CHAPTER 10

# POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC ARISTARCHY OF THE KINGDOM, 1851–1869

*If the people of the United States will let us alone for ten years, we will ask no odds of them.*

—Brigham Young, 24 July 1847[1]

*Electioneer Experience: Chauncey W. West*. When his family joined the church in upstate New York in 1842, Chauncey W. West was only fifteen years old. His father and future electioneer colleague, Alva West, was a poor tenant farmer. Chauncey seemed destined for the same life's work until, in a rare move, the missionaries ordained him a priest. The ordination surely opened the way for Charles Wandell, president of Joseph's election campaign in New York, to call him in 1844 to be a traveling electioneer in the region near his home.[2] At seventeen, West was the second youngest electioneer in Joseph's campaign. The diligence, energy, and loyalty that he showed in that assignment would in time lead to priesthood advancement with its attendant religious and political responsibilities.

Following Joseph's death, West moved to Nauvoo with his parents. A church leader there described him as "a [young] man of untiring energy and industry," whose "boundless hope doubtless led him into enterprises from which other men would shrink."[3] Within a few months, church

*Chauncey W. West's call at age seventeen to electioneer for Joseph led to an array of leadership opportunities in the Great Basin. His career encapsulates the electioneer cadre's experience. 1867 photo by Savage and Ottinger courtesy of Church History Library.*

leaders ordained him a seventy, again one of the youngest ever appointed. He also married seventeen-year-old Mary Hoagland. After the expulsion from Nauvoo, the West family settled in Winter Quarters, where West's father, mother, and brother perished that winter. Undaunted, West led the rest of his father's family to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. Brigham called West and thirty-six other men in 1852 to serve missions in East Asia. West worked tirelessly in Bombay and Ceylon preaching and trying to raise money to go to Siam, his original assignment. His mission was a series of persecutions, privations, and frustrations. Never able to reach Siam, West and a few others sailed back to San Francisco and arrived in Utah in July 1855. Despite these hardships, West remained positive. He wrote, "I now report myself on hand for duty whenever the servants of God call, for the priesthood is my law."[4]

Like that of his fellow electioneers, West's fealty to theodemocratic Zion motivated him to accept church leadership as binding as law and to submit to any duty in any location. In the Great Basin community, the duties of such religiously successful electioneers often included service in political positions, which led to enhanced socioeconomic status. This was true for West and other uneducated eastern farm boys who had exhibited fervor, loyalty, and skill. As a result, they were becoming powerful political, social, and economic elites in Deseret's aristarchic theodemocracy.

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## THE ELECTIONEERS' POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

### GOVERNING THE GREAT BASIN THEODEMOCRATIC KINGDOM

The first territorial election of 1851 showed continuing electioneer dominance in the aristarchy of the Great Basin kingdom (see table 10.1). The Territorial House of Representatives had twenty-five members, twelve of whom were electioneers. The House continued to have a high percentage of electioneer veterans throughout this period, particularly when compared to their percentage in the overall population. The Territorial Council (which became the Utah Senate in 1896) consisted of thirteen men, four of whom were electioneers. Electioneers held 30 percent of Territorial Council seats, above their numbers in the male population by more than three to one. The year 1855 saw a precipitous drop to just under 8 percent and a ratio of less than two to one. After rebounding in 1860 to 15 percent and a ratio of five to one, the numbers in 1865 would reach an astounding 46 percent and a ratio of twenty-three to one.

**Table 10.1. Percentage of Electioneers Elected as Utah Territorial Legislators, 1851–1865**

| *Year* | *Electioneers as Percentage of Total Priesthood** | *Council Members* | *Members of House of Representatives* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1851 | 8.5% | 30.8% (4/13) | 48.0% (12/25) |
| 1855 | 4.9% | 7.7% (1/13) | 57.7% (15/26) |
| 1860 | 3.3% | 15.4% (2/13) | 20.0% (5/25) |
| 1865 | 2.1% | 46.2% (6/13) | 23.1% (6/26) |

* There are no definitive numbers of total priesthood holders during these years. I have used a formula to derive an approximate number of priesthood-age men in the Utah Territory using census and church almanac numbers.

Why the volatility? The 1855 decline can be explained by men having been "reassigned" to election in the House or called to lead proselyting or colonizing missions. As to the incredible rebounds in 1860 and 1865, the answer may be the Civil War. Brigham and other church leaders saw the conflict as a likely fulfillment of Joseph's prophecy in 1832.[5] Considering

the possibility that the United States would soon collapse, Brigham wanted the kingdom ready to independently govern the Great Basin. It is likely that electioneer church leaders were reassigned from other roles into the Council. By the end of the war, they constituted almost half of the Council's number. In fact, of the thirteen Council positions, ten were held by apostles—five of whom were electioneers. Of the three non-apostolic members, two were electioneers. One was Daniel Spencer, president of the 1844 mission in Massachusetts, mayor of both Nauvoo and Salt Lake, and Salt Lake Stake president. The other, Aaron Johnson, was a former Territorial Speaker of the House with significant political and governing experience. Preparing for a government that might begin to expand beyond the Great Basin, Brigham assigned his best men to the council.

Local elections in two Latter-day Saint towns further illustrate the depth of theodemocracy and the involvement of the electioneers. Parowan was the center of the Iron County Mission. On 16 January 1851 the mission's leaders called for an election the next day to organize the county. Apostle, chief justice of Deseret, and Iron County Mission president George A. Smith led the nomination process. Electioneers claimed six of fifteen positions, including the five most powerful: representative to the State of Deseret, Jefferson Hunt; associate judges, Edson Whipple and Elisha H. Groves; magistrates, Aaron Farr and John D. Lee.[6] The next day, the men of the Iron County Mission, in theodemocratic fashion, unanimously elected all of the nominees.

