



Thomas Bullock: “The Lord’s Clerk”

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Salt Lake City’s early history was shaped by prominent pioneers like Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball but also by lesser-known settlers who left a lasting mark on both the city and the Church. One of these individuals was Thomas Bullock, who served in numerous civic and ecclesiastical posts during the first twenty years of Salt Lake’s history. The contributions Bullock made not only helped shape his own community but continue to influence people interested in Latter-day Saint Church history today.

A defining moment in the life of Thomas Bullock took place on the morning of September 18, 1846, in Nauvoo, Illinois. By this time, the main body of Latter-day Saints had fled Nauvoo for their new homes in the West, and only about six hundred remained in the city.¹ Brigham Young had asked his trusted clerk, Bullock, to remain in Nauvoo and record its final days as a Latter-day Saint community,

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and it was a heart-wrenching story. On September 13, a renegade anti-Mormon army commenced an attack on the small Nauvoo militia. Several Latter-day Saints were killed, and the survivors were forced to surrender. Within days, the last remnant of destitute Mormons would flee across the Mississippi River.² During the retreat, a band of about thirty mobocrats confronted a sickly Thomas Bullock. The captain of the band pointed his sword at Bullock's throat. Four others directed their bayonets at his chest. The leader then threatened, "If you are not off from here in twenty minutes, my orders are to shoot you." Bullock snapped back, "Shoot away, for you will only send me to heaven a few hours quicker." The captain then countered, "If you will renounce Mormonism you may stay here, and we will protect you." To this, the courageous Bullock declared, "I am a Mormon, and if I live, I shall follow the Twelve." The captain then ended the confrontation with one final warning, "If you are not gone when I return in half an hour, my orders are to kill you and every Mormon in the place."³ Soon thereafter, Thomas and his impoverished family complied with the merciless order, making their way across the Mississippi River to safety in Iowa.

This traumatic incident reveals Thomas Bullock's character. First, he was a man of incredible courage; second, he had unwavering faith in the restored gospel; and third, he possessed exceptional loyalty to the leaders of the Church. This episode demonstrated that Thomas would rather die than denounce his allegiance to Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles. He manifested this remarkable loyalty many times over throughout the rest of his life.

A chief way Thomas exhibited his faithfulness to Church leadership was to magnify his talent as a professional clerk. Throughout his life, he served as clerk, secretary, scribe, recorder, or proofreader for Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Willard Richards, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the Church Historian's Office, the Nauvoo City Council, the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, Church general conferences, the Nauvoo poor camp, the vanguard pioneer company, the Utah Territorial House of Representatives, Salt Lake County, Brigham Young's exploration

parties, the Council of Fifty, the *Deseret News*, the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, the Nauvoo Legion of Utah, and the First Presidency.

On November 27, 1832, Joseph Smith received a revelation that described the responsibilities of the Lord's clerk: "It is the duty of the Lord's clerk, whom he has appointed, to keep a history, and a general church record of all things that transpire in Zion" (D&C 85:1). Joseph Smith called several men to serve as clerks. Some were more faithful than others, but none was more valiant than Thomas Bullock. His life may be divided into two main periods: first, in his early years in England, in Illinois, and on the pioneer trail, when he developed and refined the skills that he would use for the rest of his career; and second, during his Salt Lake City, years when he made a major contribution as a clerk and historian.

Early Years

Thomas Bullock was born on December 23, 1816, in Leek, Staffordshire, England.⁴ He was the youngest of nine children born to Thomas and Mary Hall Bullock.⁵ His career as a clerk began in March 1830, when he was only thirteen. At that time, he took a position in the law office of John Cruso, where he worked for the next eight years. In nineteenth-century England, many boys were apprenticed out to learn a skill or trade. In 1838, Thomas began working in the government's excise department.⁶ On one occasion, he referred to himself in this position as "one of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria's Officers of Excise."⁷ In 1838, Thomas married Henrietta Rushton, whom he had courted for about five years.⁸

On November 20, 1841, Thomas and Henrietta participated in an event that would change their lives forever. They were baptized members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints "on a cold . . . night, when ice was on the canal, and the keen frosty air was blowing in all its severity."⁹ Bullock's loyalty to the Church was tested shortly after his conversion. He "was pelted with stones" and threatened to be

run over by a carriage. On one occasion, somebody actually tried to throw him “down an old coal pit.” Yet, through it all, he believed that the Lord had delivered him out of “each trial and difficulty.”¹⁰ Thomas and Henrietta soon began making plans to move to America and unite with the Saints in Nauvoo.

