</sup> Despite hostilities, Young sought peace and sent Wakara a gift of tobacco and offered beef cattle and flour.<sup>43</sup> During the war, Governor Young also attempted to gain control of the two gentile outposts in Utah Territory: Fort Bridger and Green River. After Young unsuccessfully attempted to establish a trading post on Green River, he revoked all territorial licenses to trade with the Indians.<sup>44</sup> He then sent a forty-man expedition to enforce the embargo. Second Lieutenant Smith accompanied Major Ferguson on the twenty-day expedition.<sup>45</sup> Before Smith's battalion arrived at the fort, Jim Bridger had fled and left his partner Luis Vasquez and his Mormon clerks in charge.<sup>46</sup> Major Ferguson promoted Smith to First Lieutenant during or after the three-week tour to Fort Bridger.<sup>47</sup>

In the spring of 1854, Smith was elected as Captain of Company B of the Life Guard Calvary.<sup>48</sup> He was then asked to serve his first tour in the corps of guards that accompanied President Young on his travels. The guards repaired wagons, ferried rivers, warded off hostile Indians, and generally contributed to the welfare and comfort of Young and his company. Although peace had already been made with Wakara, Young planned a trip south to ceremonially negotiate peace and to visit the settlements.<sup>49</sup> To help prevent future problems with the Utes, Young promoted defense during the tour. He exhorted the settlements to fort up and to build strong walls around the cities as he traveled south.<sup>50</sup>

At Meadow Creek, Young's caravan arrived at the wickiup of Wakara. With ceremony beloved of the Utes, a deputation of mounted chiefs from Wakara's camp rode forward and saluted the caravan with singing and gunfire, but Young's party did not go out to meet them.<sup>51</sup> Instead, Young directed his guards to form a corral of the wagons and carriages forty

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42. Richard W. Young, "The Nauvoo Legion," *Contributor* 9(4): 163–66.

43. Young, 163. For a comprehensive look at the Walker War, see Morris A. Shirts and Kathryn H. Shirts, *A Trial Furnace, Southern Utah's Iron Mission*, 317–36.

44. Kate Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 3:321.

45. *Report of a Detachment of Cavalry sent on an expedition to Fort Bridger and Green River August 21st, 1853* [to September 10, 1853], #3505B, Military Records Section Archives, Utah State Historical Society.

46. Hope A. Hilton, "Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier, 40.

47. *Expedition to Fort Bridger and Green River August 21st, 1853*, #3505B, listed Smith as First Lieutenant. The payroll listed Smith as Second Lieutenant.

48. Certificate of election, Special Collection, University of Arizona.

49. Bean, *Autobiography*, 93–94.

50. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, May 3, 5, 6, 1854.

51. Woodruff, May 11, 1854.

rods from the Utes' camp.<sup>52</sup> Young then sent a message to Wakara that he had arrived and would be ready to receive him at a stated time. Wakara, who felt rebuffed at Young's lack of acknowledgement of his ceremonial welcome, sent back word that if Governor Young wanted to meet that he must come to Wakara's camp. Young quipped, "If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain."<sup>53</sup>

Young presented himself at Wakara's wickiup with a large escort of his council and his well-mounted guard including Lot Smith. Wakara sat inside his wickiup "like a prince" in the center of a buffalo robe.<sup>54</sup> The Ute chief received the company with great ceremony. Through the interpreter, Wakara said that Brigham was a big chief and that Wakara was a big chief; Wakara put up his two thumbs to illustrate that the two men were equal.<sup>55</sup> Despite all the talk, official peace was not proclaimed that day. In meeting the next morning, Wakara said, "Wakara talk with Great Spirit; Great Spirit say—'Make peace.'"<sup>56</sup> Each took a puff as the calumet passed, peace was proclaimed, and the fighting ended officially. Wakara with his wife and about thirty splendidly mounted Utes accompanied Young's caravan for much of the remainder of the journey.<sup>57</sup>

During the next few days, the company traveled through the southern settlements and arrived on May 19 at Harmony on Ash Creek, the southernmost settlement of Young's colonies.<sup>58</sup> There the company fed and lodged with John D. Lee.<sup>59</sup> From there, the caravan continued north. When they reached the Sevier River, it was flooding. The guards made quick work of rafting over the river before breakfast. They arrived May 30 in Great Salt Lake City, where Young called for a celebration.<sup>60</sup> "A very interesting party [was] got up by the president at the Social Hall for his Company that went south with him. It continued till midnight when we all returned to our homes."<sup>61</sup>

52. Journal History, May 11, 1854.

53. Solomon Nunes Carvalho, *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West*, 189.

54. Wells, "Narrative," 125–32.

55. Wells, 125–32.

56. Carvalho, *Travel and Adventure*, 193.

57. Carvalho, 193.

58. Journal History, May 19, 1854; "Return of Brigham Young," *Deseret News*, June 8, 1854, in Journal History.

59. Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee*, 178.

60. Journal History, May 26, 27, 30, 1854.

61. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, June 12, 1854.