The next month, news reached the Great Basin that Congress had created the Territory of Utah, requiring new elections. Brigham toured the Basin, supervising the nomination process for territorial, county, and even locally elected officers. On 16 May 1851 Brigham met with the men of Parowan and counseled on nominations, reversing most results of an election held a mere four months ago. They nominated John M. Bernhisel (electioneer) as delegate to Congress, George A. Smith to the Territorial Council, and Elisha Groves (electioneer) to the Territorial House for the upcoming August elections.

While the electioneer-filled county offices stood, the council turned to nominating and electing local officials. A mayor, aldermen, and councilors were chosen, including electioneers John D. Lee (alderman) and Joel H.

Johnson and Elijah Newman (councilors). With selection and election completed, Brigham addressed the men regarding government. He entitled his remarks "Union Is Power"—a phrase from Joseph Smith's 1844 pamphlet *Views*. When the territorial elections took place on 4 August 1851, all nominees were unanimously elected, as expected under theodemocratic rule. The pattern of general, regional, and local church leaders counseling together to nominate men for government office and the people voting unanimously to elect them continued without significant interruption in Latter-day Saint settlements through the 1860s.

Before 1869, only in San Bernardino did theodemocracy struggle. Initially the colony accepted theodemocratic governance under electioneer apostles Amasa Lyman and Charles C. Rich. After nearly three years, the first election of city officers occurred in 1854. Lyman was nominated and then elected as mayor, and Rich and fellow electioneer Quartus S. Sparks won office on the five-man city council.[7] Political unity, however, lasted only a year. Trouble began with elderly electioneer Henry G. Sherwood. He had embraced the restored gospel in 1832 and played an instrumental role in strengthening the church during the next twenty years. Joseph had placed him on high councils in Kirtland and Nauvoo. He had been elected as city marshal in Nauvoo and had labored at Joseph's Nauvoo campaign headquarters during the 1844 election. Arriving in the first pioneer company to Salt Lake Valley, Sherwood spent the next six years surveying settlements in the Basin.

Called to help settle and survey San Bernardino in 1853, Sherwood irritated Lyman and Rich with his words and actions. They wrote to Brigham asking if there was anywhere in the "wide range of Zion's domains" where the seventy-year-old Sherwood could be "rendered useful." The two leaders, forty-one and forty-three respectively, described Sherwood as "too conceited to be taught [and] too old to be managed by men so much his junior."[8] Sherwood left for Salt Lake City in 1854, only to return to San Bernardino the following year with another group of settlers. Together they refused to buy land from the church's ranch, knowing that government land was available at far lower prices. Contention and dissension followed.

By 1855 San Bernardino had become an outpost for those who wished to stay nominally Latter-day Saints but chafed under the realities

of theodemocracy. California gave them physical and, they hoped, political distance. Several even opposed the apostles in subsequent elections but were dealt with sternly. As noted previously, three men were excommunicated for not submitting politically to their leaders' direction.[9]

Rich reported to Brigham in May 1856 that Sherwood "now stands at the head of the 'anti-Mormon' movement in this place; he makes speeches and uses his influence against the church."[10] Sherwood called Rich and Lyman sycophants of Brigham and threatened to disclose alleged secrets about the three leaders.

While opposition to Rich and Lyman grew, it never gained enough power to change San Bernardino's theodemocracy. Yet conflict continued to occur, leading to church discipline, legal action, and even violence. Before evacuating San Bernardino in 1857, some of the apostates reconciled, including Sherwood.[11] Ultimately, Brigham's vision of theodemocracy continued to thrive in every Latter-day Saint settlement except San Bernardino. After the Utah War, Brigham chose not to reestablish the community.[12]

## UTAH WAR

Brigham's theodemocracy and the federal government had been inching toward a confrontation for a decade. The Compromise of 1850 created Utah and other territories under popular sovereignty. Brigham and church leaders, of course, were thrilled with the idea, seeing popular sovereignty as an instrument to maintain self-rule. Yet after the church publicly proclaimed the practice of plural marriage, the nation with its Protestant and Victorian sensibilities painted the Latter-day Saints as immoral and enslaved by despotic rule—and therefore subject to forfeiture of any claim of popular sovereignty.

Popular sovereignty, however, was already bleeding. National angst over ruffian settlers in Kansas violently imposing their viewpoints spotlighted the weaknesses of the doctrine. Utah became increasingly cited in public arguments about Kansas because popular sovereignty was allowing "un-American Mormons" self-rule. In part, the fallout of the Kansas and Utah debates gave rise to the Republican Party in 1856. Its motto to extin-

guish the "twin relics of barbarism"—slavery and polygamy—put Democrats on the defensive, including newly elected president James Buchanan. With exaggerated rumors of Latter-day Saint despotism, public uproar over polygamy, and the chance to intimidate the secession-contemplating South, he acted.[13]

Buchanan replaced Brigham with Alfred Cumming as governor. An army of twenty-five hundred men accompanied Cumming to suppress the Saints. Brigham was purposely not informed. On 1 July 1857 Salt Lake City mayor and electioneer Abraham O. Smoot learned in Independence, Missouri, that a large contingent of soldiers was heading for Utah to forcibly replace Brigham. Smoot and his companions raced west at full speed, reaching Salt Lake on 23 July. Brigham and many of the valley Saints were in Big Cottonwood Canyon preparing for the next day's celebration—the tenth anniversary of the pioneers' arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. Smoot found Brigham on the twenty-fourth and relayed the news. Church leaders had heard rumors of an army for two months, but now it was confirmed. At nightfall Brigham stunned the revelers when he announced the government's intentions. He instructed everyone to return to their homes the following day.[14]

Brigham readied the territory for what he deemed an invasion. He activated the territorial militia, including its senior electioneer officers.[15] Placing the territory under martial law, he prohibited the selling of grain or other foodstuffs to passing emigrants. Messages were sent to missionaries around the world and to distant colonies to return and help defend Zion. Brigham sent electioneer Samuel W. Richards to England to call home all missionaries and deliver two letters. The first was to President James Buchanan informing him that the army should not enter Utah until a peace commission met. The second was for Latter-day Saint sympathizer Thomas L. Kane, pleading for him to aid the Saints once again. The *New York Times* interviewed Richards. His story, eloquently denying the Saints were in rebellion, put their perspective in the national eye.