On March 8, 1843, Thomas, his wife, and their three children boarded the ship *Yorkshire* and embarked on their journey to the United States. Bullock and his father-in-law, Richard Rushton, were selected to supervise a company of eighty-three Mormons on the vessel. Thomas even paid the passage for several Latter-day Saint families.¹¹ After a hazardous trip across the ocean during which their ship almost capsized, the *Yorkshire* arrived in New Orleans.¹² There they boarded the steamboat *Dove*, which carried them to St. Louis.¹³ While they were in St. Louis, they switched to the steamer *Amaranth*, which transported them to Nauvoo. Their date of arrival at the great Mormon gathering place was May 31, 1843.¹⁴

Much to his delight, on the day Thomas arrived in Nauvoo, he met the Prophet Joseph Smith. It did not take long for the Prophet to recognize Bullock’s skills, and within five months he called Thomas to be his personal clerk, a position he would hold until Joseph was martyred in June the following year.¹⁵ As a result of this appointment, Thomas was at the center of many activities during the last eight months of the Prophet’s life.

One of the first major responsibilities Joseph Smith assigned to Bullock was to be clerk for the April 1844 general conference.¹⁶ This occasion provided the setting for the Prophet’s King Follett Discourse, which some have called his greatest sermon. Thomas was one of four men who recorded that discourse—the other three were Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, and William Clayton. However, Bullock’s account was more thorough and extensive than the others.¹⁷ This conference is also when the Twelve called for volunteers to serve as “electioneer” missionaries to campaign for Joseph Smith in his run

for president of the United States. At that time, 244 men stepped forward and received their assignments.¹⁸

During the two months following general conference, Thomas began clerking for several other institutions. On April 18, he joined the Masons and within ten weeks was appointed clerk of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge.¹⁹ On May 9, a court-martial was held in Joseph Smith's office for Major-General Wilson Law of the Nauvoo Legion on charges of "unofficer-like conduct," and Bullock was assigned to be secretary for the proceedings.²⁰ Then on May 13, Joseph asked Thomas to keep the records of the steamboat *Maid of Iowa*, a vessel owned jointly by the Prophet and Dan Jones.²¹

Unfortunately, Bullock's close association with Joseph Smith came to a tragic end when the Prophet and his brother Hyrum were brutally martyred in the Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844. A few years after the fact, Thomas wrote a touching tribute to the martyrs: "I do know they were the anointed of the Lord, the Prophet and Patriarch of God, and they were two good men when living, and they died good men; they died martyrs for the truth, and they sealed their testimony with their blood; and their testimony is true, and all the powers of earth and hell can not render it null and void."²²

After the death of Joseph Smith, a new era began in the life of Thomas Bullock. Soon thereafter, Willard Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles became an important person in Thomas's life. In addition to being an Apostle, Elder Richards had been appointed Church historian in December 1842, general Church recorder in July 1843, and Nauvoo city recorder in August 1843.²³ On December 8, 1844, Elder Richards opened an office in his newly completed home and appointed Thomas Bullock as deputy city recorder. Thomas began putting the Nauvoo city records into order inasmuch as they had been neglected for several months due to Elder Richards's extended illness.²⁴

In February 1845, Bullock began his greatest endeavor as a historian, writing the manuscript for the "History of Joseph Smith." Up to that time, Elder Richards and others had written 394 pages of the

manuscript.²⁵ However, between February 1845 and February 1846, Bullock, under the direction of Elder Richards, wrote an incredible 674 pages of the history.²⁶ Then, on February 4, 1846, Bullock and Richards packed the manuscript for the pioneer trek to the Rocky Mountains. Because of the western migration and subsequent Mormon colonization, Bullock's further work on the "History of Joseph Smith" would be suspended until 1854.

