

Erected on the grounds of the Utah State Capitol by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers in 1961, this monument honors the men who served in the Lot Smith Utah Cavalry. (Courtesy of W. Jeffrey Marsh)



## CHAPTER 8

Joseph R. Stuart and Kenneth L. Alford

# THE LOT SMITH CAVALRY COMPANY

## UTAH GOES TO WAR

When the American Civil War is studied, it is almost always the major battles and campaigns that draw our attention and focus our interest—Manassas, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Antietam, Gettysburg, and many others. In remembering a war that cost hundreds of thousands of lives, it is often easy to overlook lesser-known contributions to the war effort. This chapter is the story of one minor, but still important, story from the Civil War—an account of the only military unit from Utah Territory called to active duty during the war.

### UTAH'S ATTITUDE REGARDING THE CIVIL WAR

With the outbreak of war, the federal government found itself, as President Lincoln noted, “in the midst of unprecedented political troubles.”<sup>1</sup> As the national crisis began, communication between the eastern and western sections of the country was sometimes interrupted—with telegraph service sometimes out of operation for several days at

a time.<sup>2</sup> Indian attacks on mail and telegraph stations left the nation without cross-country communication, threatening further confusion on both sides of the country.<sup>3</sup>

Given geographic realities and Washington's attitude, Utah's active participation in the Civil War was limited. While other states were seceding to the Confederacy, Utah sought to join the Union and become the thirty-fifth state. Utah's applications were denied, reinforcing the view that the Civil War was primarily a problem of “the states.”<sup>4</sup> Shortly after the telegraph reached Salt Lake City in October 1861, President Brigham Young publicly declared that “Utah has not seceded [from the Union], but is firm for the Constitution and laws of our once happy country.”<sup>5</sup> Church members often had mixed emotions regarding the war because they felt that the nation had denied them the protections of the Constitution, which the Saints considered to be divinely inspired. The Saints had made the best of their situation—settling in Utah rather

than Texas, California, or Oregon—and had done herculean work to make the land habitable. Because of their hard work, the Saints hoped to be left alone by the United States—a welcome change from the torment and interference they had come to expect at the hands of the federal government.

### ASKING FOR UTAH'S ASSISTANCE

After 1861, telegraph lines spanned the width of the United States and enabled news to be sent thousands of miles almost instantaneously. Then, as now, rapid communication was highly valued. Working telegraph lines and open mail routes supported Union victory and the well-being of the nation. After suffering several Indian attacks and fear of attack by the Confederate Army, the trail required increased protection.<sup>6</sup>

The Overland Trail—which carried people, mail, and telegraph lines—stretched from Atchison, Kansas, to Salt Lake City, Utah. General James H. Craig, brigadier general of volunteers, received orders on April 16, 1862, making him responsible for protecting the Overland Trail.<sup>7</sup> The trail had been plagued for months by Indian attacks that disrupted travel and communication.<sup>8</sup> Soldiers were now required to protect the Overland Trail.

Mustering a unit from Utah to protect the trail made good sense. Not only did the Union have access to people who wanted to prove their loyalty to the United States, but the Mormons were also largely frontier people, used to living on barren and unsettled land. Utahns were well suited for the job of protecting the mail, telegraph, and emigration routes.

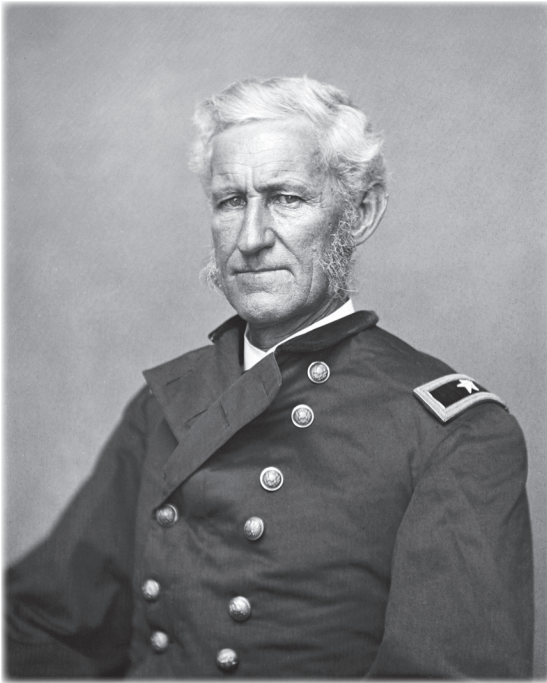
### THE CALL TO SERVE

In April 1862, three weeks after the Battle of Shiloh, President Lincoln turned

to Brigham Young to muster men to protect the Overland Trail.<sup>9</sup> The idea may have originated in a letter from General Lorenzo Thomas to General James W. Denver, a brigadier general stationed at Fort Leavenworth. The letter, dated April 11, 1862, suggested that Brigham Young would be ideal to contact because of his interest “in the telegraphic communication with Salt Lake and from his known influence over his own people, and over the Indian tribes” around Salt Lake City. Thomas’s letter acknowledged that Brigham Young was “not a functionary recognized by the United States Government” and that any formal request for troops should probably be sent to the governor of the territory.<sup>10</sup>