For the electioneers it felt like mid-1840s Nauvoo had come back from the dead. Although Latter-day Saint self-rule employed the outward mechanics and doctrines of American politics, it was viewed as despotic. Branding the Saints as "un-American," as in Illinois and later across the

nation, made moving against them palatable. Once again the Saints' strong political influence was seen as an obstacle to national expansion warranting coercive action. Would this be a repeat of Nauvoo, with leaders murdered and the people forced to find another home? Or would it be Missouri—a war of extermination, rape, theft, and expulsion? With Kansas already bleeding, it seemed Utah was next.

Church leaders avoided direct confrontation with the approaching army, hoping for negotiations. Several electioneers led or took part in raids to burn the US Army's supplies and scatter its livestock.[16] William R. R. Stowell's experience proved particularly important. US soldiers captured Stowell, who tried to dispose of his journal and orders because they revealed the Saints' strategies. While trying to do so, he twice remembered hearing a voice: "Keep them, for they will do more good than bad." Army personnel found and read his papers. Stowell boldly declared that the plans were not only true but would succeed. With supplies running low, winter setting in, and Stowell's intimidating intelligence, the army chose to halt for the winter. They charged Stowell with treason. He escaped, was recaptured, and eventually received immunity.[17]

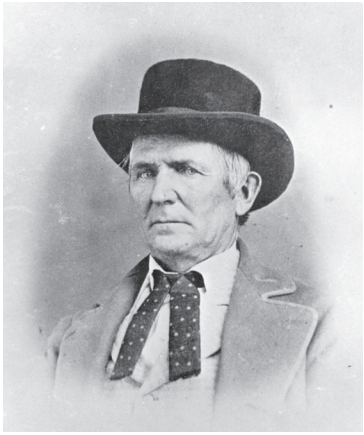
With past persecutions in mind, Brigham ordered the Saints to preemptively evacuate northern Utah. David Evans, Dominicus Carter, and other Utah Valley electioneer leaders prepared for the influx from the exodus. The experience of electioneer Simeon A. Dunn was typical of other Saints forced to flee. Recently widowed, Dunn loaded a few provisions and his children into his wagon and left Brigham City early in April 1858. At Kay's Creek (Kaysville), his three-month-old son Henry fell ill and died. Leaving his family as comfortable as possible, Dunn returned the little body to the Brigham City cemetery. He considered spending the night in his home, but it was so quiet and lonely that he could not bear it. Instead he slept beside his oxen in the stable. Returning to his family, they continued to Payson. The Dunns bivouacked there for several months until told to return home.[18] Thirty thousand Saints made the journey south.

Thomas L. Kane persuaded Alfred Cumming to come to Salt Lake City for negotiations. The parties agreed that Brigham would make way for Cumming in exchange for immunity for the Saints and the stationing of the army forty miles distant from Salt Lake City. Electioneer veteran

Howard Egan escorted Kane back to Washington, DC, with details of the settlement. After the army built Camp Floyd in Cedar Valley, the Saints returned to their towns and homes.

Electioneer leader Joseph Curtis once heard Brigham state that "all hell could not drive us from these mountains."[19] Curtis noted the irony of the army coming to suppress a rebellion only to find the people at peace. Had they figured it out sooner, he wrote sarcastically, "a vast expense might have been saved."[20] In fact, "Buchanan's Blunder," as the incident came to be called nationally, became an economic windfall for the Saints: when after three years the army abandoned Utah for the Civil War, four million dollars of surplus equipment went to the Saints. However, economic "victory" in the Utah War was Pyrrhic. The federal government had proved it was ultimately in charge. Utah would not have a Latter-day Saint governor after Brigham until statehood, forty-two years later. Theodemocratic Zion would now always be contested. The Saints would not to be left alone as a people and kingdom apart ever again.

While direct battle with the US Army was avoided, the Mountain Meadows Massacre ensured that the Utah War was not bloodless. On 11 September 1857 in southern Utah, Latter-day Saints and Paiute Indians butchered 120 Arkansas emigrants en route to California. The company, unable to resupply because of Brigham's martial law edict, had grown increasingly irritated while traveling south. Minor disputes in settlements boiled over in Cedar City. Both sides gave insults and made threats. After the wagons left town, stake president and militia commander Isaac Haight sent word to his military superior asking for permission to go after the emigrants. The reply was to leave them alone. Haight and others would not let it go, and they concocted a plan to have Paiute Indians ambush the wagon train. Haight recruited electioneer standout John D. Lee to assemble and direct the Paiutes. However, Lee and the Indians attacked at an earlier time and place than agreed. The botched raid led to a five-day siege of the emigrants, who knew that their attackers included Latter-day Saints. Fearful that news of the Saints' involvement amid a fluid war environment could bring federal retaliation, Haight, with implied consent from his superior, changed the plan—all the emigrants must die. He sent a contingent of the militia to Lee with the order.