Thomas Bullock recorded many of the most important events pertaining to the Latter-day Saint exodus from Nauvoo and the pioneer journey to the Salt Lake Valley—certainly one of the most arduous yet faith-promoting eras in the history of the Church. As assigned, he recorded the sorrowful demise of Nauvoo as the Mormon capital. "For a whole week the war of cannon and the sharp cracking of rifles kept us in an awful state of suspense and anxiety," wrote Bullock. "Our devoted city was defended by about 150 poor, sickly, persecuted Saints, while it was cannonaded by about 1500 to 2000 demoniacs, in the shape of men, who had sworn to raze our temple to the ground, to burn the city, ravish our wives and daughters, and drive the remainder into the river."²⁷

The Mormons who survived this brutal attack fled for their lives across the Mississippi River to Iowa. There the "Poor Camp," as they were called, were safe but impoverished and without food. This became the setting for the "Miracle of the Quail," which took place on October 9. On this occasion, according to the faithful, the Lord miraculously provided food from heaven, in the form of quail, for his starving Saints. Once again we are indebted to Thomas for writing a descriptive account of a significant event in Church history:

But hark! what noise is that? See! the quails descend; they alight close by our little camp of twelve wagons, run past each wagon tongue, when they arise, fly round the camp three times, descend, and again run the gauntlet past each wagon. See the sick knock them down with sticks, and the little children catch them

alive with their hands! . . . They rise again, the flocks increase in number, . . . continually flying round the camp, sometimes under the wagons, sometimes over, and even into the wagons, where the poor sick Saints are lying in bed; thus having a direct manifestation from the Most High, that although we are driven, He has not forsaken us.²⁸

After this episode, it took Bullock about two months to get to Winter Quarters at the Missouri River. He arrived on November 27, 1846, "finding a city of about 700 houses, and upwards of 4,000 Saints, built in less than three months."²⁹ There he was reunited with his good friend and fellow historian, Willard Richards. In December, Elder Richards told Bullock that he must be at his side writing "from this time henceforth and forever."³⁰ At about that same time, President Young told Bullock that he would take him to the Rocky Mountains "even if he had to put [him] in his pocket."³¹ On April 11, 1847, President Young called Thomas to be the chief clerk for the vanguard company of pioneers going to the Salt Lake Valley.

Accordingly, two days later Bullock left his family behind, departing from Winter Quarters to the Rocky Mountains with eight Apostles and a total of 143 pioneers.³² Thomas's journal is the official record of the vanguard pioneer company and one of the most important documents in Church history. During the trek west, Bullock also served as clerk for meetings of the Twelve Apostles, which at that time constituted the presiding quorum of the Church. One example was "the council in the grove," a meeting held on June 28, 1847, at the Little Sandy River. On that occasion, Jim Bridger gave a rambling, sometimes incoherent description of the country in and around the Great Basin.³³

About four weeks after this rendezvous with Bridger, the pioneers finally arrived at the Great Salt Lake Valley. Bullock's first impression of the historic location was obviously favorable. On July 22, he recorded, "A very extensive valley burst upon our view, dotted in 3 or 4 places with Timber. I should expect the valley to be about 30 miles long & 20

miles wide.” He continued, “I could not help shouting ‘hurra, hurra, hurra, there’s my home at last’—the Sky is very clear, the air delightful and all together looks glorious.”³⁴ On July 24, President Young saw the valley for the first time and, according to Wilford Woodruff, declared, “This is the right place, drive on.”³⁵ During the next three months, ten additional pioneer companies entered the valley.³⁶

Salt Lake City Years



Thomas Bullock, early Salt Lake civic and ecclesiastical leader. (© Intellectual Reserve, Inc.)

The pioneers went to work as soon as they entered the Salt Lake Valley. On July 24, Bullock recorded that they “removed to the spot where the city would be built . . . and dedicated the place to the Lord.”³⁷ On July 28, he recorded another significant event. On that historic day, he accompanied President Young and the Apostles to a location “between the two creeks.” There, President Young chose the site for construction of the Salt Lake Temple. Elder Orson Pratt made a motion “that the Temple be built upon this Spot of ground,”

and it carried.³⁸ During the first month in the valley, “we ploughed and planted about eighty-four acres with corn, potatoes, beans, buck wheat, turnips and a variety of garden sauce,” Bullock recorded. “We irrigated all the land; surveyed and laid out a city, with streets running east and west, north and south.” Bullock’s lot was located “on the second block, south of the temple.”³⁹

On August 22, the pioneers had a conference. On September 1, Bullock accompanied 107 men on a return trip to Winter Quarters.⁴⁰ President Young and seven Apostles led these "returning pioneers." Bullock again was the official clerk for the expedition. They arrived back at Winter Quarters two months later on October 31, 1847.⁴¹ There, Thomas was finally reunited with his family after being apart for over six months.