The idea for direct contact from Lincoln to Young, rather than to Governor Stephen Harding, also came from U.S. Congressman Milton Latham of California. In an April 26, 1862, letter, Latham proposed that Lincoln ask Brigham Young to provide soldiers to protect the Overland Trail. Latham suggested that because of recent trouble with Indians destroying mail stations and making the mail route unsafe, “authority [should] be given [to] Brigham Young to raise and equip one hundred men for ninety days’ service in protecting the [telegraph] line.”<sup>11</sup> In addition to Congressman Latham’s suggestion, it was practical to ask Brigham Young for recruits because there was no official governor in the Utah Territory at that time. Governor John W. Dawson had fled the state, and Lieutenant Governor Frank Fuller was serving as the acting governor. The new governor, Stephen Harding, did not arrive until July.<sup>12</sup>

General Lorenzo Thomas, adjutant general of the U.S. Army, and the War Department recognized that the real power to get things accomplished in Utah lay in the hands of



*Brigadier General Lorenzo Thomas served as the U.S. Army's adjutant general from March 7, 1861, until 1869.  
(Library of Congress)*

Brigham Young and not the federally appointed leadership.<sup>13</sup> Young received a telegraph message asking for soldiers on April 28, 1862, two days after Congressman Latham's suggestion to President Lincoln.

Washington, April 28, 1862  
Mr. Brigham Young,  
Salt Lake City, Utah:

By express direction of the President of the United States you are hereby authorized to raise, arm, and equip one company of cavalry for ninety days' service. This company will be organized as follows:

One captain, 1 first lieutenant, 1 second lieutenant, 1 first sergeant, 1 quartermaster-sergeant, 4 sergeants, 8 corporals, 2 musicians, 2 farriers, 1 saddler, 1 wagoner, and from 56

to 72 privates. The company will be employed to protect the property of the telegraph and overland mail companies in or about Independence Rock, where depredations have been committed, and will be continued in service only till the U.S. troops can reach the point where they are so much needed. It may therefore be disbanded previous to the expiration of the ninety days. It will not be employed for any offensive operations other than may grow out of the duty hereinbefore assigned to it. The officers of the company will be mustered into the U.S. service by any civil officer of the United States Government at Salt Lake City competent to administer the oath. The men will then be enlisted by the company officers. The men employed in the service above named will be entitled to receive no other than the allowances authorized by law to soldiers in the service of the United States. Until the proper staff officer for subsisting these men arrive you will please furnish subsistence for them yourself, keeping an accurate account thereof for future settlement with the United States Government.

By order of the  
Secretary of War:  
L. Thomas, Adjutant-General.<sup>14</sup>

The message granted direct authority for President Young to recruit men for active duty military service. The soldiers called were to arm and equip themselves, as well as provide their own horses and firearms for the campaign. Perhaps such a small unit was mustered because General Thomas believed





*Daniel H. Wells, an early Utah pioneer, apostle, and counselor in the First Presidency of the LDS Church, served as commander of the Nauvoo Legion in Utah and as the third mayor of Salt Lake City. His son, Heber Manning Wells, became the first governor of the state of Utah. (Utah State Historical Society)*

that “so large a force is [not] necessary” and raising a small force from Utah “offer[ed] the most expeditious and economical remedy to the obstructions to the mail route.”<sup>15</sup>

Brigham acted upon the message “within the hour.”<sup>16</sup> Writing “at even date” to Daniel H. Wells, his first counselor and the commanding officer of the Utah militia (also known as the Nauvoo Legion), Brigham explained the situation.<sup>17</sup> Young and Wells decided to accept the government’s call. The next order of business was to determine who would command the company. At that moment of military need, Colonel Robert T. Burton, commander of the elite Nauvoo Legion Lifeguards, was leading the Utah militia protecting the mail route from Indian attack in northern Utah and Wyoming at the request of Frank Fuller, the acting governor. General Wells contacted another officer,

Colonel Fullmer, but he too was unavailable.<sup>18</sup> With Colonel Burton and Colonel Fullmer unavailable to answer the call from President Lincoln, General Wells selected another experienced officer—Lot Smith.