*John D. Lee directed the Mountain Meadows Massacre and was the only conspirator tried and convicted. Photo courtesy of Sherratt Library Special Collections, Southern Utah University.*

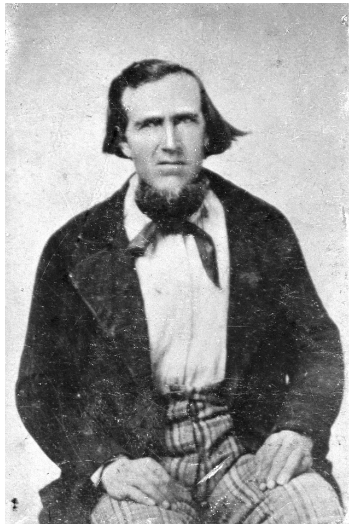
On 11 September, Lee entered the camp under a false flag of truce and brokered a cease-fire. He promised the company safe passage from the "Indian threat" back to Cedar City if they would surrender their firearms. Seeing no other choice, the emigrants agreed. One cannot miss the painful irony of Latter-day Saints, in official militia assignments, confiscating their adversaries' weapons—exactly what their Missouri and Illinois enemies had done to them before killing and expelling them. At a predetermined signal, the militiamen murdered the men while the Paiutes and other militiamen killed the women and older children. Seventeen young surviving children were given to local families. Immediately, Lee and Haight covered up their involvement, misinforming others that the Paiutes alone were responsible. Over time, however, information leaked out that pointed to militia involvement. In later years, Brigham released Haight and others from their leadership positions. Some were also excommunicated.[21]

Electioneer leader John D. Lee directed the massacre. He lived in nearby Fort Harmony, where he served as an alderman, militia commander, and representative from Iron County to the Territorial House. He was no stranger to violence. Continually beaten as a child and later abandoned, Lee had a vicious temper. After accepting the church in 1837, he moved to Missouri just in time for the Mormon War. In fact, he had been part of the voting scuffle that initiated the conflict. As a member of the official Caldwell County militia and the Latter-day Saint vigilante "Danite" group, he had fought at the Battle of Crooked River. Intense loyalty toward Joseph gave Lee unprecedented status. Before Joseph's campaign, Lee en-

tered plural marriage and was placed in the Council of Fifty. He directed the 1844 election campaign efforts in Kentucky.

After Joseph's murder, Lee returned to Nauvoo, named his newborn son Joseph Hyrum Lee, and passed his unflinching fealty to Brigham, becoming the new prophet's "lifeguard" by "sword and pistol."[22] Lee continued to serve Brigham and the church as a member of the Council of Fifty during the exodus west and in the council's governing years of Deseret. In 1850 Lee had the most wives and the most land wealth of any electioneer veterans. The 1860 census reported Lee's assets as an astounding forty thousand dollars in land and ten thousand dollars in personal wealth. However, after years of investigations, Lee was indicted for his role in the massacre. In 1876 he was convicted, taken to Mountain Meadows, and executed.

Electioneer Jacob Hamblin was a primary figure in the massacre's aftermath. Baptized in 1842, Hamblin campaigned for Joseph in the mid-Atlantic states. He was endowed with his wife in the Nauvoo Temple only to have her abandon him and their four children in Winter Quarters. Hamblin remarried and came west in 1850, settling in Tooele. While there he exhibited extraordinary talent in communicating and negotiating with local Indian tribes. Four years later Brigham sent him to southern Utah as an "apostle to the Lamanites." Hamblin quickly gained the respect of the tribes of central and southern Utah.



*The Mountain Meadows Massacre occurred near Jacob Hamblin's ranch. Not one of the conspirators, he buried the more than one hundred victims. Photo of Hamblin courtesy of Church History Library.*

In 1856 Hamblin built a ranch in the Mountain Meadows valley. In compliance with church leaders' Reformation emphasis on plural marriage, he rode to Salt Lake City in August 1857 to marry a second wife and

to escort Indian chiefs to a war council there. En route he met the Arkansas emigrant company in central Utah. When they asked where a good site would be to recuperate and feed their animals before crossing the desert to California, Hamblin suggested Mountain Meadows. Ironically, on 11 September, while Hamblin was being sealed to his plural wife, John D. Lee was leading the massacre at Mountain Meadows. On the trail back home, Hamblin heard about the bloodshed. He encountered Lee, and the two former electioneers talked. Hamblin later reported that as an emotional Lee rambled on, he disclosed some Latter-day Saint involvement, including himself.[23] Upon returning to his homestead, Hamblin visited the site of the carnage and later recalled, "Oh! Horrible indeed was the sight."[24] He counted and buried 120 corpses. He accounted for all seventeen surviving children and turned them over to a federal agent who returned them to kin in Arkansas.

## CIVIL WAR

When telegrams in April 1861 declared the fall of Fort Sumter, Brigham assured President Lincoln that Utah stood with the Union. To be sure, Brigham and other Saints remembered Joseph's revelation prophesying the rebellion of South Carolina and an all-consuming war. The church straddled support of the Union with a measured anticipation of apocalyptic destruction paving the way for an independent Zion. Indeed, many Saints believed that soon God would take vengeance on the United States, in large part because of Joseph's assassination.

The war engulfed some electioneers directly. William H. Miles was serving as the Eastern States Mission president when hostilities began. He received a letter from twenty Saints in the Grand Army of the Potomac asking him to come and minister to them—a request he was unable to fulfill, having been recalled to Salt Lake City. Miles returned after the war to resume his role as mission president.[25] Lucius Scovil was a missionary in New York when the war erupted. He immediately mailed copies of Joseph's prophecy to several of his relatives. He advised eastern Saints "to wind up their business and leave Babylon" that spring.[26]

In a war often described as fratricidal, the electioneer brotherhood included those who fought and died on both sides. While most of these men had long separated from the church, it is nonetheless ironic that they found themselves fighting one another in a war that together they had campaigned to prevent. After Joseph's death, Martin H. Tanner alienated himself from his Latter-day Saint family. He moved to New York City and fought for the Union in the war.[27] William D. Lyman, after his mission to South Carolina, watched his parents and most of his siblings die at Winter Quarters. Grief-stricken and disenchanted with the church, he left, taking his remaining brother and sister with him to Tennessee, presumably to be close to the family of his wife Maria. "In April 1862 he was incarcerated in the rebel prison at Madison, Ga., because of his outspoken Northern sentiments." He got out by enlisting in the Tennessee cavalry and subsequently fought in several battles. Later he moved to Missouri, living out his life as a Methodist.[28]