Smith had been keeping company with nineteen-year-old Lydia McBride and romance blossomed.<sup>62</sup> The week following his appointment as Color Bearer, Smith and Lydia rode from North Cottonwood into Great Salt Lake City to be married. In Young's Log Row home built along the street south of the temple block, Smith and Lydia stood together with her Uncle Reuben McBride and some of Young's wives as witnesses.<sup>63</sup> President Young pronounced Lot Smith and Lydia Minerva McBride husband and wife for time and all eternity on June 3, 1851.<sup>64</sup> Smith also began to keep company with Jane Walker. In Lydia's words, although she "did all [she] could to keep him from having her as his wife, it was no use."<sup>65</sup> Eight months later, Smith and Jane were married on February 14 in the endowment rooms of the two-story red sandstone Council House. Jane's brother-in-law Heber C. Kimball performed the ceremony. Witnesses were Willard Richards and Thomas Bullock.<sup>66</sup>

Lydia accompanied Smith to the Council House, where they were both endowed on August 9, 1852.<sup>67</sup> However, Lydia could not tolerate a second wife and soon left with their firstborn son. She later described her feelings:

We lived together, my husband and myself, until a woman by the name of Jane Walker came into my life, when I stood it as long as I could and then quit, going to my father's home in Fillmore, Utah. [Lot] married this Walker woman . . . and all three of us lived together in Farmington until the next Fall when I quit, as I wouldn't live in the same house with her. If [Lot] had got another house for her, then things would have been different. I shouldn't have come away.<sup>68</sup>

Even long after his death, it was rumored that Smith branded his wives. According to a second-hand account, Amasa L. Clark of Farmington re-

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62. Deposition, Case of Lydia M. Smith #15411, September 17, 1900, Military Records, National Archives, Washington, DC.

63. Deposition, Case of Lydia M. Smith, September 17, 1900.

64. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Endowment House Sealing Book A, A1, 1851-1854*, film 64, 301. The next recorded marriage was solemnized an hour later at 3:25 p.m. in Brigham Young's office, the usual site of marriages at that time.

65. Deposition, Case of Lydia M. Smith, September 17, 1900.

66. Jane Walker Smith, Mexican War, Claim of Widow for Service Pension, Affidavit, November 11, 1899.

67. Utah and Nauvoo Temple Records #1286A, 48. Jane had already been endowed before her marriage (February 2, 1852), Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Endowments of the Living, 1851-1884*.

68. Deposition, Case of Lydia M. Smith, September 17, 1900.

called Smith “standing at the pulpit. He always took his coat off and laid it on the chair as he walked to the pulpit. He said anything he owned or possessed, he always branded, including his wife.”<sup>69</sup> His sense of humor entertained his friends, but his less intimate acquaintances were aghast, and horrified women decried him a wife beater—their worst condemnation.<sup>70</sup>

Jane told how she was “branded.” The incident happened after Lydia left in the fall of 1852 and before Smith married his third wife. Jane was gathering fresh eggs for a dinner she was preparing for Smith and two friends when they came in from branding. She saw several eggs in the manger that she could not reach from the outside of the corral. Smith had cautioned her about the temperament of his stallion, but the horse, who dozed in the far corner of the corral, looked peaceful enough. Jane attempted to pass quietly and collect the eggs. The horse, not as drowsy as he appeared, suddenly shrieked and charged Jane. Lot, without dropping his branding iron, jumped and ran between his wife and the stallion. When she ducked under the fence, he pushed her through with the branding iron. The men at the branding fire watched as Jane twisted to check her nice skirt that she wore for company. The branding iron had cooled enough that it didn’t even scorch it. One of the men laughed and said, “That’s one that won’t get away from you; she’s branded!”<sup>71</sup>

By the mid-1850s, Farmington had grown into an attractive, productive community. The settlers built a wall for protection. Every able-bodied man, including Smith, worked on it in proportion to their land holdings. George Quincy Knowlton wrote: “This wall was made of mud shoveled into forms and trampled solid by the bare feet of people.”<sup>72</sup> After a year’s work, the wall was over two and a half miles long and ten to twelve feet high.<sup>73</sup> Before a civil government could be organized in Farmington, the bishop and the ward teachers divided the town into districts, hired water masters, and settled differences. In February 1855, the 40th Quorum of the Seventy was organized in Farmington with Ezra T. Clark as Senior

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69. Davis County Sheriff Kenneth Hammon, interview with Carmen R. Smith, July 18, 1974. Clark was a youngster when Smith first came to Farmington.

70. Frederick S. Buchanan, ed., *A Good Time Coming: Mormon Letters to Scotland*, 104.

71. Charlie Ashurst to Nephi Lot Smith, interview by Omer J. and Carmen R. Smith, audio recording, June 1, 1972.

72. George Quincy Knowlton, *History of Farmington, Utah*, 56.

73. Leonard, “History of Farmington,” 87.

President.<sup>74</sup> As one of the seven presidents of the Seventy, Lot Smith regularly attended the quorum meetings from 1855 to 1867.

By 1854, Pennsylvania Dutch and Scandinavians had begun settling in Farmington.<sup>75</sup> Most of the small group of primarily Danish Scandinavians hardly understood or spoke English. Smith suggested that if the visits of the ward teachers were to be effective, the Scandinavians should be visited by someone who could speak or understand their native language. Smith then began visiting the Scandinavians with Madse Christensen, a Danish immigrant, as his partner.<sup>76</sup> His reputation for ethnic tolerance became widely known. In an 1857 speech in the Tabernacle, Heber C. Kimball decried intolerance among the settlements and cited Lot Smith as an example of acceptance.<sup>77</sup>

In Utah's first general election in August 1854, Smith was elected as Davis County's first sheriff. Smith's service as sheriff constituted his major contribution to Farmington and Davis County and was fraught with challenges and risks typical of the Western frontier, but few incidents were chronicled. Except for a short interim in 1859 and calls to military service in 1857–58 and 1862, Smith served as sheriff for approximately ten years.<sup>78</sup> In addition to the challenges Smith faced as sheriff, he dealt with personal distresses in his family. The same day he became sheriff, his older sister Abiah Ann Smith McBride died and left three small children.<sup>79</sup>

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74. Andrew Jenson, *History of Seventy Quorums*, 241.