### LOT SMITH—UTAH FOLK HERO

Lot Smith was something of a folk hero in the Utah Territory. Described as a “red head [with] a red face, a straight form, a military bearing . . . and a gleam in the eyes that bespoke a high temper and an absolute absence of fear,”<sup>19</sup> Lot Smith looked the part of a soldier. According to one member of the Lot Smith Company, “He was gentle as a woman and as brave as a lion . . . a citizen . . . a soldier, and also . . . a missionary of the Church.”<sup>20</sup> With prior service in Indian wars, in the Utah War, and as an active member of the Nauvoo Legion, Major Smith was well respected and admired within the territory. (Lot Smith, who served as a major in the Nauvoo Legion, will be referred to as Captain Smith throughout this essay because the letter requesting the active duty Utah Cavalry unit authorized only the rank of captain for the commander. Accepting the government’s call was actually a demotion for Major Smith.<sup>21</sup>) His most important previous assignment came during the Utah War when he disrupted and delayed the progress of the United States Army under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston. Lot Smith was a territorial hero and a man the Church could rely upon to get a job done.<sup>22</sup>

### BRIGHAM’S RESPONSE

After General Wells and Captain Smith mustered local men into service (in less than two days) and borrowed animals,<sup>23</sup> President Young sent the following telegram to General Thomas:

Great Salt Lake City, April 30, 1862  
Adjutant General Thomas, U.S.A.  
Washington, D.C.

Upon receipt of your telegram of April 27, I requested General Daniel H. Wells, of the Utah militia to proceed at once to raise a company of cavalry and equip and muster them into the service of the United States army for ninety days, as per your telegram. General Wells, forthwith issued the necessary orders and on the 29th day of April the commissioned officers and non-commissioned officers and privates, including teamsters, were sworn in by Chief Justice John F. Kinney, and the company went into camp adjacent to the city the same day.

Brigham Young<sup>24</sup>

At first look, it may seem unusual that President Young took nearly two days to officially respond to the government's request for military service. The delay, though, was characteristic of Brigham Young. Rather than telegraphing the government with a promise of future action, he chose to respond after the action had already been completed.<sup>25</sup>

### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LOT SMITH COMPANY

The same day Brigham Young answered the government's request, the First Presidency, in a letter dated April 30, 1862, clarified and outlined the duties of the Lot Smith Company. The First Presidency directed the men under Lot Smith to "recognize the hand of Providence in [the Saints'] behalf" and to place the wages from the army as secondary to their purpose. The men were to act



*Lot Smith was a frontiersman and early Mormon Church member. Noted chiefly for his military exploits in the Utah War, he lived for nearly three decades in the Davis County town of Farmington and led a colonizing mission to Arizona in the late 1870s and 1880s. (Utah State Historical Society)*

as emissaries of the Church, to "establish the influence God has given us . . . be kind, forbearing, and righteous in all your acts and sayings in public and private . . . that we may greet you with pleasure as those who have faithfully performed a work worthy of great praise." Doing so would enable the men to "again prove that noble hearted American citizens can don arms in the defense of right and justice, without descending one hair's breadth below the high standard of American manhood." Counsel was also given to abstain from "card playing, dicing, gambling, drinking intoxicating liquors, or swearing" and to "be kind to [their] animals." Expectations were expressed that the company would "improve the road as you pass along, so much so as practicable diligence in reaching your destination will warrant, not only for your own convenience but more particularly for the accommodation of the Mail Company and

general travel,” showing the First Presidency’s concern for continued cross-country communication and future Mormon immigration.<sup>26</sup>

In a final piece of ecclesiastical advice, the company was directed that each “morning and evening of each day let prayer be publicly offered in the Command and in all detachments thereof, that you may constantly enjoy the guidance and protecting care of Israel’s God and be blest in the performance of every duty devolved upon you.” With the salutation “Your Fellow Laborers and Brethren in the Gospel,” the First Presidency formalized their approval of the mission of the Lot Smith Company.<sup>27</sup>

### DEMONSTRATING LOYALTY

Ben Holladay, proprietor of the stage and U.S. mail line that extended from St. Joseph to San Francisco, sent a telegram to Brigham Young thanking him for the service that the Mormons would provide. Holladay promised that “just as soon as these Utah volunteers are located along the line, I will proceed to replace my coaches, horses and drivers and rebuild and man the destroyed mail stations from the North Platte River and Independence Rock to Salt Lake City.”<sup>28</sup> The mail and telegraph would be fully operational, pending the arrival of soldiers on the plains. The ability to communicate between the east and



*Following his military service, Seymour Young served for several decades as a general authority in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; he was one of the first Lot Smith company veterans to be accepted as a member of the Grand Army of the Republic. (Juvenile Instructor)*

west coasts of the United States would not be seriously interrupted again during the Civil War—in part because of service rendered by the Lot Smith Company.<sup>29</sup> The importance of cross-country communication should not be underestimated. Mail delivery in the 1860s was not the organized system our nation enjoys today. When mail and telegraph lines were interrupted, communication slowed to a crawl.

