



This March 1864 woodcut from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper shows a Civil War recruiting station in New York City. (Library of Congress)



This 1861 Currier & Ives lithograph, entitled "The Voluntary Manner in Which Some of the Southern Volunteers Enlist," portrays a facetious view of the Confederate states' early efforts to man a volunteer army during the Civil War. The placard on the right announcing the "Suicide of Abe Lincoln" and "Washington to be taken" is signed by Confederate general John B. Floyd. Floyd, who served as secretary of war under President Buchanan, was accused of secretly supplying arms and ammunition to the South from the federal arsenal before the war; Camp Floyd in Utah Territory (named in his honor) was renamed Fort Crittenden after he resigned on December 29, 1860 and joined the Southern cause. (Library of Congress)



CHAPTER 11

Brant W. Ellsworth and Kenneth L. Alford

MORMON MOTIVATION FOR ENLISTING IN THE CIVIL WAR

On April 12, 1861, shots fired between Union and Confederate soldiers at Fort Sumter officially ushered in the American Civil War—the most violent and devastating conflict in American history. The nation was torn apart as families, friends, and neighbors were divided against each other. There were over six hundred thousand casualties—approximately half the total number of combat deaths in the nation’s history. An additional three hundred thousand men returned home with battle wounds. Today, visitors at Civil War sites pause to commemorate the soldiers, marvel at their bravery, honor their sacrifices, and consider their lives.

The impact of the Civil War engulfed the entire nation. Because the war was fought primarily in the East, historians have generally paid less attention to the war’s impact on the western territories and states. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter referred to as Mormons or Latter-day Saints) distinctly felt the impact of

the Civil War. Although Latter-day Saint leaders never directed Church members to enlist, several members did so. While it is unknown exactly how many Latter-day Saints actually served in the Civil War, the experiences of those who did serve provide insight into an important but generally overlooked period of Mormon history.¹

Mormon soldiers who enlisted were different in some respects from the typical Union or Confederate soldier. Fresh in many minds at the time was President James Buchanan’s 1857 request for Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston and approximately twenty-five hundred soldiers to quell a supposed Mormon rebellion in Utah and replace Brigham Young as governor. Although the Utah War concluded without significant bloodshed, the effects of that war were long lasting. At the start of the Civil War, the U.S. Army still occupied nearby Camp Floyd. The majority of Mormon men must have felt that they had understandable reasons for avoiding Civil

War military service. The purpose of this essay is to explore the motives of Latter-day Saints who chose to fight in the Civil War.

THE CHURCH'S POSITION ON THE CIVIL WAR

It is difficult to gauge past public sentiment in an effort to capture the mood and tenor of that time. Rhetoric used by Latter-day Saint Church leaders prior to the Civil War suggests that as the threat of war grew more pronounced, the Church and its members often grew more indignant of those who had abused them in the past. Wrathful tirades sometimes spilled from Mormon pulpits as Church leaders spoke regarding “when,” not “if,” war would come. Speaking in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in November 1860, Heber C. Kimball, a member of the Church's First Presidency, reminded his congregation that the “Lord then said, if [the governors, judges, and president of the United States] will not redress your wrongs, I will come out of my hiding place . . . and I will cut them off from the face of the earth.” Kimball then asked the congregation, “Brethren, do you not think that day is right here?”² In February 1861, after receiving news that Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana were the latest in the growing list of states that had seceded from the Union, Brigham Young cautioned Latter-day Saints about the calamity he expected to shortly befall the nation. Young admonished the Saints “not to boast over our enemies’ downfall. Boast not, brethren.—God has come out of his hiding place, and has commenced to vex the nation that has rejected us.”³ Heber Kimball saw similar war clouds on the horizon. “I have never prayed for the destruction of this government,” he said, “but I know that dissolution, sorrow, weeping and

distress are in store for the inhabitants of the United States.”⁴

In early 1861, with the threat of war growing more certain, Mormon leaders advised Church members against enlisting in the coming conflict. George A. Smith left little room for interpretation when he counseled: “[The Lord] does not wish us to go and slay our enemies.”⁵ Brigham Young placed his faith in God's power to protect his Saints. “As I often tell you,” Young said, “if we are faithful, the Lord will fight our battles much better than we can ourselves.”⁶ John Taylor emphasized that the Latter-day Saints should remain neutral, as the coming war was not their fight. “It may now be proper to inquire what part shall we take in the present difficulties. . . . Shall we join the North to fight against the South? No! Shall we join the south against the north? As emphatically, No! Why? They have both . . . brought it upon themselves, and we have had no hand in the matter. . . . We know no north, no south, no east, no west.” The Lord had other plans for them instead of fighting; Taylor counseled the Saints in April 1861, only days before the shots at Fort Sumter were fired, to keep God's commandments, live righteously, and focus on their spirituality. “What shall we do in the midst of these things that are now transpiring? Why, lean upon the Lord our God, purify ourselves. . . . Let us also look at our position as Elders in Israel, clothed with the power of the holy Priesthood, as men who hold the ministry of reconciliation. . . . This is the position that we ought to occupy in relation to these matters.”⁷ Considering Young's previous teachings, such a position of general neutrality made good sense for the Saints. For as Young taught: “When those who profess to be Saints contend against the enemies of God

through passion or self will, it is then man against man, evil against evil, the powers of darkness against the power of darkness. But when men who are sanctified—purified—do anything, . . . they will do it with the power of the living God. If they are ever called to wipe out their enemies . . . they have to do it by the power of the Gods, or not at all.”⁸ Young, Kimball, and Taylor were not alone in their early opposition to the war effort; other Church leaders also urged the Saints to remain steadfast in Zion, wait out the storm in the safety of the valleys, and avoid the war whenever possible.⁹

As war continued during the next few years, Mormon rhetoric cooled. In a speech given on Sunday, August 31, 1862, President Young lamented the great destruction of human life: “My heart is filled with pain for the inhabitants of the earth. We desire with all our hearts to do them good. . . . It is our duty to pray for them. . . . They are in the hands of God, and so are we.”¹⁰

MOTIVATION TO ENLIST

With Church leaders in such strict and synchronized opposition to the war, especially during 1861–62, why did some Mormons enlist as soldiers? To answer questions regarding enlistment motivation, soldier letters, diaries, and journals often reveal individual motives with clarity and candor.¹¹ Civil War armies were among the most literate in history. Scholars estimate approximately 90 percent of Union soldiers and 80 percent of Confederate soldiers were literate, and those soldiers had a proclivity to write.¹² As a result, Civil War records provide a window into wartime thoughts and experiences. Those letters, diaries, and journals are especially valuable to scholars trying to better understand

the attitudes of antebellum Americans and the factors that motivated soldiers to enlist. In spite of a general abundance of Civil War records, only a few accounts remain from Latter-day Saint soldiers, but from those records we can gain some insights into their varied motivations to enlist.