75. Leonard, "History of Farmington," 32–35.

76. Minutes of the Ward Teachers Meeting of the Farmington Ward 1 (1862–68), December 7, 1862.

77. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 4:223.

78. Civil records are scant and do not report that Smith was elected as sheriff in August 1856 to the next two-year term. Yet, he served during 1856 and was absent from September 27 to December 5, 1857 in the Utah War (Davis County Court Records, #0484.601, Family History Library, 51). Philemon C. Merrill may have been appointed during Smith's absence. Possibly elected in the 1858 election, Merrill was serving as sheriff on February 19, 1859, until his resignation when he moved to Weber County. Smith was appointed by Judge Stoddard the following month on March 7 (Davis County Court Records, #0484.601, Family History Library, 51). Two years later, on March 11, 1861, Smith was sheriff under Judge Samuel Richards (Minutes of Probate Court 1854–1869, Farmington, 35).

Court minutes show that Smith served as sheriff after his service in the Civil War on October 13, 1862, November 1, 1862, and March 26, 1863, under Judge Thomas Grover (Minutes of Probate Court 1854–1869, Farmington, 47).

79. Personal Family Records of Emily Jane Smith Burke.

About two months later, a wagonload of hay tipped over on October 27 and killed Smith's brother Hyrum who was only nineteen years old and engaged to be married.<sup>80</sup> Perhaps it was because of the Biblical injunction to raise up seed to a deceased brother that Lot soon began to court Hyrum's fiancée, Julia Ann Smith.<sup>81</sup> Lot and Hyrum had first become acquainted with the vivacious eighteen-year-old Julia at the home of Lot's friend Robert T. Burton.<sup>82</sup> After his brother's tragic death, Lot proposed, but Julia was loyal to the memory of Hyrum. According to a descendant of Julia's, it took more than a year for her to accept Lot as her husband. Lot sought help from both President Young and his wife Jane.<sup>83</sup> Both obliged. Jane said to Julia, "Oh come on, Julia; marry Lot and we'll all have fun."<sup>84</sup> Young married Smith and Julia Ann in his office on the main floor of his newly built Beehive House. Young expressly stipulated that the children would belong to Lot's brother Hyrum.<sup>85</sup> Julia then moved into the big stone house with Jane.

An extravagant social festivity was held February 6 and 7, 1855, to celebrate the service of the Mormon Battalion. Almost ten years had passed since nearly five hundred men had responded to Young's call to serve in the Mormon Battalion. Lot Smith and Henry S. Dalton made certain that all widows and wives of the battalion members in Davis County were invited to the celebration.<sup>86</sup> The attendees crowded Brigham Young's Social Hall for the festival. Elaborate decorations by David Candland, Great Salt Lake City's official party host, adorned the walls of both the lower and upper floors. The programs for both days began at 2:00 p.m. and ended between 2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Nearly one thousand people attended

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80. Personal Family Records of Emily Jane Smith Burke.

81. For more about the Levirate Law and Hebrew marriage practices in Mormon theology, see Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy, Vol. 3: Theology*, 34–36.

82. Julia lived in Great Salt Lake City with her mother and stepfather Samuel Burton Jr., who was Robert T. Burton's father.

83. Frank Sharar, oral interview notes by Carmen R. Smith. In author's possession.

84. Vera Beamish, interview by Kenneth Smith, audio recording. In author's possession.

85. The record is scanty and inaccurate. Index said Book 1, p 25. Record found Book A 32 and S 25, "Record of Sealings by Proxy 1854 to 1857": Lot Smith b. April 15, 1830, Julia Ann Smith b. March 6, 1837, solemnized by Brigham Young in President's office, November 4, 1855. Jessie Smith gives the date of November 25, 1855. The later date is probably a second sealing that fulfilled the requirement that earlier wives be present and give consent.

86. *Deseret News* 4, no. 46. January 18, 1855, January 26, 1855.

the two-day festivity. Bands played and the people danced.<sup>87</sup> Before dinner the first night, the counselors in the First Presidency—Jedediah M. Grant and Heber C. Kimball—spoke. After dinner, President Young commented that the celebration was the best party he had ever seen in his social hall.<sup>88</sup> He further remarked: “The Mormon Battalion will be held in honorable remembrance to the latest generation; and I will prophesy that the children of those who have been in the army, in defense of their country, will grow up and bless their fathers for what they did at that time. And men and nations will rise up and bless the men who went in that Battalion.”<sup>89</sup> The battalion veterans recounted their shared hardships and many anecdotes of assistance, fellowship, and sympathy.<sup>90</sup> The battalion commemoration was cherished by the participants as one of the most memorable events in the early history of Utah Territory.

The mid-1850s presented challenges to Utah. Smith’s neighbor Thomas Steed described the situation in Farmington. Grasshoppers devastated the crops in both 1854 and 1855.<sup>91</sup> Farmington’s “winter of 1854–55 piled snow three and four feet high and stock died by the hundreds.”<sup>92</sup> The following winter of 1855–56 was worse. Snow fell as much as ten feet in Farmington. That winter nearly all the cattle left to range outside Farmington died. Steed found his cattle together in a place sheltered by bushes where they had gathered in a close circle and lain to die.<sup>93</sup> The few remaining animals could hardly work, weakened by lack of forage. To attend the Church’s General Conference in April, most of the Saints walked.<sup>94</sup> The residents shared their food with those who had none, and no one died from lack of provisions.<sup>95</sup>

A general reformation took place throughout the church in the beginning of 1856.<sup>96</sup> President Young declared, “I shall take my knapsack

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87. Item 976 in Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 3.

88. Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War 1846–1847*, 351.

89. Tyler, 354.

90. Tyler, 355–63.

91. Thomas Steed, *The Life of Thomas Steed*, 18.

92. Hess, *My Farmington*, 46.

93. Steed, *Life of Thomas Steed*, 20.

94. Steed, 20.

95. Jesse W. Crosby, in *Annals of Wyoming* 10, 11 (1938–39): 210.

96. For a history of the religious reformation in Utah, see Gustive O. Larson, “The Mormon Reformation,” 45–63.

under my arm and I will travel through this territory and preach reformation unto this people until they do repent.”<sup>97</sup> Young’s forty-year-old counselor Jedediah Grant took up the crusade. He first visited the Saints in Davis County. On September 17 and 18, he preached in Farmington’s courthouse. On September 19, Thomas Steed said: “[A]s a Ward, [Grant] weighed us in the balance and found us wanting in great many things. He then called upon us to know if we were willing to repent and renew our Covenant again before God; and we arose en mass to show our willingness to be obedient to the call of the man of God who had come to us armed with the Spirit and power of the Lord Almighty.”<sup>98</sup> The next day, Smith was among the 406 Farmington residents gathered at the millpond to be rebaptized.<sup>99</sup>

During the fall of 1856, President Young recalled the Territory’s highest-ranking field grade officers from missions in England. Those who returned in early October included Brigadier General George D. Grant, his adjutant James Ferguson, William H. Kimball, Cyrus Wheelock, Joseph A. Young, and Chauncey Webb—all led by apostle Franklin D. Richards, newly released European Mission President. To greet and honor Brigadier General Grant with a 113-mile escort to the City, Major Burton and a small party of the mountain boys gathered at Fort Bridger on October 1. Though the records do not name the party members, the group would have likely included Burton’s close associate in the military, Lot Smith. The returning missionaries brought disturbing news. The James G. Willie and Edward L. Martin handcart companies, who had started late in the season from Iowa with short supplies, were now out on the Wyoming plains headed west to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Disaster was imminent due to the lateness in the season. The escorts and missionaries left Fort Bridger on October 4 for the City.

The next morning President Young addressed the circumstances of the handcart companies during General Conference. Young called for men to volunteer to help bring in the Saints. Stressing urgency, Young called for the volunteers to leave quickly despite the temperate weather.<sup>100</sup> On Monday evening, October 6, the Minute Men known as “the boys” and their leaders met in Young’s office to receive instructions and

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97. Robinson, *History*, 69.

98. Steed, *Life of Thomas Steed*, 20.

99. Farmington Ward Membership Records; *Deseret News*, October 1, 1856, reported that 445 were re-baptized.

100. Leroy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 122.

blessings.<sup>101</sup> As captain of Company B of the Life Guards Cavalry, Lot Smith would have been in this group. Early in the morning of October 8, the rescue group left the City. They camped that night at the foot of Big Mountain and elected George D. Grant as captain with assistants William H. Kimball and Robert T. Burton.<sup>102</sup> The trip to Fort Bridger from Big Mountain was slowed by a drop in the temperature followed by heavy snowfall. It required four days of travel before the rescue party reached Fort Bridger. Three days later they reached the vicinity of Green River, with no sign of the emigrants. At this point, an anxious Grant sent scouts to go as far as Devil's Gate in search of the oncoming companies.<sup>103</sup>

After another heavy snowfall at South Pass on October 17, the weather on the east side of the mountain turned even colder, the nights more bitter, the snow deeper. On October 19, when the rescue party was about fourteen miles farther east below the mouth of Willow Creek on the upper reaches of the Sweetwater, the scraping wagon axles pushed snow in front of the wagons which forced a stop. The rescuers were unaware that they were hardly a day's journey from Willie's handcart company.<sup>104</sup> When the express team found Willie's company, the rescue party broke camp—snowbound or not—and pushed on. The evening of the next day, October 21, they reached the Willie camp—its people huddled in willows near the fifth crossing of the Sweetwater. Bonfires soon blazed for the freezing Saints. The several wagons loaded with food and provisions brought for the two handcart companies could not fill the needs of the approximately 340 members of the Willie Company. The rescuers could only dole out inadequate but deeply appreciated flour and warm clothing with a promise of more to come.<sup>105</sup>

Captain Grant and his party—including Burton and Smith—left William Kimball with Willie's Company and pushed eastward five more days through more storms and deepening snow to search for Martin's company. They passed the place now known as Three Crossings on the Sweetwater, Split Rock, and reached Devil's Gate on October 27 to find

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101. Rebecca Bartholomew and Leonard J. Arrington, *Rescue of the 1856 Handcart Companies*, 8.