Lorenzo Moore of Illinois served his electioneer mission in Louisiana. In the wake of Joseph's murder, he returned to Nauvoo and participated in temple rites. However, he soon left the main body of Saints to follow Lyman Wight to Texas, where he became a prosperous farmer and county commissioner. During the Civil War he fought in the cavalry of General John Hood's famous Texas Brigade. Following the war, he returned to his life in Texas.[29] John W. Grierson, originally from Maryland, campaigned for Joseph in Tennessee but did not return to Nauvoo after the prophet's death. In 1849 he converted to James J. Strang's movement and traveled to Iowa as a successful missionary for that cause. He later left Strangism and moved to South Carolina. A letter to his daughter in 1864 shows him fighting for the Confederacy in Mississippi. A decade after the war, while residing in Mississippi, Grierson encountered RLDS missionaries. He accepted their message and became the presiding elder in Mississippi.[30]

Perhaps the most intriguing story of Civil War electioneer Saints was the family of William E. Higginbotham. Converts in 1842 of fellow electioneer Jedediah M. Grant, William and his wife Louisa sold their extensive possessions (including a slave) and moved to Nauvoo. William labored in his native Virginia for Joseph's campaign. After Joseph's murder, William and his wife participated in temple ceremonies. At Winter

Quarters they learned that Louisa's father had died, leaving her a considerable inheritance in Virginia. They decided to go there to settle the estate. When their daughter Nancy married local merchant David Perry, who bitterly opposed the church and refused to let her gather to Utah, William and Louisa chose to stay. By 1860 William was again a very wealthy farmer with two slaves. When the war began, their son Simon and son-in-law David Perry enlisted in the Confederate army.

In 1862 Simon and David returned from battle wounded and stricken with typhoid fever. Though they would live, in a twist of fate the disease killed William, Nancy and all but one of her siblings, and Perry's parents. Now a widower, Perry took the counsel of his mother-in-law to investigate the church. Clinging to the doctrine of eternal marriage, he converted. A local elder baptized him in the winter of 1863 with a foot of snow on the ground. Later that year, Louisa and her daughter Eliza fled Virginia with two thousand dollars in gold coins, crossing federal lines with the help of a Confederate officer. They rendezvoused in Union-occupied Kentucky with Simon and David, who had deserted the Confederate army. The family emigrated to Utah, where Perry then married Eliza, the remaining sibling of his deceased wife. He later became a prominent business leader.[31]

Church leadership, believing that the Civil War might destroy all nations and governments, prepared the kingdom of God to fill the void. In 1862 a constitutional convention re-created the State of Deseret and applied to Congress for admission. Denied, the legislature of Deseret instead met after each territorial session—a kind of government in exile—and enacted identical legislation. However, the war ended and the United States, though bloodied and bruised, still stood. It was not yet time for the political kingdom of God to ascend.

## THE ELECTIONEERS' SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In 1852 Orson Pratt publicly pronounced the doctrine of plural marriage. The Saints were required to accept the doctrine, though not all were required to live it.[32] Plural marriage quickly became the preferred and most honored institution of marriage.[33] Church leaders practiced plural marriage more than their congregants and strongly counseled regional and

local leaders to model the practice. Since those of higher church rank were viewed as more likely to attain exaltation, they became attractive marriage candidates for women seeking the same blessing. In fact, studies show that church office was more important than wealth in predicting plural marriage. A man was much more likely to enter plural marriage in the five years following a rise in ecclesiastical rank than in the five years previous. Practicing plural marriage was not a prerequisite to higher priesthood office or its attendant duties, but it did become a responsibility for those who received such positions.[34]

*The first wife of electioneer Franklin D. Richards, Jane Snyder was humble and courageous in undertaking plural marriage. Photo ca. 1873 by J. Hoffman courtesy of Church History Library. © IRI. Used by permission.*

Two-thirds of the electioneers in good standing practiced plural marriage between 1851 and 1869.[35] With fourteen wives, apostle Franklin D. Richards topped the list. His first wife, Jane Snyder, was humble and courageous in living plural marriage. Jane cared for Richard's first plural wife, Elizabeth McFate, in 1846–47 while he was away on a mission. However, McFate succumbed in Winter Quarters, as did Franklin and Jane's firstborn daughter, four-year-old Wealthy. Now completely alone and ill herself, she later penned, "I only lived because I could not die."[36] Even with such an inauspicious beginning to their family's plural marriages, Jane continued to accept the practice. During the Reformation, Richards added seven plural wives to the four he already had, while marrying three more in later years. Some electioneers needed prodding from their leaders to enter plural marriage. Prominent leader Samuel W. Richards, brother of Franklin, abstained until Brigham ordered him to enter the practice.[37] At first Charles W. Hubbard did not marry

plurally even when advised to do so. However, with the consent of his wife, he eventually married again.[38] The median number of plural wives among electioneers in this time period was three, with the average mean closer to four (see table 10.2). Electioneers generally married more wives than others who practiced plural marriage because the former's higher religious and political rank encouraged it.

**Table 10.2. Percentage of Polygamous Men in Relation to Number of Wives, 1851–1869***

| *Number of Wives* | *Electioneers (200 total)* | *Manti* | *Great Basin* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 32% (63) | 66% | 66% |
| 3 | 32% (63) | 21% | 21% |
| 4 | 12% (24) | 8% | 7% |
| 5+ | 25% (50) | 5% | 6% |

* Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 129. Daynes draws on Stanley Ivins's 1956 study to provide the Great Basin statistics.

The Reformation of 1856–57 created a spike in plural marriages as men and women clamored to prove their loyalty to the church. The resulting wave of marriages led apostle Wilford Woodruff to write, partly in jest, that "nearly all are trying to get wives, until there is hardly a girl 14 years old in Utah but what is married, or just going to be."[39] A comprehensive study of plural marriage in Utah noted that in 1856–57, 65 percent more plural marriages took place than in any other two-year period in Latter-day Saint history.[40] The same was true for the electioneers. In 1856 forty-six of them married sixty-four wives, and in 1857 fifty-five married eighty-seven wives. Ten married plurally in both years. The increase in demand for plural wives continued into the 1880s, even among surviving electioneers.