Despite contrasting ideological views and differing backgrounds, Northern and Southern soldiers offered the same general reasons for enlisting in the war. Likewise, notwithstanding differences in background and religious perspective, Mormon soldiers described the same motivations as non-Mormons for enlisting. Although Latter-day Saint soldiers may have interpreted the war somewhat differently than their Union and Confederate counterparts, most soldiers responded similarly to the war itself.¹³

After reading thousands of journals and letters from Union and Confederate soldiers, historian James McPherson outlined several enlistment motivations. He described the initial wave of volunteers enlisting because of the engrossing patriotic furor that swept across the nation—a *rage militaire*. The war’s first volunteers chose to fight because of patriotic fervor—it was what their country expected of them. Later, soldiers often enlisted because of personal ideological convictions. Northern soldiers were often motivated to serve in order to preserve the Union from dissolution; Confederate soldiers fought for their concept of liberty and independence. Some soldiers served out of a sense of duty or honor; some fought to defend their personal honor.¹⁴ Historian Bell Irvin Wiley suggested that “the dominant urge of many volunteers was the desire for adventure . . . the prevailing excitement, the lure of far places . . . the glory and excitement of battle.”¹⁵ Still other

soldiers spoke of serving in order to defend more abstract concepts like “country, flag, Constitution, liberty, and [the] legacy of the [American] Revolution.”¹⁶

Although we may gain some insights into individual reasons for Civil War service, a complete understanding will remain beyond our grasp. As historian John Demos wrote, “Proof is relative in any case—and scholars should never, in my opinion, dismiss an important problem because of ‘insufficient data.’ Particularly in the newer fields of research . . . , the framing of significant questions and of their probable answers may help to speed the recovery of the essential pieces of evidence.”¹⁷ Let us now, therefore, examine the lives of several Latter-day Saint Civil War veterans. Their wartime experiences are organized according to what appear in hindsight to be their primary motives for serving: *rage militaire*, a sense of duty, personal honor, and happenstance.

RAGE MILITAIRE

At 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861, Confederate Lieutenant Henry S. Farley fired a single ten-inch mortar round at Fort Sumter and the eighty-five troops within. The shot detonated over the fort, officially signaling the start of the general bombardment and the beginning of the war.¹⁸ News spread rapidly from South Carolina—electrifying both the North and the South. The following morning newspaper headlines in New York City announced “War at Last.”¹⁹ An editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* declared, “By the act of a handful of ingrates and traitors, war is inaugurated in this heretofore happy and peaceful Republic! . . . Now, men of the North, for the struggle!”²⁰ In Virginia, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reported, “The ‘irrepressible conflict’ which has been

forced upon the peaceful homes and the unoffending citizens of the South, will be met by a people who will drench their native soil with the blood of their invaders, or perish, to the last man, in vindication of all that man holds dear.”²¹

As the nation braced for war, President Abraham Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand men to put down the Southern insurrection. The response was immediate and overwhelming; people took to the streets vowing vengeance on the traitors. A Harvard professor wrote at that time, “I never knew what a popular excitement can be. . . . The whole population, men, women, and children, seem to be in the streets with Union favors and flags.” During the first year of the war, men fought because they chose to do so. Overwhelming support from volunteers easily filled state quotas. Many were caught up in the wave of patriotic enthusiasm that swept the nation. Speaking of the impact of that impulse, one New York woman wrote that the “time before Sumter” was like another century. “It seems as if we never were alive till now; never had a country till now.”²²

Joseph Barlow Forbes, Union soldier. Patriotism seemed to know no bounds. Union enlistee Joseph Barlow Forbes spent the months prior to the start of the war away from newspapers and the reported threats of Southern secession. An avid sailor from a wealthy family with connections in the shipping trade, Forbes had been at sea, navigating a ship around the Cape of Good Hope. On this most recent trip, Forbes had decided on a career as a sailor. When he docked in March 1861, though, Forbes found himself in a nation on the edge of war. A month earlier, Texas had officially seceded, bringing the tally to seven.

In April, war transformed the nation and its citizens. Forbes answered Lincoln's initial call for volunteers and enlisted immediately. He recorded the specifics in his journal: "[I]n April through the excitement through the firing on Sumpter [sic] and secession of the South States I joined my old class mates, the Bangor City Cadets and enlisted in the 2d M[ain]e Vol[unteers] under the first call of Pres. Abraham Lincoln, April 26th, 1861, for six mo[nth]s." The Bangor Regiment was the first to march out of Maine. After briefly training at Willets Point on Long Island, they made their way to the District of Columbia. Forbes and the Second Maine Infantry engaged in eleven battles, including First Bull Run, the Peninsular Campaign, Antietam, and Chancellorsville. Forbes survived his tour of duty and the war; he was mustered out of service as a second lieutenant on June 9, 1863.²³

David Crockett Stuart, Confederate soldier. After the bombardment of Fort Sumter, a similar patriotic furor swept through the Southern states as they prepared to meet the potential Union invaders. Early one Monday morning in April 1861, a twenty-six-year-old Alabama farmer named David Crockett Stuart walked into the local blacksmith shop and learned that war had been declared between the North and South. Stuart recorded, "I lost no time in getting home, . . . telling every one on the way of the bloody war that was coming on." "During that week," he wrote, the news stirred up "excitement all over the South, and I suppose it was the same in the North. How we all got through that week I don't know." Naturally, not everyone was excited by the prospect of war. Stuart captured the mixed emotions they felt: "We did not know whether to be scared or tickled; some of us seemed to want war, as it was something new, and might

be quite interesting . . . , while many others wished for anything else before war, but there was no getting around it."²⁴