102. Bartholomew and Arrington, 9-10; Hafen and Hafen, *Handcarts to Zion*, 125.

103. Hafen and Hafen, 125.

104. Janet Burton Seegmiller, *"Be Kind to the Poor": The Life Story of Robert Taylor Burton*, 151.

105. Seegmiller, 14.

the first express men who awaited further orders.<sup>106</sup> Alarmed, Captain Grant sent a second express to ride eastward to search for the Martin handcarts and “not to return until [the emigrants] were found.”<sup>107</sup> The express traveled as quickly as their mounts permitted to find the Martin handcarts strung out along the trail and stalled near the last crossing of the North Platte River at Red Buttes/Bluffs Camp now known as Bessemer Bend. Pinned down by a blizzard, they had not moved for nine days.<sup>108</sup> Paul Gourley and his daughter Nichalous of the Martin Handcart Company tell that Lot Smith was one of their first rescuers.<sup>109</sup> Nichalous wrote, “When they arrived at Green river, Joseph A Young, Lot Smith and Angus Wheelock were sent ahead to meet the companies and let them know that relief was coming.” She continued, “The three men who came ahead brought a few crackers in their pockets. The children [including Nichalous] were in a wash eating bark off the willows. When they saw the men on horses appear over a hill. The children became very frightened and ran for camp thinking the men were Indians.”<sup>110</sup>

Aghast at the shattered spirit of some of the Saints, the rescuers encouraged the company to start traveling again toward the supply wagons. Daniel Jones, Joseph A. Young, and Abel Garr continued eastward to the two stranded wagon companies of Captains William Benjamin Hodgett and John A. Hunt that were trailing the handcarts with orders for them also to start westward. Smith helped bring the Martin Company forward. For two days the Martin handcarts traveled westward. On one of those days, Jones, who was leading Captain Hunt’s wagons forward, caught up with the Martin handcarts as they labored up a long muddy hill. Jones left the wagons and went to assist. He recalled,

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106. Seegmiller, 17

107. Seegmiller, 17–18.

108. George D. Grant, as quoted in Riverton Wyoming Stake, *Remember: The Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and Their Rescuers—Past and Present*, 25.

109. Paul Gourley and his eleven-year-old daughter Nichalous Gourley (Teeples) remembered Joseph A. Young, Lot Smith, and Angus Wheelock. In Raymond W. Madsen, “Scottish Convert Made Long Ocean Journey to Join Ill-Fated Handcart Group,” 6; Nichalous Gourley Teeples, “Experience of the Paul Gourley Family 1856 with the Martin Hand-cart Company.” Since Paul Gourley served under Smith the following year in the 1857 Utah War, the identification of Smith is positive.

110. Nichalous Gourley Teeples, “Experience of the Paul Gourley Family 1856 with the Martin Hand-cart Company.”

A condition of distress here met my eyes that I never saw before or since. The train was strung out for three or four miles. There were old men pulling and tugging their carts, sometimes loaded with a sick wife or children—women pulling along sick husbands—little children six to eight years old struggling through the mud and snow. As night came on the mud would freeze on their clothes and feet. There were two of us and hundreds needing help. What could we do? We gathered on to some of the most helpless with our riatas [lariats] tied to the carts, and helped as many as we could into camp on Avenue hill.<sup>111</sup>

Wagons were sent from Devil's Gate with provisions and met Martin's handcarts at Greasewood Creek. When the group arrived at Devil's Gate, there was room for only a third to shelter in the stockade. Many of the others were so weak they could barely scrape away the snow to set up tents. The Minute Men drove the stakes into frozen ground.<sup>112</sup> The Saints moved to a cove, thereafter known as Martin's Cove, to shelter from the wind strong enough to blow off a wagon cover. There they could await wagons and provisions from their fellow Saints, then ride to Great Salt Lake City.<sup>113</sup> The struggle to convey the handcart companies to the valley was filled with heartbreak as death took more. Of the more than one thousand persons who launched out with the Willie and Martin handcart companies, about 190 died.<sup>114</sup>

As Smith became established in the Rocky Mountains, he continued to advance his military career in the Provo War and as a member of the Nauvoo Legion cavalry in disputes with the Utes, Shoshones, and Gosiutes. These experiences, combined with his service as Davis County sheriff and as a rescuer of the handcart companies, prepared him for the demanding role he would take the following year in the Utah War.

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111. Daniel W. Jones, *Forty Years Among the Indians*, 66.

112. Bartholomew and Arrington, *Rescue of the 1856 Handcart Companies*, 22.

113. Bartholomew and Arrington, 23.

114. Riverton Wyoming Stake, *Remember*, cover flap.

## CHAPTER 3

# Utah War

A succession of government-appointed territorial officials sent to Utah led to many conflicts with the Mormons. Some appointees were upright and honest; others were openly dishonorable. Any disagreements between the appointees and the Saints were featured prominently—but not neutrally—in the nation’s newspapers. The situation in Utah became increasingly tense. Young had chosen a military man, Daniel H. Wells, as his second counselor in the First Presidency of the Church on January 4, 1857, to replace Jedediah Grant, who had passed away in December. Wells was designated Lieutenant General of the Utah Militia. He resumed his military duties, reactivated the Nauvoo Legion throughout the territory, and installed new local officers.<sup>1</sup> Lot Smith was elected on June 27, 1857, as a major of the First Battalion of Life Guards.<sup>2</sup>

Young planned his annual 24th of July picnic and extended invitations to the Saints to celebrate with him at Silver Lake up Big Cottonwood Canyon; over 2,500 people responded.<sup>3</sup> Major Lot Smith, who commanded five platoons, was stationed at the gate at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon with orders to guard access and make certain that no one preceded the carriages of the First Presidency on the route. Hundreds of waiting wagons crowded the slopes around the entrance to the canyon. Smith also posted sentinels on the way up the mountain to preserve order and to assist in case of mishaps.<sup>4</sup> While the crowd awaited the coming of Young, several bands played.<sup>5</sup> When Young arrived, Major Smith, on horseback with his guards, led the procession up the dugway.<sup>6</sup>

At Silver Lake throughout the next day, the celebrants raised the stars and stripes, listened to speeches and prayers of thanksgiving by their leaders, socialized, and danced to the music of six bands in three separate

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1. Nauvoo Legion General Orders No. 1, April 11, 1857.