Many electioneers and their wives found plural marriage difficult, adding friction to relationships already stretched by Zion's demands. Israel Barlow's third wife doubted the principle until receiving a definitive sign during prayer.[41] Dominicus Carter, a church and political leader in Provo,

struggled at times with two of his six wives. One neighbor remembered being asked to give a priesthood blessing to one of Carter's wives: "I found hardness existing between her and her husband and some others of his wives. I refused to lay on hands until all difficulty was settled. I laid hands on her the same evening; all difficulties being settled, she got well."[42] Later, Carter's second wife, Sylvia, took her two small children and left him, deciding she could not live in polygamy.[43] Norton Jacob's first wife objected to his taking a second wife. His journal shows that although she finally relented, it produced a domestic life of constant discord.[44]

The second of the twin evils denounced in the Republican Party platform, polygamy took a back seat only to slavery. As the Civil War raged, however, the federal government did not lift a finger to enforce new anti-bigamy laws. Regardless, enforcement would have proved difficult. Local probate judges were all Latter-day Saints, including several electioneer members. Because the courts of first jurisdiction were subject to territorial law, convictions were next to impossible.

## THE ELECTIONEERS' ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

### WEALTH

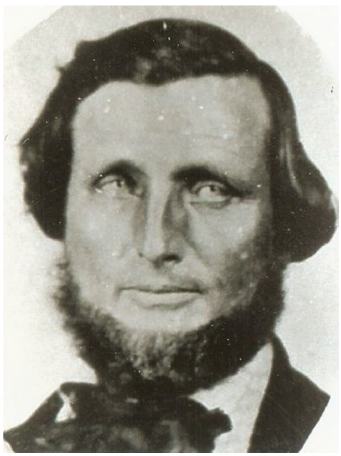
The wealth of electioneers, polygamous and monogamous, relative to heads of household in Salt Lake City in 1860 yields insightful comparisons (see table 10.3). Monogamous electioneers were more likely to have below-average wealth, probably because they lived in settlements across the Great Basin where economic opportunity was significantly less than in Salt Lake City. In smaller towns, land was the measure of wealth; and because land allotment was assigned by family size, monogamous men were at a disadvantage. An astounding 44 percent of polygamous electioneers, however, held wealth two and half times greater than that of other Latter-day Saint men. Yet there was more to their wealth than the land-distribution model. Because many electioneers were local or regional political and religious leaders, they often were assigned (or assigned themselves) to water, logging, and other resource rights. Furthermore, they were better connected to local, regional, and Basin-wide leaders and thus more aware of

economic opportunities. With two-thirds of them practicing financially advantageous plural marriage, the electioneers were as much an economic aristarchy as a religious and political one.

**Table 10.3. Electioneers' Wealth in 1860**

| *Wealth* | *Polygamous Electioneers (181 total)* | *Monogamous Electioneers (52)* | *Salt Lake City** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elite ($2,000+) | 44% (80) | 17% (9) | 18% |
| Average ($200–$1,999) | 51% (93) | 58% (30) | 68% |
| Below Average (< $200) | 4% (8) | 25% (13) | 14% |

* The Salt Lake City numbers come from Travis, "Social Stratification and the Dissolution of the City of Zion in Salt Lake City," 138.

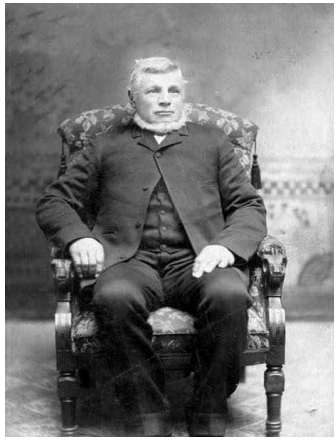


*Levi Stewart's post-electioneer career included positions of trust for decades throughout Utah. Unknown date and photographer. Courtesy of Church History Library.*

The wealthiest electioneer in 1860 was John D. Lee. He had almost double the wealth of his next wealthiest peer, Levi Stewart. Ironically, Lee and Stewart were childhood friends in Illinois. Their stories illustrate the electioneers' rise to economic prominence owing to previous service and loyalty to Joseph's vision for Zion. As adults with families in 1837, Lee and Stewart separately entertained missionaries, joined the church, and moved to Missouri. After being involved in the Mormon War, they moved to Nauvoo. The following year they labored together as missionaries in Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In 1844 Lee headed campaign efforts in Kentucky while Stewart electioneered in Illinois.

Levi Stewart's economic success in Utah also began with his electioneering mission.[45] Shortly after his return from that assignment, he was unexpectedly made a high priest. In the Nauvoo Temple, Stewart and his wife were part of the less than 1 percent of Latter-day Saints who received the second anointing. Like many other electioneers, he was instructed to enter plural marriage before 1850. When Stewart arrived in Utah in 1848, his proven loyalty along with his priesthood, political, and plural marriage status qualified him for the extensive plots of land given to him. Stewart leveraged these assets to become one of the leading merchants in Salt Lake City and an officer of the Brigham Young Express Company. In 1865 Brigham instructed Stewart to sell everything and move to Big Cottonwood to set up a paper mill. Stewart obediently did so.