Mr. Holladay’s motives for keeping the trail and telegraph lines open were not entirely patriotic. As

owner of the Holladay Mail and Telegraph Company, Holladay’s financial losses could have been severe, even crippling. During the spring of 1862, for example, Indians were held responsible for more than \$50,000 worth of damage and destruction to animals, supplies, and wagons equipment, as well as the deaths of several employees.<sup>30</sup> Holladay had already been forced to alter his stagecoach route to accommodate the heavy losses he was incurring in Indian territory.<sup>31</sup>

But protection of the trail and delivery of the mail were not the sole incentives for accepting the invitation to serve; many Latter-day Saints believed that the government’s call had a larger purpose. Less than two weeks after the Utah volunteers enlisted, President Wells publicly stated that the call of the Lot Smith Company was divinely inspired, and he reaffirmed that the Saints would continue to demonstrate their loyalty to the United





*This painting by Frank Thomas shows Lot Smith and his company at the beginning of their military service in May 1862.  
(Courtesy of Frank Thomas)*

States—despite the government's past interactions with the Saints.

It is all right with regard to those expeditions going forth, and will result for the benefit of this people . . . and in this way we prove ourselves before God, that we are ready to do his will, and to do his bidding. The requisition was made by the proper authority at Washington, and was readily responded to, as has always been the case when a call has been made through the proper channel, and the compliance with this call will result in good. Our brethren will perform their duties and do honour to their country. It is our country; we are citizens of the American Government, and we have a right to act for the preservation of its institutions, and we have always done it whenever called upon, and we have

shown ourselves ready to respond to our duty as good citizens, no matter what usage we have received in return. This proves a weapon in the hands of this people for their defence. Let us feel contented to respond to every call that comes from the proper source, let us do it with full faith and confidence believing that it is right.<sup>32</sup>

## THE MARCH TO FORT BRIDGER

At 1:00 p.m. on May 1, 1862, the Utah Cavalry (as the unit was later designated) embarked on their military assignment.<sup>33</sup> At nightfall the men gathered to pray. After a futile attempt to travel through Parley's Canyon the next day, the company traveled north and east through Emigration Canyon, east of Salt Lake City. At 9:00 a.m. the following day, they met with Brigham Young and Daniel H. Wells.<sup>34</sup> The two Church leaders spoke to the troops regarding spiritual as well



as practical matters. This “Canyon Discourse” was largely a reiteration of the First Presidency’s April 30 letter to the company. Brigham Young spoke to the men frankly regarding their mission: “I desire of the officers and privates of this company, that in this service they will conduct themselves as gentlemen, remembering their allegiance and loyalty to our government, and also not forgetting that they are members of the organization to which they belong.” He again cautioned the soldiers to never indulge in intoxicants of any kind and warned them against “associating with bad men or lewd women.”<sup>35</sup> President Young also counseled,

Another thing I would have you remember is that, although you are United States soldiers you are still members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and while you have sworn allegiance to the constitution and government of our country, and we have vowed to preserve the Union, the best way to accomplish this high purpose is to shun all evil. . . . Remember your prayers . . . establish peace with the Indians . . . [and] always give ready obedience to the orders of your commanding officers. If you will do this I promise you, as a servant of the Lord, that not one of you shall fall by the hand of an enemy.<sup>36</sup>

President Young wanted the Utah soldiers to be viewed as loyal, obedient, patriotic,

and thoroughly American—not dependent on Church leaders for direction, counsel, or action. The Church leaders may have hoped that the company’s good example would create positive impressions and some favorable press reports in the East.<sup>37</sup> Brigham also recalled the example of the Mormon Battalion and how their service had benefited the Church at large.<sup>38</sup>

The march to Fort Bridger was difficult. The company “encountered ten feet of newly fallen snow,” and in many places the roads were almost impassable. Despite the fact that there were food shortages, Indian problems, snow,

challenges crossing rivers and streams, and oceans of mud to contend with, “they did not complain.”<sup>39</sup> Dr. Harvey C. Hullinger, the company’s doctor and self-appointed diarist, noted that “only the Latter-day Saints could have surmounted these difficulties and remained cheerful.”<sup>40</sup>

As they had been counseled, the Lot Smith Company improved the trail on their way to Independence Rock. One of their major contributions was bridge building: at one point they built three bridges in just four days. They traveled on many washed-out roads and had great difficulties in their travel to Independence Rock.<sup>41</sup> As the group followed the Bear River, they found “many of the Mail stations were still smouldering when [they] came upon them. Wagon-loads of United States mail had been scattered and destroyed by the Indians.”<sup>42</sup> This provided the company somber firsthand evidence as to why they had