The following Saturday, Stuart and his family rode ten miles to Falkville, Alabama, in order to purchase farm supplies. While in town, Stuart noticed a crowd gathered around an "old war horse by the name of Campbell." Campbell riled up the crowd with stories about the "Yanks" and "what they would do if we let them come down South." Stuart admitted that Campbell "told some all-fired big stories" about how the Yanks would "take all the peoples land, put the men in bondage like the negroes and take their families, such as they wanted, for themselves." Campbell stood atop the "platform in his white shirt, coat and hat off, with the sweat running down his cheeks, while his shirt was wringing wet in places" and gave "one of the hottest war speeches that ever fell from the lips of any man." Campbell continued to electrify the crowd with promises that "one Southerner could whip from ten to twelve Yanks in no time, and could lick all of the North in from thirty to sixty days."²⁵

Campbell's stories excited his listeners. Caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment, Stuart was among the first from his town to enlist. Of his enlistment, he wrote, "When [Campbell] saw that he had the people worked up to a pitch, he gave a sign to the leader of a Marshal band that he had hid out, to get to the front with their band and give us some old war music. . . . At the same time he came down from the platform roaring like a lion, calling for volunteers to go fight the Yankees." Campbell's enthusiasm was contagious and swept through the crowd, as both old and young lined up to volunteer. Stuart was third in line. In a short time, an entire brigade had been raised.²⁶

By 1862, Stuart had tired of infantry life. Camping, drilling, and marching were exciting for a while, but Stuart wanted to ride with the cavalry. With his captain's permission, Stuart and a band of fellow soldiers returned home, obtained horses, and joined the Fourth Alabama Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest. Under Forrest's command, Stuart fought for the Confederacy in battles at Fort Donelson, Nashville, and Shiloh. On December 31, 1862, Union forces attacked Stuart and the Confederates at the Battle of Parker's Crossroads in Tennessee. In a moment of confusion, Stuart and a small group of men became separated from their unit during a fire fight. Soon they were surrounded and forced to surrender to Union soldiers.

For the next few months, twenty-year-old Stuart was a prisoner of war at Camp Douglas, Illinois, where soldiers often suffered from smallpox, typhoid fever, and pneumonia. During his captivity, Stuart lost ninety pounds—nearly half his body weight. He was exchanged in a prisoner-of-war swap in 1863 and survived the war. Stuart waited until 1915 to record his wartime experiences—sharing them in a letter addressed to his son, Forrest (who was named after Nathan Bedford Forrest).²⁷

A SENSE OF DUTY

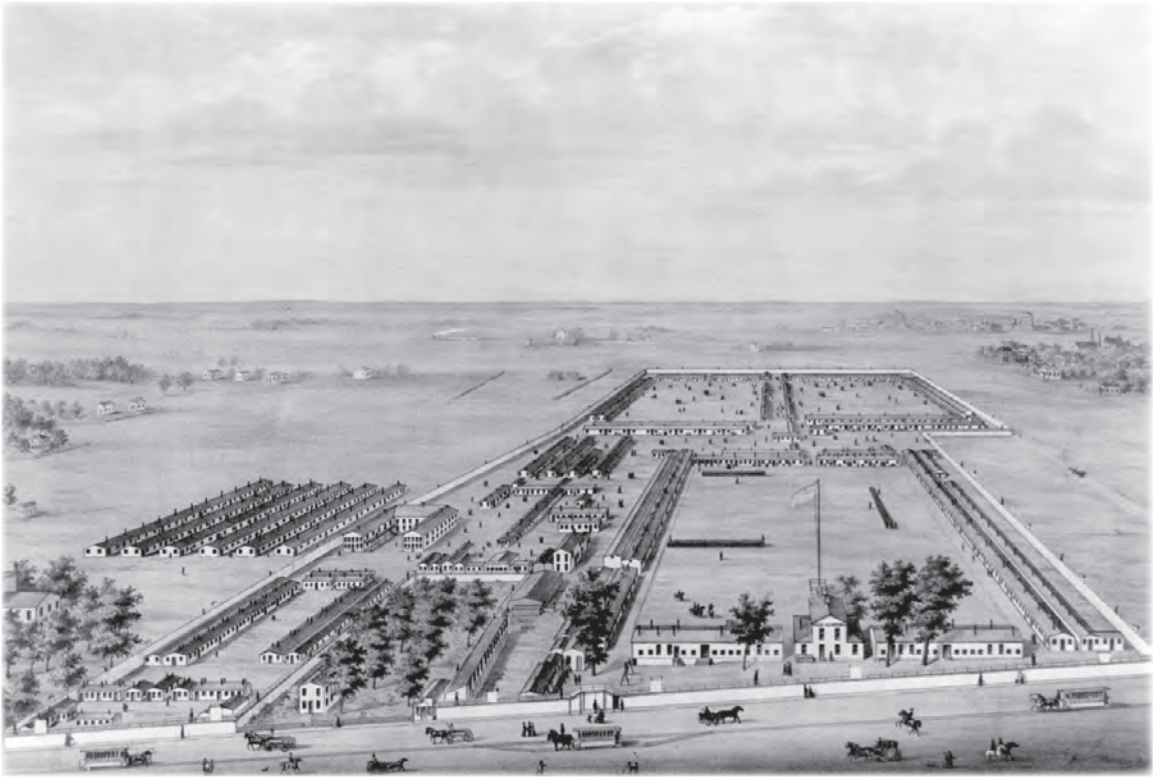
Stuart and others quickly realized that Campbell's prediction of a short war was wildly inaccurate. As weeks became months and the conflict dragged on, initial enlistment enthusiasm faded as casualties increased and the war's end seemed increasingly farther away. Even though the North and the South instituted conscription in 1862, the preponderance of soldiers volunteered their service instead of being drafted. Many of those

soldiers, Union and Confederate, joined the military out of a sense of duty—an understanding that citizens were bound by a moral obligation to set aside personal feelings, relationships, and fears in order to protect their country.²⁸