2. Muster Roll, Field and Staff of the 1st Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Division, Nauvoo Legion, August 27, 1857.

3. Wilford Woodruff, journal, July 23, 1857.

4. Special Orders No. 5, July 15, 1857, Nauvoo Legion Orders.

5. Journal History of the Church, July 22, 1857 (hereafter cited as Journal History).

6. Woodruff, journal, July 23, 1857.

plank-floor boweries.<sup>7</sup> At about noon, four horsemen arrived posthaste at the campsite. Two were mail carriers—Bishop Abraham O. Smoot and Judson Stoddard. They were accompanied by Porter Rockwell and Judge Elias Smith. In only twenty days the mail carriers had rushed across the continent from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to bring Young alarming news.<sup>8</sup> The US government had refused to give Utah's mail carriers the mails from the East in order to keep the Territory uninformed that an army of 2,500 soldiers was being assembled to subdue the Utah Territory and supplant Young as governor by Alfred Cumming of Saint Louis. The advance guard was already en route. President Young did not immediately inform the celebrants about the report.<sup>9</sup> He retired to his tent to allow the Twelve Apostles to ask questions as to what he intended to do. In the meantime, the dancing continued. At the eight o'clock prayer break, Wells broke the news to the attendees.<sup>10</sup> Despite the news, the dancing continued until a late hour.<sup>11</sup> Early on the morning of July 25, Major Smith's cavalymen again took stations along the return route and the descent began. Young was the last to leave, escorted again by Lot Smith and members of his guard.

As the US Army advanced across the plains toward Utah, Young gathered the outlying settlements to the Great Basin. On September 8, the US Army Assistant Quartermaster, Captain Stewart Van Vliet, arrived in Salt Lake City to a cordial welcome.<sup>12</sup> The captain had intermingled with the Mormons at Winter Quarters and relations were friendly. In honor of Van Vliet, master chef David Candland invited the Minute Men, including Lot Smith, to dine at the Globe Bakery, a popular eating place next to the Council House.<sup>13</sup> Van Vliet felt the united fervor of the Mormons and heard the impassioned accusations of injustice. The Latter-day Saints did not intend to be routed again from their homes. The expulsions from Missouri and Illinois still blazed in the Mormon minds. Young proclaimed to Captain Van Vliet: “[W]hen those troops arrive, they will find Utah a desert. Every house will be burned to the ground, every tree cut down and every field left waste. We have three years' provisions on hand, which

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7. *Deseret News*, 7:165.

8. Woodruff, journal, July 24, 1857.

9. Bryant S. Hinckley, *Daniel Hanmer Wells*, 94.

10. Kate B. Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 7:95.

11. Andrew Jackson Allen, “Diary,” 16.

12. Journal History, September 8, 1857.

13. John D. T. McAllister, *Autobiography and Diary*, September 11, 1857.

we will ‘cache,’ and then take to the mountains and bid defiance to all of the powers of the government.”<sup>14</sup> Van Vliet was persuaded that President Buchanan had misjudged the situation. As Van Vliet left Great Salt Lake City on September 14 and traveled eastward, he met each segment of the army and tried to persuade them that to invade Utah Territory was folly.<sup>15</sup>

The afternoon of Van Vliet’s departure, Young proclaimed martial law.<sup>16</sup> Nauvoo Legion Commander, Lieutenant General Wells, departed September 27 for Fort Bridger with important papers that Young desired to be delivered to the advancing army.<sup>17</sup> Major Lot Smith accompanied the commander and a large contingent of men.<sup>18</sup> Companies of fifty to a hundred men hastened up Echo Canyon behind the staff of the general. Their urgency was fueled by rumors that the army was advancing by rapid forced marches.<sup>19</sup> Wells ordered troops to build rock parapets atop the high cliffs of Echo Canyon, to position huge boulders to be cast down at will on the army, and to construct levees to flood the route and push the army against the boulder-topped bluffs.<sup>20</sup> Hosea Stout wrote: “[B]efore we return it will be determined whether a legalized government mob can force themselves on us against our will and contrary to all law or not. We go in the name and Strength of Israels God.”<sup>21</sup>

Commander Wells and two apostles, George A. Smith and John Taylor, along with troops arrived September 30 at Mormon-held Fort Bridger. Wells entrusted General Lewis Robison, who had authority at Fort Bridger, to deliver Young’s important letter packet to the enemy’s camp.<sup>22</sup> Wells

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14. Edward Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City*, 174–175.

15. Journal History, September 25 and 28, 1857.

16. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City*, 166.

17. Tullidge, 169.

18. *Contributor*, 3:270.

19. George A. Smith, journal, September 27, 1857.

20. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City*, 169. The breastworks and dam in the bottom of the canyon are located about 1.25 miles east of the Echo exit on old Highway 30. The fortifications begin about three-quarters of a mile up the canyon from the current rest area and continue for about one and a half miles. There were supposedly sixteen fortifications; thirteen are currently pictured in the information center at the rest area.