Harvey Coe Hullinger (1824–1926), who kept a handwritten pocket diary of his 1862 military service and served as the physician for the Lot Smith Cavalry Company. (Utah State Historical Society)

been enlisted by President Lincoln. Ironically, at the same time the Lot Smith Company was actively protecting the Overland Trail, “Mormons” were being blamed for destruction of the mail.<sup>43</sup>

### LIFE AT INDEPENDENCE ROCK

After a twenty-six-day march that tested the men physically, they arrived at Independence Rock, located in what is today south-central Wyoming. There they joined Lieutenant Colonel William O. Collins, commander of the Eleventh Ohio Cavalry (previously designated as the Sixth Ohio Cavalry), who had also been assigned to protect the Overland Trail.<sup>44</sup> The Eleventh Ohio Cavalry had met several Indian groups but had avoided military conflict to that point. The Eleventh Ohio and Lot Smith Cavalries were jointly responsible for protecting the Overland Trail and keeping peace with the Indians on the plains.<sup>45</sup>

The Utah Company’s initial contact with army leadership created a favorable impression. The first days in camp provided them with several opportunities to demonstrate their ability to work and follow orders. The Latter-day Saint soldiers were soon ordered to investigate and rectify Indian horse thefts that had occurred three days earlier at Ham’s Fork, Wyoming. Lot Smith, together with twenty men and four pack animals, was sent to Ham’s Fork in late May. They traveled 150 miles in only two days. When the soldiers reached the Green River, Captain Smith decided that pursuing the Indians any further would entail a “very considerable risk of life,” and he gave up the chase.<sup>46</sup>

The month of June was spent in camp at Independence Rock with no significant military action. Dr. Hullinger’s diary recorded that

he “drew 2 sketches of devil’s Gate,” built “a bridge that the Church Trains coul[d] cross,” and “Clean[ed] their Pistols and Guns.”<sup>47</sup>

During June, Lot Smith sent several telegrams to Brigham Young. The first telegram, sent June 16, reported on many items of interest to the First Presidency. Captain Smith noted that General James Craig was “much pleased with the corral and Houses [the Lot Smith Company was] building at Devil’s Gate . . . and desired us to contribute as much as possible to our own comfort, and render all the assistance possible to the Mormon Emigration.” General Craig “was much pleased with the promptness of our people attending to the call of the General Government . . . spoke in high terms of our people generally . . . [and] informed me that he had telegraphed President Lincoln to that effect.” Captain Smith quoted General Craig as having commented that the Utah Cavalry were “the most efficient troops he had for the present service” and recommended that the president “engage our Services for 3 Months longer.”<sup>48</sup> General Craig, though, did not actually ask Secretary of War Edward Stanton to “re-enlist the Utah troops for a limited time” until August 23 (nearly a month after their initial ninety-day enlistment had expired).<sup>49</sup>

A subsequent telegram from Lot Smith, dated June 27, 1862, focused largely on the army’s relations with the local Indians. Smith wrote that the army “is decidedly against killing Indians indiscriminately”; the army, he said, would not act against any Indians unless they had ample evidence and just cause for an attack. Lot also brought up the musings of the army concerning re-enlistment, saying Colonel Collins “allow[s] we are best suited to guard this road, both men and horses; they are anxious to return, and if they have

J. N. Hinckley			
1862			
July 8	To 2 Salts	10.00	
July 30	Ammunic	5.00	
Sept 8	By Cash		5.00
			12.15 - 17.15
			<hr/> 17.15

A ledger page showing purchases made by Ira N. Hinckley, grandfather of Gordon B. Hinckley, at the Fort Bridger sutlery in July 1862.

any influence, I imagine they will try to get [us] recalled and recommend [us] to Utah to furnish the necessary guard.”<sup>50</sup> The men were desperately needed. General Craig wrote to General James G. Blunt, brigadier general of volunteers and given command of the Department and Army of Kansas on June 26, that he was “using the company of Utah troops in that region, but they are not sufficient.”<sup>51</sup> On August 25, Edwin M. Stanton, secretary of war, authorized General Craig to “raise 100 mounted men in the mountains and re-enlist the Utah troops for a limited time.”<sup>52</sup>

The Lot Smith Company did not have their enlistment extended, though. On August 25, General Craig received word from Stephen Harding, territorial governor of Utah, that Brigham Young would not extend the men’s enlistment. General Craig was told to “not expect anything for the present. Things are not right.”<sup>53</sup> That same day, President Young sent the following telegram to the adjutant general, Lorenzo Thomas, at Washington, DC:

Governor Harding has received a telegram from Brig. General Craig at Laramie, for the re-enlistment of Captain Lot Smith’s Company and their being marched to Laramie. Please inform me whether the Government wishes the military of the Territory of Utah to go beyond her borders while troops are here from other states who have been sent to protect the mail and telegraph property.<sup>54</sup>