David H. Peery, Confederate soldier. Prior to the Civil War, Mormon missionaries met with great success in Tazewell County, Virginia—so much so that it was locally known as “the nest” for its reputation as a religious stronghold for Mormons in the eastern United States. In 1839, the fiery missionary Elder Jedediah M. Grant baptized the first member of the Church in Virginia—Peter Gose Litz. Litz, a prominent member of his community, recorded that he was baptized after a visit from a “Heavenly Messenger who commanded him to ‘Doubt no more.’”²⁹

After the June 1844 martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, a few members of the branch left Tazewell County to join the Saints in the West, but the majority remained behind, pledging themselves loyal to the Twelve Apostles and Brigham Young. Missionaries continued to serve in Tazewell until the 1860s, when the Civil War forced the Church to keep missionaries at home. From “the nest,” at least four Latter-day Saints enlisted with the Confederacy: Colonel Peter Gose Litz (likely the highest-ranking Mormon in the Confederacy), his two sons John Tiffany and William Sawyers Litz, and local businessman David H. Peery. Peery is the only one of those four soldiers who is known to have left a wartime account.

After enlisting in 1862 as an officer under General Humphrey Marshall in the Confederate Army of Eastern Kentucky, Peery contracted typhoid fever. He was temporarily released from military service and sent to his father's



Camp Douglas, near Chicago, was a Union prisoner-of-war camp for captured Confederates. Pictured here in 1864, the camp was known for poor prisoner conditions and high rates of death and disease. (Library of Congress)

home to recuperate. While at home, his father, mother, and father-in-law died of typhoid. Although he was still sick, Peery returned in July 1862 to his home in Burke's Garden, Virginia. In September, his wife, Nancy, died of typhoid fever—followed in October by his one-month-old son. Within one year of joining the Confederate Army, Peery had lost his entire family except for his daughter, Louisa. Setting aside his personal grief, Major Peery returned to active service in the Confederate Army and served until 1864.³⁰

Lorenzo Dow Watson, Union soldier. Union enlistee Lorenzo Dow Watson, or “Low” as he preferred to be called, was born on September 17, 1845, in Limerick, Maine.³¹ In the winter of 1861, during his third year of schooling at a local academy in Maine, Low’s

father, David Watson Jr., “sent him to Portland [Maine], a seaport town sixty miles from his home, with a load of vegetables and pork to be shipped south to the Northern Armies.” Low described the streets of Portland as “teeming with excitement, the shrill sound of the fife, the beat of drums, and the tramping of feet, for war was in the air.” One of Low’s cousins had previously enlisted with a local infantry regiment. Low wrote that as he walked through Portland, he was stopped by a man who offered him three hundred dollars as a substitute conscript. “Three hundred dollars! What a lot of money!” Low remembered thinking. He longed “for excitement, a chance to get out in the world, and here was [his] opportunity.”³² Low sent his team home with a neighbor who traveled with him and entered the

army without the consent of his parents. He was only sixteen years old when he enlisted as an infantryman. His three-hundred-dollar bounty would shortly be stolen.

Low and his cousin took part in battles at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. On April 5, 1862, they landed at Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River and marched two miles to the Shiloh Church log cabin. At the Battle of Shiloh, over ten thousand Confederate soldiers and thirteen thousand Union soldiers lost their lives. Low's cousin, John Watson of Limerick, Maine, was killed on April 6, 1862.³³ Years later, Low penned a poem about his cousin's death during the Battle of Shiloh.

At night we lay together
Near the waters of the Tennessee
When before the dawn
We woke at the alarm
Of the advancing enemy.
That day when forced from cover
Under a merciless hail of lead
Together we sank
At the river's bank
While all 'round us lay the dead.
"Buell is coming," he shouted
As I handed him my bruised canteen.
He took it and drank,
Returned it, and sank
Suddenly down, the dead between.
A red stream 'neath his visor
Showed why he uttered no cry,
I knelt in the sand
As I grasped his hand
And 'midst the dying watched him die.
That night with a broken mess-pan
I there hollowed his grave in the sand
And at break of day
I left him to lay
At rest in peace in that southern land.³⁴



Lorenzo Dow Watson, from Limerick, Maine, fought in several Civil War battles. After the war, he wrote a poem about watching his cousin be killed by his side during the Battle of Shiloh (Pittsburgh Landing). (Courtesy of Stevenson Genealogy Center)

Following the Battle of Shiloh, Low's family "felt that he would be much better off in school than in the army."³⁵ Low's parents, being very upset that their sixteen-year-old son was at war, contacted Mr. Bean, a local minister, to bring the boy home—which he did in June.

Low's military service, though, was not yet over. On December 9, 1863, at eighteen years old, Lorenzo Dow Watson enlisted in Company L of the Second Maine Volunteer Cavalry for a three-year term—this time with the permission of his parents. Written records are sparse from Low's second tour of duty. He contracted malaria, from which he would suffer the rest of his life, and developed scurvy while serving in the Florida Everglades. Yet, despite the "hardships of soldiering," Low had a "resiliency that enabled him to quickly overcome depression."³⁶

Forbes, Stuart, Peery, and Dow were all from the eastern United States. Approximately one hundred Latter-day Saint Civil War soldiers enlisted in Utah as members of Lot Smith's Utah Cavalry. Although they were geographically separated from the war, remaining records generally cite duty as their primary reason for enlisting.

Soon after the start of the Civil War, Union soldiers stationed in Utah were withdrawn to the east, and the Utah Territory was left without a federal military presence. Without military protection, travel and communication on the Overland Trail became vulnerable to Indian attacks.³⁷ In April 1862, the federal government requested that Brigham Young raise a company of men to protect the mail and telegraph lines. The Utah Cavalry volunteers served under the command of Captain Lot Smith.³⁸ Unfortunately, few written records remain from those soldiers.