Two years later, comfortable and wealthy, Stewart again heard from Brigham, who had decided to restart the recently abandoned remote settlement of Kanab. Brigham chose Stewart to lead this second attempt. Fifty-eight-year-old Stewart sold his possessions and moved with his wives yet again. Called as bishop of Kanab, he supervised the planting of crops, the assignment of land, and the building of a sawmill. Although his wealth measured in dollars dropped significantly since his earlier time in Salt Lake City, he was by far the wealthiest man in the area throughout the early 1870s, with ownership of land, cattle, the sawmill, and the regional Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution. In 1874 he divested himself of his wealth and holdings and presided over the town's attempt at consecration in the United Order. When the order collapsed three years later, he had to begin financially anew—again. Deciding to open a mercantile store, Stewart and his son left for Salt Lake City to procure supplies. Stewart died of a stroke before arriving.[46]



*Electioneer Jonathan O. Duke, who became a religious and political leader in Provo, Utah, named his twins after Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Photo ca. 1865 courtesy of Darby Smith.*

Jonathan O. Duke held the median slot in terms of electioneer wealth in 1860. At that time he was a stonemason in Provo with three wives and thirteen hundred dollars in assets. Born in England, he was raised as a Methodist and became a mason's apprentice. He emigrated to the United States in 1829. In 1837 his wife converted to the church while visiting Latter-day Saint relatives in Brooklyn. Despite reservations, Jonathan followed suit in 1839 and even served a mission to Massachusetts. By 1840 he had moved his family to Nauvoo, where he continued to work as a mason. Church leaders assigned him in 1844 to campaign in Delaware. So significant were the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum to him that exactly twenty years later he named his twin boys Joseph and Hyrum.

Duke and his family arrived in Utah in 1850 and immediately moved to Utah Valley. However, Duke chose to work in Salt Lake City on the church's public works. He longed to hear the preaching of Brigham and Heber C. Kimball (he first met the latter during his electioneering mission). When church leaders organized the town of Provo, they selected Duke as bishop and, in theodemocratic fashion, nominated and elected him as town councilman. Duke remained central to Provo politics and religion until his death in 1868.[47]

## OCCUPATIONS

By 1860, 78 percent of electioneers (85 percent if polygamous) were landed farmers or professionals (see table 10.4), a 30 percent increase from 1850. In contrast, the percentage of all Salt Lake City men in the same occupational category declined slightly. Even electioneers who were monogamous continued to rank higher in upward occupational mobility than their non-electioneer counterparts.

This pattern is illustrated in previously mentioned electioneer Chauncey W. West. After eleven years of dedicated missionary service from New York to Bombay, he returned to Salt Lake City in 1855 and was called to move to Ogden and enter plural marriage. Obedient, he immediately married a second wife and then seven more over the next twelve years. Church leaders ordained him bishop of the Ogden First Ward and presiding bishop of Weber County. They also nominated and elected him

**Table 10.4. Electioneers' Occupations in 1860**

| *Occupation* | *Electioneers (236 total)* | *Monogamous Electioneers (56)* | *Electioneers with Plural Wives (180)* | *Salt Lake City Residents** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Business-Professional** | 78% (183) | 54% (30) | 85% (153) | 34% |
| Skilled | 15% (35) | 30% (17) | 10% (18) | 36% |
| Unskilled | 8% (18) | 16% (9) | 5% (9) | 30% |

* The Salt Lake City numbers come from Travis, "Social Stratification and the Dissolution of the City of Zion in Salt Lake City," 138.
** Includes landed farmers.

to the Territorial House and the Ogden City Council. These positions and the land allotments he received to support his multiple wives expanded his local and regional business connections and yielded real estate opportunities. With his tireless work ethic and business acumen, he built and maintained a cattle ranch and several timber mills as well as a tannery, stable, blacksmith shop, meat market, mercantile shop, flour mill, hotel, and freight company. He became the largest employer in Ogden.

During the Civil War, church leaders called West to preside over the European Mission. In the course of constant travel from Ireland to Italy to oversee missionary work, he contracted a severe respiratory infection (from which he never fully recovered) and was released to return to Utah.

After a brief respite, West returned to his religious, political, and economic duties with renewed vigor. In 1868 Brigham decided to have the church contract the local work on the transcontinental railroad. Young asked Weber County leaders Ezra T. Benson, Lorin Farr, and Chauncey W. West (all electioneers) to carry the Central Pacific contract. As the youngest of the three, West assumed much of the work and was rewarded as one of the honored dignitaries at the "Golden Spike" ceremony the following year. West's rise to prosperity had been dramatic since his inauspicious beginnings as the son of a poor tenant farmer in upstate New York.

But West's incredible religious, political, and economic success was doomed. Central Pacific paid him less than half of the more than two

million dollars contracted. West divested himself of all properties and businesses to pay as many subcontractors as possible. He made several trips to California to obtain the rest of the promised monies, but to no avail. Just eight months after the railroad's completion, while on one of these trips, West collapsed and died three days later at the age of forty-three. His family soon had more to mourn: his nine widows and dozens of children were not only penniless but subjected to vexing lawsuits for unpaid bills.

Chauncey West's life and death are a fitting microcosm of the success of the electioneer veterans in theodemocractic Zion and its ultimate demise. His life's trajectory illustrates what the electioneers could achieve because of their faith-inspired commitment to join the sacred with the secular. West's death, however, foreshadowed the passing of theodemocracy itself. It is ironic that the "martyr of the transcontinental railroad" died at the hands of greedy railroad barons who epitomized the American capitalist industry.[48] Although their railroads connected the Great Basin to the people, ideas, goods, and markets of the rest of the United States, within two decades these influences destroyed the electioneers' Zion dream. By 1890 in Utah there was no more unity in elections, no more publicly authorized plural marriages, and no more cooperative, stewardship-based economics. Disunity had destroyed power. Theodemocracy had lived for forty-six years, just three more than West. Gone was the political framework that had protected Joseph's Zion. Just like West's large family, the church was saddled with debt and left to pick up the pieces. Fatefully, conditions were ripe for the electioneer cadre's biggest success story—Lorenzo Snow—to salvage a changing Zion.