21. Juanita Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier, the Diary of Hosea Stout*, 638.

22. The packet of letters included five things. First, it included a letter of Young dated September 29, 1857, citing the section of the Territorial Laws that referred to the manner in which the governor might be succeeded. On that authority, Young stated that he was still the Governor of Utah, not having been removed by

then chose the two majors of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of Cavalry—Lot Smith and J. D. T. McAllister—to accompany Robison. Robison was also assigned to travel fifteen miles up Ham’s Fork, survey the position of the army’s encampment, travel back across country toward Bridger, and report the route.<sup>23</sup> Robison, McAllister, and Smith were joined by Porter Rockwell and left Bridger the morning of October 1.<sup>24</sup> Apparently, the group split. Robison and Rockwell made the survey while Smith and McAllister headed for the army’s camp at Ham’s Fork to deliver the papers.<sup>25</sup> Henry S. Hamilton, one of the bandsmen of Colonel E. P. Alexander’s camp, reported the delivery of the letter packet to Colonel Alexander:

A delegation of Mormons came to our camp, bearing with them the following order from Brigham Young. . . . We were somewhat surprised that our colonel tolerated such impudence, and did not take them prisoners; but he treated them courteously, even ordering out the band to entertain them. On their departure he instructed them to inform Mr. Brigham Young that [the Colonel’s] orders to proceed to Salt Lake City came from an authority much higher than [Young’s]—from the President of the United States; that [the army] were there as escort to Governor Cumming, who was to supersede him, and they would better not come with any more such orders.<sup>26</sup>

Upon his return to camp, Smith was invited to dinner with the commanding general and his aides.<sup>27</sup> Recalling the conversation, Smith wrote:

During the meal General Wells, looking at me as straight as possible, asked if I could take a few men and turn back the trains that were on the road or burn them. I replied that I thought I could do just what he told me to do.

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the President of the United States. Young further demanded immediate retreat or delivery of arms and ammunition to Quartermaster General Robison at Fort Bridger and a retreat the following spring. Second, it included the Proclamation of September 15, 1857, that forbade US troops to enter Utah Territory and ordered Mormon troops to be ready to repel the US troops. Third, the packet included a proclamation of martial law throughout the territory. Fourth, there was a letter to Mr. James Rupe, wagonmaster traveling with the army, that warned him to “take care of his men.” Rupe had been appointed general agent for Majors & Russell to accompany the trains. See Raymond W. Settle and Mary Lund Settle, *War Drums and Wagon Wheels*, 56. Fifth, the packet included Wells’s letter of transmittal.

23. George A. Smith, *Journal History*, October 25, 1857.

24. McAllister, *Autobiography and Diary*, October 1, 1857.

25. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah 1540-1886*, 515; *Journal History*, October 1, 1857.

26. Henry S. Hamilton, *Reminiscences of a Veteran*, 81–82.

27. *Contributor*, 3:271–72.

The answer seemed to please him, and he accepted it, telling me that he could furnish only a few men, but that they would be sufficient, for they would appear many more to our enemies. As for provisions, none would be supplied, as we were expected to board at the expense of Uncle Sam. As this seemed to be an open order, I did not complain.<sup>28</sup>

The request made by General Wells sent Smith into a leading role in the most dramatic acts of the Echo Canyon War.

Majors Smith and McAllister formed the vanguard of patrols from the Latter-day Saint men who had arrived at Fort Bridger. Smith selected forty-three men for the mission.<sup>29</sup> (See Appendix A.) He chose as his officers Captain Horton D. Haight and Lieutenants Thomas Abbott and John Vance, and he requisitioned the best available horses.<sup>30</sup> With the company ready to leave Fort Bridger for the field, General Wells's farewell to Smith's men was a wise forewarning: "Boys, don't let them pen you! don't let them pen you!! boys don't let them pen you!!!"<sup>31</sup> In the late afternoon of Friday, October 2, Smith rode eastward at the head of his company toward the approaching army.<sup>32</sup> Historian Edward Tullidge described Smith's entry into the Utah War:

Among all the warriors of the Mormon Israel, there was, perhaps not one so fitted to open this very peculiar campaign as Lot Smith. His lion-like courage and absolute fearlessness of personal danger when most in its presence, marked him out as the man of men to execute an exploit of such daring as that designed to astonish the American nation into a realization of the Mormon earnestness, yet at the same time to do it without the shedding of a drop of 'the enemy's' blood.<sup>33</sup>

Smith's company traveled most of the night and crossed Ham's Fork where they stopped on the south side near Black's Fork to camp in the hills below the soldiers' rendezvous camp located about four miles up-river.<sup>34</sup> Very early the next morning, Smith and his company rode to the army's camp where he and his forty-three Mormons looked at the

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28. *Contributor*, 3:272.

29. Thurzal Q. Terry, *Great Utah War*, 8.

30. Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 3:19.

31. Terry, *Great Utah War*, 8.

32. Smith's *Contributor* story dated his departure from Fort Bridger as Saturday, October 3. Diaries of his company specified Friday, October 2.

33. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City*, 173.