Lewis Albert Huffaker, Union soldier. Lewis Albert Huffaker enlisted in Lot Smith's Utah Cavalry. Born in Illinois during 1841, Lewis was six years old when he crossed the plains to Utah as a member of the Jedediah Grant and Willard Snow Company. He came to Utah as the son of a "well to do" father who "could furnish equipment for his sons at any time."³⁹ At the age of twenty-one, Huffaker "volunteered [in April 1862] at the call of President Abraham Lincoln to help keep open the line of communication." He acknowledged that due to his father's means, he felt an obligation to serve. He wrote that it was also his duty to "protect the people against marauding Indians."⁴⁰

Huffaker related how Lieutenant Colonel William O. Collins, commanding the Eleventh Ohio Cavalry, approached Lot Smith and challenged his men to a friendly competition.

Huffaker reported that Collins said, "I would like to try a test and see whether your men or mine are best adapted to remain here in the West to protect the mail line." Collins "ordered a detachment of his men, double quick time, up the side of the mountain and down again." Collins's soldiers completed the task with "great confusion." Huffaker noted that Smith's unit completed the same tasks in "perfect order." "We gave our Indian ponies the reins and they knew how to avoid the sagebrush and gopher holes." After losing the challenge, Colonel Collins exclaimed, "Captain Smith, I would rather have ten of your men than my whole regiment. We will send the Eastern men to the front."⁴¹

Reuben Parley Miller, Union soldier. Reuben Parley Miller, born December 22, 1844, was the second son of Mormon pioneers Reuben and Rhoda Ann Letts Miller from Illinois. In 1849, as a four-year-old, he traveled the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City with other Saints. At eighteen, Miller was one of the youngest members of the Utah Cavalry. Miller's motivation for military service was his sense of duty after he was "called upon to bear arms in defense of the U.S. government."⁴² It is unclear if Miller felt he was responding to the "call" of Abraham Lincoln or Brigham Young—perhaps he felt a service obligation to both men.

Edwin Brown, Union soldier. Edwin Brown's account of his enlistment suggests that he volunteered for service in the Lot Smith Company only after President Young personally asked him to enlist. Brown was born in Berkshire, England, in 1841 and immigrated to Utah in 1853. His family settled in Murray, Utah, on a farm large enough to support their family of nine. Tragedy struck the family in 1860 when Edwin's father and younger

brother died. The responsibility fell on Edwin and his older brother, Henry, to run the farm. In April 1862, after Lincoln's request for Utah soldiers, Brigham Young made a surprise visit to their farm. Young was brief; he requested that the Brown family send one of their remaining two sons to guard the trail. As was traditional for English families, the eldest son's primary responsibility was to the family and the farm. As Edwin's brother Henry was needed at home, the responsibility to enlist fell upon Edwin.⁴³ He served faithfully from April to August 1862, when he was mustered out of service with the rest of the Utah Cavalry and returned to his farm.

PERSONAL HONOR

Some Civil War soldiers admitted that their enlistment was motivated by a desire to honor their families. Such a mindset was derived, in part, from the era in which they lived. As McPherson noted, "Boyhood was a time of preparation for the tests and responsibilities of manhood. And there could be no sterner test than war. It quite literally separated men from boys."⁴⁴ As a representative of his family, a man fully embodied the values for which he fought; soldiering was the ultimate proving ground for a man to defend his family. Union soldier Saul Norman understood his role, although he needed a stern rebuke and reminder before he would enlist.

Saul Norman, Union soldier. Saul Norman was born the son of a Methodist minister in July 1836, and little is known about him, his family's connection to Mormonism, and how the family arrived in Utah. In 1848, when gold was discovered in California, prospectors rushed to claim their fortunes. Norman was late to the scene, trekking to California in 1857 at the age of twenty-one. When

the Civil War started, Norman was still in California. We do not know his initial attitude toward the war. In a letter written by his father in 1862, Norman was chastised for thinking only of himself and not of his responsibilities to his family or his country. That was unacceptable behavior. Norman's father demanded he "show his colors" and follow the example set by his four brothers and six nephews who were serving in the army.⁴⁵ The pressure worked. Reminded of his responsibility, Norman made his way in late 1862 to Camp Douglas, a small, newly established military garrison east of Salt Lake City. There he enlisted with the Third Regiment of the California Volunteer Infantry under the command of Colonel Patrick Edward Connor.

HAPPENSTANCE

Hans N. Chlarson, Union soldier. The end of the Civil War in April 1865 meant soldiers could return to their families. Such was the case for Union Lieutenant Hans Chlarson, who had not seen his wife and son for two years—since he watched them leave Sweden in March 1863 on their way to Utah. Chlarson had vowed to follow his family as soon as it was financially possible; he hoped to join them no later than the summer of 1864. At least that was his plan.

After meeting two Mormon missionaries in 1854, their teachings had a profound effect on him, and Chlarson "decided to lead a better life."⁴⁶ Chlarson was soon baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He served as a missionary in his homeland until 1861, when he fell in love with Johanna, a young Mormon girl. They married, and a year later welcomed their first son, Heber. After sending Johanna

and Heber to Utah in 1863, Hans remained behind, worked two jobs, and saved money for his voyage to America. By July 1864, he had saved over four thousand dollars and boarded a boat for New York City.

After arriving in America, Chlarson rented a hotel room in the city while he made preparations for his trip west. The first week in New York a thief broke into his room and stole his entire savings. Alone in a new country without money or means, Chlarson desperately sought for advice. A fellow Swede named Nicolas told Chlarson that his language skills (he was fluent in seven languages, but English was apparently not one of them) would make him an ideal candidate as a translator and officer at the army hospital in Washington, DC. Nicolas presented Chlarson with some paperwork to fill out, which he did, before boarding a troop train bound for Washington. After he arrived at camp, Chlarson discovered that his name was not on the officers' commissioning list. After describing his situation, the recruiting officers told Chlarson that the papers he had signed were conscription papers. By signing, Chlarson had agreed to fight in the Civil War as a substitute soldier for Nicolas. The officers explained that he had two options: either he could desert the army, evade authorities, and escape to Utah; or he could stay in camp, train to be a soldier, and fight in the war. He chose the latter, saying he "did not want to start his career as an American with that kind of a record."⁴⁷ Within just a few short weeks of arriving in his new country, Chlarson found himself training for combat in a war he never intended to join.