Brigham Young was not anxious to resend the Lot Smith Company to protect the Overland Trail when a similar order had been given to Colonel Patrick E. Connor and the California Volunteers who were en route to Utah.<sup>55</sup> It is not clear whether General Thomas answered President Young’s telegram, but Young maintained his position, later stating that “if the Government of the United States should now ask for a battalion of men to fight in the present battle-fields of the nation, while there is a camp of soldiers

from abroad located within the corporate limits of this city, I would not ask one man to go; I would see them in hell first.”<sup>56</sup>

General Craig assigned the Lot Smith Company responsibility for “the 1st crossing of the Sweet Water to Green River, considering it would be more to [the company’s] advantage to be near home.”<sup>57</sup> The Lot Smith Company moved to Fort Bridger during June 1862 to protect the trail between Green River and Salt Lake City.<sup>58</sup>

### TRACKING DOWN A HORSE THIEF

At the beginning of July, the company was ordered to pursue five U.S. Cavalry deserters. Captain Lot Smith and First Lieutenant J. Q. Knowlton deployed with a squad of nine men to apprehend the deserters. When they embarked on July 4, 1862, Captain Smith directed Lieutenant Knowlton to make contact with Washakie, chief of the Shoshoni Indians, who was rumored to live around Bear Lake. At the time, Chief Washakie was considered as being possibly hostile toward settlers.<sup>59</sup>

With the “persuasion . . . of a loaded revolver,” the Utah soldiers convinced a passing Shoshoni warrior to direct them to Chief Washakie.<sup>60</sup> After entering the Indian’s camp, the eleven-man group was informed they could meet with Chief Washakie, who lived across Bear Lake. While crossing the lake, it was discovered that Indians had stolen a horse from Samuel W. Richards, a citizen of Salt Lake City. Recognizing the stolen horse, Lieutenant Knowlton captured it and fought the Indian thief, who ultimately succeeded in stealing it back. Following that brief skirmish, the men continued south, entered the Indian camp, and were welcomed by the chief. Washakie told them “he was no

longer acknowledged as the Head Chief of the Snakes.” Lot Smith and his men sought to improve relations with the Shoshoni, and from all appearances, the chief desired good relations with the army.<sup>61</sup>

When he heard that a horse had been stolen, Washakie ordered the horse be given to Lieutenant Knowlton. The chief showed his disapproval by having the thief severely whipped. In another show of good faith, Washakie provided provisions for the soldiers’ return march to Fort Bridger. He placed a fifty-pound bag of flour on the ground and gave half to the soldiers. Washakie also entrusted the soldiers to take one of his relatives to Fort Bridger for medical attention.<sup>62</sup> After the detachment returned to Fort Bridger on July 13, Captain Smith reported to Brigham Young by telegram that the company had followed the First Presidency’s counsel to “establish peace with the Indians.”<sup>63</sup>

### THE COMPANY’S LAST MISSION

The night of July 15, Indians raided the ranch of Jack Robinson, a prominent settler near Fort Bridger, and stole nearly three hundred of his horses and mules. The Lot Smith Company responded to a request to recover the animals. Sixty-one members of the company tracked the animals through the Snake River Valley.<sup>64</sup> The trip took longer than planned; the company ran out of provisions and was forced to live on wild strawberries. A group of twenty-one men under the direction of Lieutenant Joseph Rawlins returned home “by way of Fort Bridger” and arrived in Salt Lake City on August 2, 1862.<sup>65</sup>

The remaining members of the company continued their difficult and dangerous search through the Tetons.<sup>66</sup> While following the Snake River, they were forced to swim



nearly two hundred yards in deep water with a swift current. As the detachment crossed the river, Private Daniel McNicol lost control of his horse, which was unwilling to swim across the strong current.<sup>67</sup> Suddenly, McNicol was pulled beneath the water's surface. To the horror of his fellow soldiers, his body was carried downstream.<sup>68</sup> After a desperate search, McNicol was declared drowned, but his body was never recovered. Because McNicol did not die in combat, President Young's promise that "not one of you shall fall by the hand of an enemy" was still fulfilled.<sup>69</sup>

In a somber mood, the soldiers continued their trek down the Snake River and toward Salt Lake City. Lot Smith felt particularly distraught by the loss of Private McNicol. He lost his appetite almost entirely and one night "walked the camp all night, broken-hearted, because of the death."<sup>70</sup> With their supplies nearly exhausted, the company passed their original federal service separation date—July 29, 1862. The company was ordered to return home "so that there may be no loss of . . . supplies used more than could be called for by the ninety days' service."<sup>71</sup> The soldiers under the direct command of Lot Smith returned to Salt Lake City on August 15, 1862—107 days after they initially left Salt Lake City. After reaching their destination, Captain Smith told his men that they had "filled the bil [*sic*] and as far as he was concerned [they] were dismissed."<sup>72</sup>

### LEAVING A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young's first counselor, spoke to the men upon their return. President Kimball reportedly and tearfully told the men that the company

had been a "ram in the thicket," given as a sacrifice to prove the loyalty and love of the Latter-day Saints for the United States. Kimball told the company that they had "saved Israel" with their service.<sup>73</sup> The Latter-day Saints had shown good faith by protecting American interests and communication lines during a time of war.