34. Henry Ballard, Private Journal, 5; Terry, *Great Utah War*, 9; Philo Dibble, journal.

182 wagons loaded with supplies, well-guarded by many soldiers. Smith saw no opportunity to burn any wagons. One of the army waggoneers, William Clark, reported that “Lot Smith, a Mormon captain with two hundred mounted men came riding into camp, stopped awhile, then rode off toward Green River.”<sup>35</sup>

Smith met a small train of six corn wagons under the leadership of Rankin. Smith told Rankin to head back east, but as soon as Smith was out of sight, the train went west again. US troops met Rankin’s train, took out the lading, and left the wagons standing.<sup>36</sup> Smith’s company camped that night on Green River not far from the troops that had taken the lading.<sup>37</sup> The following day the company continued eastward and met Benjamin F. Ficklin, who was unknowingly allied with the US army.<sup>38</sup> Smith inquired of him where Majors and Russell’s supply trains were. Knowing Smith’s intent to burn the supply wagons, Ficklin declined to betray their location.<sup>39</sup> Later in the day at Green River, Smith found the Tenth Infantry of the army, or part of it, with a light battery camped near the road. Smith recalled:

On the road, seeing a large cloud of dust at a distance up the [Green] river on the old Mormon road, I sent scouts to see what caused it. They returned, overtaking me at Sandy [Fork], and reported a train of twenty-six large freight wagons. We took supper and started at dark. After traveling fourteen miles, we came up to the train, but discovered the teamsters were drunk, and knowing that drunken men were easily excited and always ready to fight, and remembering my positive orders not to hurt anyone except in self-defence, we remained in ambush until after midnight.<sup>40</sup> I then sent scouts [Henry Day and Henry Jackson] to thoroughly examine the appearance of their camp, to note the number of wagons and men and to report all they discovered. When they returned and reported twenty-six wagons in two lines a short distance apart [about 150 yards apart], I concluded that counting one teamster to each wagon and throwing in eight or ten extra men would make their force about forty. I thought we would be a match for them, and so ordered an advance to their camp.<sup>41</sup>

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35. William Clark, “A Trip Across the Plains in 1857,” 192.

36. Philo Dibble, journal, 9; Hamilton Gardner, ed., “A Territorial Militiaman in the Utah War, Journal of Newton Tuttle,” 306.

37. *Contributor*, 3:272

38. Tracy Albert, “Journal of Captain Tracy Albert,” 5n14.

39. Captain Jesse A. Gove, *Utah Expedition, 1857–1858*, 73.

40. *Contributor*, 3:272.

41. Kate B. Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 10:235–36.

As Smith and his troops neared the train, they discovered there were twice as many wagons and double the men. Smith's men thought he would make casual inquiries and pass their advance upon the train as a joke, but Smith felt it was not a time for joking. Smith led his company forward until their horses' heads were lit by firelight. When he looked back at his twenty men, he realized that the end of his troops could not be seen in the darkness; it looked as though there could be a hundred or more. Smith asked for the captain and John Dawson stepped forward. Smith told Dawson to quickly get all his men and their personal property out of the wagons for he "meant to put a little fire into them." Dawson exclaimed, "For God's sake, don't burn the trains," to which Smith replied that it was for His sake that he was going to burn them.<sup>42</sup> Dawson stated that he didn't think Smith had enough men to burn the wagons. Smith bluffed that if he didn't have enough, all he had to do was whistle.<sup>43</sup> The teamsters were very frightened as they came forward to stack their guns and huddle under guard until they realized they would not be harmed. Then they laughed and said they were happy for the wagons to burn so they wouldn't have to drive them anymore. A tar rope in one wagon was to be used, as it was said, to hang Brigham Young; it made a great bonfire instead.<sup>44</sup>

When an army messenger came into camp, Smith demanded his dispatches, and the man replied that they were only verbal. Smith said: "I told him if he lied to me his life was not worth a straw. He became terrified, in fact I never saw a man more frightened. The weather was a little cool but his jaws fairly clattered." The verbal orders were that they were not to sleep and were to keep a night guard because there were Mormons in the field; they would be escorted in the morning. While Smith and his company were involved with the first train, a guard came from the second train. Smith told the guard to go back and not to move until he came to take care of the second train. The guard returned to his train, squatted by a wagon wheel, and never moved until Smith arrived.

Smith and Dawson went to the second train where Dawson shook the wagon master's wagon and yelled for Bill (R. W. Barret). Groggy with sleep, Bill grumbled until Dawson exclaimed, "Damn it man, get up, or you'll be burned to a cinder in five minutes!"<sup>45</sup> Smith's men carried out the same itinerary with the second train and were spread thin guarding, but

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42. *Contributor*, 3:272-74.

43. Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West*, 10:236.

44. Terry, *Great Utah War*, 10.

45. *Contributor*, 3:272-74.

the teamsters never figured it out. Smith asked Dawson about his freight since he needed overcoats for his men. Smith also asked if there was any powder in the wagons. If so, Smith would take Dawson with him to fire the wagons. Dawson was terrified at that dangerous proposition and searched diligently for overcoats and powder. He found a lot of saltpeter and sulphur that were almost as hazardous as powder. Smith said they would have to take the risk of injury anyway. Dawson begged Smith, "For the good Lord's sake don't take me, I've been sick and am not well yet, and don't want to be hurt."<sup>46</sup> Smith said, "There were many such laughable incidents connected with the adventures of the night, if we had dared to laugh."<sup>47</sup>

Smith respected Dawson's frank desire to not torch the wagons and instead took his Irish follower, Big James, who was not afraid. They both made torches and when the train was ready to fire, a Ute came asking for two wagon covers, some flour, and soap. When Smith filled his order, the Ute was elated. Smith and Big James then rode with their torches from wagon to wagon and set the wagon covers on fire in the blowing wind. To Smith, the covers seemed to catch fire very slowly. When he said so to his companion, Big James swung his long torch overhead and said, "By St. Patrick, aint it beautiful! I never saw anything go better in all my life."<sup>48</sup>

Smith's account continued: "On completing this task, I told [Dawson] that we were going just a little way off and that if he or his men molested the trains or undertook to put the fire out, they would be instantly killed. We rode away, leaving the wagons ablaze."<sup>49</sup> The wagon masters