Chlarson wrote that he "stood in many bloody fights" as a lieutenant in General Philip Sheridan's cavalry until wounds to his shoulder and leg forced him to the hospital.⁴⁸ He was "unable to earn a support by reason of an



Hans Chlarson and his wife, Johanna, joined the Church in Sweden and desired to join with the Saints in America. The two were separated after Hans was tricked into enlisting as a soldier in the Union army. (Courtesy of Daniel K Judd)

injury of the left leg or thigh supposed to have been caused by a fragment of a shell which struck me in battle at Southside Rail Road rendering me insensible," an injury which left him with a limp the remainder of his life.⁴⁹ After the war ended, Chlarson made his way back to New York City, where his first order of business was to hunt down his erstwhile friend Nicolas and give him a beating.⁵⁰ After spending a few days in jail for attacking Nicolas, Chlarson made his way to Utah, where he "embraced [his] wife and son for whom [his] heart had longed."⁵¹

John Rozsa, Union soldier. Like Chlarson, John Rozsa was a European emigrant who served in the Civil War. Born in Hungary in 1820, Rozsa was a child of privilege. His father's military commission enabled him to have a



John Rozsa served in several European armies before emigrating to the United States and enlisting in the U.S. Army. Stationed at Camp Floyd following the Utah War, Rozsa fought for the Union in the Civil War and died after the war while returning to Utah. (Pleasant Grove Chapter, Daughters of Utah Pioneers)

childhood filled with excellent educational opportunities. After a few years of schooling, Rozsa took advantage of his father's goodness and used his money to patronize saloons and gambling halls.⁵² Eventually, Rozsa fell deep into debt. His family expressed disappointment regarding his poor decisions. Unable to look into their disapproving eyes, Rozsa left home to live with his grandmother.

Rozsa worked in a variety of jobs in many cities. In 1838, while he prepared for employment as a notary public, he fell in love. Rozsa's parents expressed displeasure in his decision to marry and announced that they would not support him. Rozsa sold all of his possessions and decided to join the Hungarian Army. When his father learned

of his decision, he tried to talk him out of it, but Rozsa's mind was set. He enlisted on February 6, 1838. When Hungary and Italy declared war in 1847, it was a perfect chance for Rozsa to become an officer; however, he admitted that he behaved poorly, and soon after he lost his opportunity to become one. In August 1849, Rozsa deserted. He wrote, "I only had to go 18 miles to cross the Poo river and then I'd been free from getting arrested. It was a pleasant night, but never the less it wasn't very pleasing to me for fear of getting caught, then the bylaws at that time for deserters was to be shot inside of 24 hours."⁵³

Unable to find meaningful employment, Rozsa next enlisted in the Austrian Army as a corporal. He served honorably for almost three years before taking a leave of absence to care for a woman and her child. While thus occupied, Rozsa traveled to a nearby town to pick up supplies where he was arrested and incarcerated. Eventually, he was transferred to a larger prison where he was housed with criminals who awaited execution. The prison director informed Rozsa that he was charged as a political offender—a charge Rozsa claimed was unfounded. The details are hazy, but on March 26, 1853, after three months of imprisonment, Rozsa was placed aboard a ship bound for the United States. On May 15, 1853, he arrived at New York City.

The first few months in America were particularly difficult as he drifted from job to job trying to find his place in the bustling city. First, Rozsa tried to use his language skills by working at a hotel frequented by immigrants.⁵⁴ The job was not what he expected, and he next moved to Baltimore, where he worked as a bartender. In December 1853, after getting into an argument with his boss's wife, Rozsa was fired. Spending his last few

dollars on alcohol, drunk and down in spirit, on December 12, 1853, Rozsa stumbled into an enlistment office and signed a six-year contract to return to soldiering. Rozsa wrote that he had always loved life as a soldier and felt that the American Army gave “the best pay of a soldier in the whole world.”⁵⁵

Rozsa was stationed at Governor’s Island, New York, for six months before asking to transfer to the Tenth Infantry at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, thinking he would be promoted more easily there. Rozsa said that in hindsight, it was one of the worst decisions in his life. After three months at Carlisle, Rozsa was overlooked for promotion and transferred to the Second Dragoons. This began a three-year period, from 1855 to 1858, during which Rozsa was constantly on the march, traveling through the Midwest. In June 1858, he arrived in Salt Lake City as a soldier in the Utah War under the command of Brevet Brigadier General Albert Sidney Johnston.⁵⁶

Rozsa did not record much about his day-to-day experiences in Utah at Camp Floyd aside from mentioning that they “had a quiet easy life, where we had an abundance of all sorts of vegetables, butter, eggs, etc.” Rozsa converted to Mormonism in 1858 after falling in love with Patience Loader, a Mormon girl he met while visiting Lehi, Utah. On December 8, 1858, the two were married by Able Evans, the same man who baptized Rozsa as a member of the Church five days earlier. Rozsa’s decision to be baptized was met with the expressed displeasure of his commanding officer and friends.⁵⁷

Alluding to the coming war, Rozsa wrote, “A sure storm will follow fine weather and Vice Versa.”⁵⁸ Their easy life in Utah was soon shattered when the soldiers at Camp Floyd received news of the outbreak of the Civil

War. Ordered to return to Washington, DC, Rozsa; his wife, Patience; and their newborn son, John James, left Utah and headed east to join the war.

The journey east was eventful. After a two-day stop at Fort Leavenworth in October, Rozsa’s unit intended to cross a railroad bridge over the Platte River. Upon arriving, the troops found that the bridge had been destroyed. The enlisted soldiers were ordered to make their crossing at Easton, fifteen miles away, while the officers, staff, women, and children crossed by raft. Rozsa reported that when the raft crossed the second or third time, the rope broke and several children were thrown into the river. Attempts at rescue were in vain, and many lives were lost. Patience and their son had crossed before the incident; all they lost was their bedding. The remainder of the trip proved uneventful. Rozsa’s family and his unit arrived in Washington, DC, in late October 1861.