The Lot Smith Company was honorably discharged on August 16, 1862. Together they earned more than \$35,000 for wages, horseshoeing, blacksmithing, and other expenses incurred over their three and a half months of service—a boon for cash-deprived Utah.<sup>74</sup> Daniel H. Wells noted that Mormons "have always [served] whenever called upon, and we have shown ourselves ready to respond to our duty as good citizens, no matter what usage we have received in return."<sup>75</sup> Brigham Young agreed with General Wells, stating that he had agreed to send the men "to prove our loyalty to the Constitution and not to their infernal meanness . . . to fight the battles of a free country to give it power and influence, and to extend our happy institutions in other parts of this widely extended republic. In this way we have proved our loyalty. We have done everything that has been required of us."<sup>76</sup>

The Civil War continued for another three years and cost the nation dearly. The service of the Lot Smith Company did not influence the outcome of the war, but Utah's only official military contribution during the Civil War provided an opportunity to demonstrate the loyalty of the Latter-day Saints collectively and the members of the Lot Smith Company individually as they faithfully served their country.

*Joseph R. Stuart is an American studies major at Brigham Young University.*

*Kenneth L. Alford is an associate professor of Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.*

## NOTES

1. Abraham Lincoln, "President's Message," *National Republican* (Washington, DC), December 4, 1861, 1.
2. Fred'k Steele to Major-General Halleck, April 22, 1862, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, series 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1885), 23:365.
3. See Aurora Hunt, *The Army of the Pacific: Its Operations in California, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Plains Region, Mexico, etc. 1860–1866* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1951).
4. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 9:7.
5. "The Completion of the Telegraph," *Deseret News*, October 23, 1861, 5.
6. Hunt, *Army of the Pacific*, 186.
7. Gen. S. D. Sturgis to Headquarters District of Kansas, April 16, 1862, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 13:362.
8. Curtis P. Nettels, *A History of the Overland Mail* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1922), 146.
9. Latter-day Saints took notice that on April 6, 1862, Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston was killed at the Battle of Shiloh (also known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing).
10. General Lorenzo Thomas to General Denver, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 50:1023–24.
11. Abraham Lincoln, endorsement, April 26, 1862, in Paul M. Angle, comp., *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), 291–92.
12. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah, 1540–1886* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1889), 604–9.
13. The territorial governor of Utah, John W. Dawson, had fled the state on December 31, 1861, after an alleged attack on his life. See "Governor Dawson's Statement," *Deseret News*, January 22, 1862.
14. L. Thomas to Brigham Young, April 28, 1862, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 3, 2:27.
15. General Lorenzo Thomas to General Denver, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 50:1023–24.
16. Edward W. Tullidge, in *History of Salt Lake City: by Authority of the City Council and under the Supervision of a Committee Appointed by the Council and Author* (Salt Lake City: Star Printing, 1886), 255.
17. Brigham Young to Daniel H. Wells, April 28, 1862, in *Brigham Young Letter Books*, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter referred to as Church History Library).
18. Letter to Colonel A. L. Fullmer, April 28, 1862, in Utah Military Files, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. Almon Linus Fullmer (1816–90) was colonel of the First Regiment of Infantry, Great Salt Lake Military District, Nauvoo Legion.
19. George H. Crosby, a newspaper clipping penciled "12-8-23," Lot Smith Papers, 1856–92, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
20. James Sharp, quoted in Margaret M. Fisher, ed., *Utah and the Civil War: Being the Story of the Part Played by the People of Utah in that Great Conflict, with Special Reference to the Lot Smith Expedition and the Robert T. Burton Expedition* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1929), 110.
21. Lot Smith had served as a major in the Nauvoo Legion since 1857. See Orson F. Whitney, *Popular History of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1916), 145.
22. In a case of historical irony, in 1862 Lot Smith fought for the United States while Albert Sidney Johnston fought for the Confederacy. Surely this irony was not lost on Latter-day Saints. See "The Rank of General," *The Semi-Weekly Shreveport News*, February 7, 1862, 1.
23. Some animals were borrowed from the notable O. Porter Rockwell. See also letter from Daniel H. Wells to O. P. Rockwell, April 28, 1862, in Utah Military Files, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
24. Quoted in Seymour B. Young, "Lest We Forget," *Improvement Era*, March 1922, 336.
25. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City*, 256.
26. First Presidency to Captain Lot Smith and Company, April 30, 1862, in Lot Smith Papers.