* * *

Most electioneers came from humble beginnings but accomplished much in devotion to their prophet's Zion. They made theodemocracy a reality. As one historian noted:

> The spirit within the Church . . . turned the commonplace into greatness. . . . The Church did not attract great men. It produced great men. . . . It gave them an opportunity for growth. It heaped upon them responsibilities which forced them to grow or die.[49]

With ecclesiastical responsibility came aristarchic political power, the two seamlessly united by the glue of theodemocratic values. Thus the electioneers held multiple commissions that fueled their rise to prominence. The grand experiment worked. As the *Deseret News* declared in 1868: "We have enjoyed such an exemption of strife and contention at elections since our settlement of these valleys. . . . Our citizens being united upon religion and other questions, have thought that, to be consistent, they should be united in political matters."[50]

Leadership in the Great Basin community also meant practicing plural marriage. Leaders at every level were expected to set an example by marrying multiple wives. A large majority of electioneers accepted the principle, and all in leadership positions did. With increased allotments of land as a result, polygamous men, as most of the electioneer veterans were, held a distinct economic advantage. As theodemocratic leaders, their outsized influence held sway over local as well as regional economic policies. As able professionals, businessmen, and landed farmers, they oversaw the blossoming of economic activity and opportunity within their geographical spheres.

From 1851 to 1869, many of the men who campaigned for Joseph in 1844 continued to be part of the religious, political, social, and economic aristarchy of the Latter-day Saint Great Basin kingdom. As part of the governing elite, they implemented Joseph's Zion as orchestrated by Brigham, thereby fashioning a Zion people "of one heart and one mind . . . [who] dwelt in righteousness . . . [with] no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). Into this hard-won theodemocracy came the transcontinental railroad, permanently connecting the Great Basin kingdom to the rest of America. The result would be tumultuous for Zion and her aristarchy, including electioneers whose influence was already waning in the face of age and death.

## NOTES

1. Young, "The United States' Administration and Utah Army," in *JD*, 5:226. In this discourse of 13 September 1857, Brigham recalls what he said at an anniversary celebration on 24 July 1847.
2. "A Conference," *The Prophet*, 3 August 1844, 2. The conference was in Portage, Allegheny County, New York.

3. Letter from George Q. Cannon to Joseph Alma, in Jenson, "West, Chauncey Walker," *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:753.
4. Chauncey W. West, "The India Mission," *Deseret News*, 14 November 1855, 286. This article is one of six written by West for the newspaper.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 87.
6. See "Iron County," *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 3:341–42.
7. See "The Mormons in San Bernardino," *Utah, Our Pioneer Heritage* (database), 4:403.
8. Lyman, *San Bernardino*, 122.
9. Boyle, Autobiography and Diary, 14.
10. Lyman, *San Bernardino*, 316.
11. See Lyman, *San Bernardino*, 335.
12. Sherwood's intransigence started in the pioneer company of 1847 when Brigham labeled him the "chief grumbler"; see Elliott, *Biographical Sketch of Jefferson Hunt*, 12–14.
13. See Rogers, *Unpopular Sovereignty*, 137.
14. See Walker, Turley, and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, 30, 37. See also David L. Bigler, *Forgotten Kingdom*, 145; and Cooley and Young, *Diary of Brigham Young*, 49–53.
15. Electioneer officers were Horace S. Eldredge, Joseph Holbrook, Jesse C. Little, Robert Burton, Willard Snow, David Evans, Howard Egan, Jonathan O. Duke, and Chauncey W. West.
16. Electioneers who participated in the raids were Enoch Burns, Lindsey A. Brady, Jonathan O. Duke, Howard Egan, Robert T. Thomas, Robert T. Burton, Chauncey W. West, Hosea Stout, and William R. R. Stowell.
17. Little, "Biography of William Rufus Rogers Stowell," 42–57.
18. See Carter, "The Move South: Box Elder County," *Heart Throbs of the West*, 10:259–60.
19. Curtis, Reminiscences and Diary, 126.
20. Curtis, Reminiscences and Diary, 127.
21. See Walker, Turley, and Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows*, 129–210.
22. Lee, Journal, 56.
23. Little, *Jacob Hamblin*, 43. Hamblin subsequently informed Brigham Young and George A. Smith what Lee had told him. He would later testify against Lee in Lee's federal trial. See "Testimony in the Trials of John D. Lee," http://

law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/mountainmeadows/leetestimony.html.

24. As quoted in Black, "Jacob Hamblin," Latter-day Saint Vital Records II Database (hereafter "LDSVR").
25. See "Mormon Participation in the Civil War."
26. Scovil, Journal, 28 April 1861.
27. See Rev. George C. Tanner, *William Tanner, Sr.*, 309.
28. See R. I. Holcombe, "Campbell Township," chap. 33 in *History of Greene County, Missouri* (St. Louis, MO: Western Historical Co., 1883), s.v. "William D. Lyman," https://thelibrary.org/lochist/history/holcombe/grch33.html.
29. All the documents for the pension application of Lorenzo Moore's wife Mary are available in the online database *Alabama, Texas and Virginia, Confederate Pension Applications, 1884–1958*, https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/texasconfederatepensions/. Her pension file number is 11476.
30. See "John W. Grierson," https://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/cudaback/1/; and Heman Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church*, 4:22.
31. See Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories*, 2:210–14; and Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4:270–71.
32. See Daynes, *More Wives than One*, 73.
33. See Daynes, *More Wives than One*, 71.
34. See Daynes, *More Wives than One*, 128.
35. That is, 201 of 305 electioneers who remained loyal to Brigham and came west to settle what became the State of Deseret practiced plural marriage.
36. Black, "Jane Snyder Richards," LDSVR (database).
37. See Black, "Samuel W. Richards," LDSVR (database).
38. See Hubbard family, "Biography of Charles Wesley Hubbard," 9.
39. Journal History of the Church, 1 April 1857.
40. See Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 92.
41. See Mecham, Family Book of Remembrance, 306.
42. Carter, "Journal and Diary of William Marsden," *Heart Throbs of the West*, 12:152.
43. See Black, "Dominicus Carter," LDSVR (database).
44. See Black, "Norton Jacob," LDSVR (database).
45. Lee's rise to wealth is discussed earlier in this chapter.
46. Black, "Levi Stewart," LDSVR (database).

47. See Duke, Reminiscences and Diary, 9–11.
48. McDonough, "Chauncey Walker West," 14–15.
49. Berrett, *Restored Church*, 146.
50. "General Election," *Deseret Evening News*, 18 July 1868, 2.