After having fought in the Peninsular Campaign, Rozsa’s years of military service finally caught up to him. He complained in August 1862, “I got broken down entirely in regard to my physical condition as I feel the palpitation of heart in the highest grade.” Unable to march, he was evacuated on a vessel bound for Harrison Landing, Virginia. Separated from his unit, Rozsa decided, without permission, to return to his family. He found a position as a clerk in the office of Henry Halleck, general-in-chief of the Union armies, which increased his monthly pay from twenty-two to seventy-five dollars. His new position also gave him the opportunity to visit his family regularly.⁵⁹

Rozsa returned to his previous unit on October 13, 1862, and was immediately placed under arrest for returning to



Camp Douglas, Illinois, in about 1863. Confederate soldiers David Crockett Stuart and William H. Norman (aka John Eugene Davis) were held as prisoners of war in wretched conditions at Camp Douglas. During his captivity, Stuart lost ninety pounds—nearly half his body weight. (Chicago History Museum, ICHI-01800)

Washington without official orders. The following week he was court-martialed. After years of military service, Rozsa was reduced in rank from first sergeant to private and was fined twenty dollars, and his pay was reduced to thirteen dollars per month. As a newly minted private, he was forced to stand guard during the cold and windy winter months.

Rozsa was never wounded during battle but suffered severe burns to his shoulders and back when a container of hot coffee was spilled on him in camp. In October 1863, he was honorably discharged from military service—for the first time in his life! On a return trip to Utah in 1866, Rozsa unexpectedly became ill and died near Fort Kearney, Nebraska, due to complications from lung disease.⁶⁰

GALVANIZED YANKEES

A small number of Civil War soldiers served in both the Confederate and Union armies. Soldiers who fought first for the Confederacy

and afterward for the Union were called “galvanized Yankees”—a reference to metal that has a thin galvanizing layer of zinc placed over steel. “In the process the surface color of the metal is altered, but underneath the coating the steel is unchanged. During the Civil War, in both Northern and Southern prison camps, soldiers sometimes decided to ‘galvanize,’ or change sides, to save themselves from the horrors of prison life. Like the metal, these galvanized soldiers in many cases were still ‘Good old Revels,’ or ‘Billy Yanks,’ underneath their adopted uniforms.”⁶¹

William H. Norman, Confederate soldier (who changed his name to John Eugene Davis after the war). Shortly after the Civil War began, sixteen-year-old William H. Norman enlisted in the Confederate Army with the 1st Georgia Infantry Regiment. After serving, reenlisting, and fighting for several years, he was captured by Union forces on December 16, 1864, at Nashville, Tennessee, and sent to Camp Douglas, a prisoner-of-war



Confederate soldier William H. Norman became a “galvanized Yankee” when he enlisted at Camp Douglas, Illinois, as a Union soldier. He changed his name to John Eugene Davis after he deserted in 1865. This picture of Norman/Davis was taken around 1870. (Courtesy of Robert L. Davis)

camp near Chicago. In the early war years, such camps “were merely holding areas where men waited to be exchanged for equal numbers of prisoners held by the other side.” After 1863, though, “the prisoner exchange system broke down, causing prison camps to become permanent areas of incarceration, where growing numbers of men had no hope of release until the end of the war.” Life in prison camps, for both Union and Confederate soldiers, was generally filthy and horrible. “Soldiers were seldom issued new clothing, and often starved due to meager food allowances.”⁶²

There was a fairly easy way out of a prison camp, though—change your allegiance and enlist in the army of your former enemy. And that’s exactly what Norman did. He

swore an oath of allegiance to the United States on March 25, 1865, and enlisted as a “galvanized yankee.” Like the majority of galvanized Yankees, whose true allegiance remained questionable, Davis’s new unit, the 6th Regiment U.S. Volunteers, was ordered west to keep trails open and provide settlers with protection against Indian attacks. He reportedly deserted from the Union army on August 3, 1865, a few months after the war’s end. Sometime after his desertion, William H. Norman changed his name to John Eugene Davis—the name he used for almost seventy years.

After the war, Davis travelled west with a Mormon freighter arriving in Utah in 1867. He lived in Utah for several years and later moved to Nevada. He was baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in May 1877 under the name John Eugene Davis. His children and grandchildren grew up unaware that he had changed his name. He often shared exciting stories of his Confederate military service but never mentioned that he had also briefly served as a “galvanized yankee” with the U.S. Volunteers or that he had changed his name after he deserted. His May 1935 obituary in the *Richfield Reaper* mentioned only his Confederate Civil War service. Several decades after his death—using family, military, and census records—one of his daughters slowly pieced together the story of his name change and dual military service.⁶³

CONCLUSION

Latter-day Saint Civil War soldiers came from all walks of life and from varied backgrounds. They were men from all over the world—varying in age, experience, and occupation. Some soldiers were lifelong

members of the Church, while others had recently converted to Mormonism. Some were multigenerational Americans; others were not citizens, having only recently arrived in America. Despite their differences, they all stepped forward to serve in the Civil War.

According to their journals, letters, and autobiographies, those Latter-day Saint soldiers served for a variety of reasons. Some of

them were motivated primarily by patriotism. Others claimed it was their duty to serve. Some sought personal glory or honor. Still others joined because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Whatever their reasons for joining, the Civil War contributions of Latter-day Saint soldiers, however small, should not be overlooked. While many people were content to leave the fighting to others, those men believed that it was their fight too.