27. First Presidency to Captain Lot Smith and Company, April 30, 1862, in Lot Smith Papers.
28. Kate B. Carter, "Utah During Civil War Years," in *Treasures of Pioneer History* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1956), 5:391.
29. See Young, "Lest We Forget."
30. See J. V. Frederick, *Ben Holladay, The Stagecoach King: A chapter in the development of Transcontinental Transportation* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1940), 168.
31. Hunt, *Army of the Pacific*, 186.
32. Daniel H. Wells, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:352–53.
33. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 24.
34. Harvey Coe Hullinger Journal, May 2, 1862; see also Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 25.
35. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 25.
36. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 25–26.
37. For additional information, please see the "Utah and the Civil War Press" chapter herein.
38. Harvey Coe Hullinger Journal, May 2, 1862.
39. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 26; see also Harvey Coe Hullinger Journal, May 2–27, 1862.
40. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 40.
41. Harvey Coe Hullinger Journal, May 4–9, 1862.
42. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 37.
43. J. Downs, "To Whom it may Concern," May 10, 1862, MSS 2210, Utah Military Files, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.
44. David P. Robrock, "The Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry on the Central Plains, 1862–1866," *Arizona and the West* 25, no. 1, 23.
45. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 26–27; see also Horton and Teverbaugh, *A History of the Eleventh Regiment, (Ohio Volunteer Infantry)* (Dayton, OH: W. J. Shuey, 1866), 72–88.
46. Letter to Brigham Young, June 16, 1862, in Lot Smith Papers.
47. Harvey Coe Hullinger Journal, June 6–20, 1862.
48. Letter to Brigham Young, June 16, 1862, in Lot Smith Papers.
49. James Craig to Honorable E. M. Stanton, August 23, 1862, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 13:592.
50. Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City*, 257.
51. James Craig to Brigadier General James G. Blunt, June 26, 1862, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 13:451.
52. Governor Stephen Harding to Adjutant-General James Craig, August 25, 1862. *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 13:596.
53. Quoted in Major-General Halleck to Brigadier-General James Craig, August 25, 1862, in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 13:596.
54. Brigham Young Letter to Adjutant-General Thomas, August 25, 1862, *Brigham Young Letter Books*, Church History Library.
55. Patrick E. Connor's California volunteers arrived in Utah in July 1862. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, "The Kingdom and the Nation," in *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 172. For additional information, please see the chapter herein regarding the establishment of Camp Douglas.
56. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:107.
57. Lot Smith to Brigham Young, June 16, 1862, in Lot Smith Papers.
58. James Craig to General James G. Blunt, July 11, 1862. *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, 13:469.
59. Brigham D. Madsen, *The Northern Shoshoni* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1980), 32.
60. Patrick E. Connor's California Volunteers arrived in Utah in May 1862. See Carter, "Utah During Civil War Years," 397.
61. Brigham Young Office Files, July 13, 1862, from Lot Smith, Microfilm (CR 1234-1), Church History Library.
62. Carter, "Utah During Civil War Years," 400.
63. See Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 25.
64. Carter, "Utah During Civil War Years," 401.
65. Brigham Young Office Files, July 30, 1862, Joseph Rawlins, Microfilm (CR 1234-1), Church History Library; Harvey Coe Hullinger Letter Accompanying Transcript of his Journal, May 1–August 24, 1862, Church History Library.
66. Carter, "Utah During Civil War Years," 403.
67. The August 14, 1862 "Muster-Out Roll of Captain Lott Smith's Company of Mounted Volunteers" (MSS A 5238, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, UT) lists his name as Daniel McNicol. Fisher, reprinting an account by Seymour B. Young of the Snake River Expedition in which McNicol lost his life, lists his name as "Donald McNicol" (pp. 72–79). Fisher also lists his name as "Daniel McNicol" (p. 29). See Appendix E for additional information about this soldier.
68. "Captain Lot Smith's Company of Volunteers," *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, January 1911, 138.

- 
69. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 26.  
70. Fisher, *Utah and the Civil War*, 109.  
71. H. B. Clawson (Assistant Adjutant General) to Lot Smith, in Lot Smith Papers.  
72. Harvey Coe Hullinger Journal, August 10, 1862.  
73. Harvey Coe Hullinger (letter accompanying transcript of his journal), May 1–August 24, 1862.  
74. Lot Smith Accounts 1862, in Lot Smith Papers.  
75. Daniel H. Wells, in *Journal of Discourses*, 9:353.  
76. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:107.