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NOTES

1. See E. B. Long, *The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory during the Civil War* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Gustive O. Larson, "Utah and the Civil War," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 33 (Winter 1965): 55–67; Ray Colton, *The Civil War in the Western Territories: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959); and David F. Boone, "The Church and the Civil War," in *Nineteenth-Century Saints at War*, ed. Robert C. Freeman (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006), 113–49.
2. Heber C. Kimball, "Remarks," *Deseret News*, February 20, 1861.
3. Brigham Young, "Remarks," *Deseret News*, February 27, 1861.
4. Heber C. Kimball, "Remarks," *Deseret News*, September 18, 1861.
5. George A. Smith, "Discourse," *Deseret News*, December 25, 1861.
6. Brigham Young, "Remarks," *Deseret News*, February 27, 1861.
7. Quoted in David F. Boone, "The Church and the Civil War," in *Nineteenth-Century Saints at War*, ed. Robert C. Freeman (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006), 126–27.
8. Brigham Young, "Remarks," *Deseret News*, February 27, 1861.
9. The *Deseret News* recorded similar pronouncements by Church leaders in 1861. See comments by Brigham Young ("Remarks," *Deseret News*, February 13, 1861; "Remarks," *Deseret News*, February 27, 1861; and "Remarks," *Deseret News*, March 13, 1861), Heber C. Kimball ("Remarks," *Deseret News*, January 30, 1861; "Remarks," *Deseret News*, February 20, 1861; and "Remarks," *Deseret News*, April 3, 1861), Daniel H. Wells ("Remarks," *Deseret News*, April 24, 1861), and John Taylor ("Discourse," *Deseret News*, January 9, 1861).
10. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 9:368–69.
11. See Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971) and *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943); and James I. Robertson Jr., *Soldier's Blue and Gray* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998). A study that focuses on the ideological motivations of the Union soldier is Earl J. Hess, *Liberty, Virtue, and Progress: Northerners and Their War for the Union*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997). Randall C. Jimeron, *The Private Civil War: Popular Thought during the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), and Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Penguin, 1988), describe the common experiences of the Union and Confederate soldiers. Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford

- University Press, 1993), describes the community's role in motivating soldiers. James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), explores the reason soldiers fought. Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), argues for slavery's central role in motivating men to enlist.
12. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 11.
 13. Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), xi.
 14. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 14–29.
 15. Quoted in McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 26.
 16. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 21.
 17. John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xxi.
 18. David Detzer, *Allegiance: Fort Sumter, Charleston, and the Beginning of the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, 2001), 269–70.
 19. “War at Last,” *New York Times*, April 13, 1861.
 20. “War Inaugurated,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 13, 1861.
 21. “The War Began,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, April 13, 1861.
 22. Quoted in James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 274.
 23. Autobiography of Joseph Barlow Forbes, 1840–1927, file MS 15909, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
 24. Autobiographical letter by David Crockett Stuart, “A Few Lines from an Old Johnny Reb,” file MS 8895, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 4.
 25. Autobiographical letter by David Crockett Stuart, 4–5.
 26. Autobiographical letter by David Crockett Stuart, 5.
 27. Autobiographical letter by David Crockett Stuart, 12–17.
 28. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 22–23.
 29. A. J. Simmonds, “Thou and All Thy House: Three Case Studies of Clan and Charisma in the Early Church,” *Nauvoo Journal* 7, no. 1 (1995): 51, http://www.mormonhistoricsitesfoundation.org/publications/nj_spring1995/Simmonds.pdf; see also Tyler Jarvis, “Life Sketch of Peter Gose Litz,” <http://www.math.byu.edu/~jarvis/FamilyHistory/PeterGoseLitz-Bio.pdf>.
 30. For more information on the life and experiences of David H. Peery, see Robert Freeman's chapter herein.
 31. Lorenzo Dow Watson may have been named after Lorenzo Dow (1777–1834), an influential preacher who was popular during the Second Great Awakening. Dow, who traveled and preached widely, is said to have preached to more people than anyone else at that time. See James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., *Appletons' Cyclopædia of American Biography* (New York: D. Appleton, 1887), 2:218.
 32. Alma Gertrude Watson McGregor, *Lorenzo Dow Watson* (Provo, UT: J. Grant Stevenson, 1970), 17.
 33. John Watson, Low's cousin, died as a Union soldier on the same day and in the same battle that General Albert Sidney Johnston, a senior Confederate general and former commander of the Utah Expedition during the Utah War, died. McGregor, *Lorenzo Dow Watson*, 20.
 34. McGregor, *Lorenzo Dow Watson*, 21.
 35. McGregor, *Lorenzo Dow Watson*, 21.
 36. McGregor, *Lorenzo Dow Watson*, 26.
 37. Alvin M. Josephy Jr., *The Civil War in the American West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 246.
 38. For additional details regarding the background and service of the Utah Cavalry, see Joseph Stuart and Kenneth L. Alford's chapter in this volume.
 39. Margaret M. Fisher, C. N. Lund, and Judge Nephi Jensen, eds., *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), 96–99.
 40. Louis Huffaker Journal, in Kate B. Carter, “Utah during the Civil War Years,” *Treasures of Pioneer History* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1956) 5:425–26.
 41. Louis Huffaker Journal, in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 5:425–26.
 42. Reuben Miller Journal, in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 5:422–23.
 43. Edwin Brown Journal, in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 5:426–27.
 44. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 25.
 45. Saul Norman Journal, in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 5:424.
 46. Ida-Rose Langford Hall, “Johanna Charlotte Scherlin & Hans Nadrian Chlarson” (unpublished), accessed July 15, 2011, <http://members.cox.net/juddclan/JuddHist/ChlrnsHJ/ChlrnsHJ.htm>.

47. Hans Chlarson Journal in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 5:430.
48. As quoted in Hall, "Johanna Charlotte Scherlin & Hans Nadrian Chlarson."
49. As quoted in Hall, "Johanna Charlotte Scherlin & Hans Nadrian Chlarson." Hall quotes from Chlarson's Civil War Invalid Pension Application #SO988484, February 11, 1891, Thatcher, Arizona.
50. Hans Chlarson Journal in Carter, *Treasures of Pioneer History*, 5:430.
51. As quoted in Hall, "Johanna Charlotte Scherlin & Hans Nadrian Chlarson."
52. John Rozsa, *Autobiography*, file MS 15389, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 3.
53. Rozsa, *Autobiography*, 4.
54. John Rozsa claimed to have spoken seven languages.
55. Rozsa, *Autobiography*, 11.
56. Rozsa, *Autobiography*, 14.
57. Sandra Ailey Petree, *Recollections of Past Days: The Autobiography of Patience Loader Rozsa Archer* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2006), 98.
58. Rozsa, *Autobiography*, 16.
59. Rozsa, *Autobiography*, 21.
60. Petree, *Recollections of Past Days*, 139–40.
61. "The Galvanized Yankees," *The Museum Gazette* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1992), 1.
62. "The Galvanized Yankees," 1.
63. Interview with Robert L. Davis, grandson of John Eugene Davis, and Kenneth L. Alford, October 12, 2011, records in possession of the Davis family.