The Winter Quarters area in December 1847 provided the location for one of the most important decisions ever made pertaining to Church government. The question to be resolved was whether or not to reorganize the First Presidency of the Church. Bullock served as the clerk for the entire development. During the three and a half years since Joseph Smith's martyrdom, Brigham Young had been leading the Church as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, but he had not reorganized the First Presidency. The other members of the Twelve sustained President Young as their leader, but they had differences of opinion as to whether the Presidency should ever be reconstituted. President Young had not pressed the issue until the Twelve returned to Winter Quarters, but now he strongly believed he should reorganize the First Presidency. However, he wanted to have the sustaining vote of the Quorum of the Twelve.⁴² Therefore, the Apostles met on December 5, 1847, at Elder Orson Hyde's home on the east side of the Missouri River at Kaneshville, Iowa. After much discussion, the Apostles in attendance voted unanimously to sustain Brigham Young as President of the Church with authority to choose two counselors. Accordingly, President Young chose Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards to serve with him in the First Presidency.⁴³ The Twelve then held a special conference in the Kaneshville Tabernacle across the Missouri River. On December 27, Bullock recorded that the membership of the Church unanimously sustained the new First Presidency.⁴⁴ One historian called this episode "the single, most important development" during the Winter Quarters era of Church history.⁴⁵

As the spring of 1848 approached, Bullock with his family began making preparations to return to the Salt Lake Valley with the leaders of the Church. Again President Young assigned Bullock to keep the official journal for the trip. In addition, Bullock was given the responsibility of caring for the Church records during the journey. These records filled an entire wagon, called the “big wagon,” and contained the manuscript for the “History of Joseph Smith,” which Thomas Bullock and Elder Richards had worked on so diligently back in Nauvoo. Bullock faithfully carried out his duties as church scribe in addition to looking out for the safety of his own family during the westward trek. They departed on May 24 and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on September 22.⁴⁶

There was much to be done when President Young and his company returned to the valley in 1848. One of the first responsibilities President Young gave to Thomas, as his clerk, was to issue land inheritances. The pioneers had surveyed the area and laid out Salt Lake City the year before, but the plots had never been officially distributed. In 1848, the city was subdivided into five-, ten-, fifteen-, twenty-, forty-, and eighty-acre lots. The three men who had the responsibility of issuing the plots were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Thomas Bullock. The job turned out to be extremely demanding and time-intensive. Sometimes, as many as “fifty persons were in the office at a time.” Altogether, 776 people made applications for a grand total of “9,630 acres, or 15 square miles” of land.⁴⁷

By the fall of 1848, there were approximately 4,200 people living in the valley, but there was no official currency for the community. Therefore, on December 28, 1848, the municipal council authorized President Young, President Heber C. Kimball, and Bishop Newel K. Whitney to issue paper money. The pioneers did not have a printing press, so President Young assigned Thomas Bullock and Robert L. Campbell, clerks for the First Presidency, to write all the bills by hand. For the next few days the two clerks carried out this tedious task of creating handwritten denominations of fifty cents, one, two, three, and

five dollars, which were all dated January 2, 1849. Each bill required the signatures of four people—Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Newel K. Whitney, and Thomas Bullock. Finally, each bill was stamped with the private seal of the Twelve Apostles. This unique seal contained sixteen letters—P.S.T.A.P.C.J.C.L.D.S.L.D.A.O.W. These letters were an acronym for “Private Seal of the Twelve Apostles, Priests of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Last Dispensation All Over the World.” Thomas spent all of New Year’s Day stamping and signing the bills. On the same day, President Young and President Kimball affixed their signatures to the notes which Bishop Whitney had signed previously. Unfortunately, the supply of money did not meet the demands of the people, so the committee decided to authorize the use of bills printed by the defunct Kirtland Safety Society, a Mormon financial institution in Ohio that had failed back in 1837. The use of this money, according to Bullock, fulfilled “a prophecy of Joseph that one day [the Kirtland Safety Society notes] would be as good as gold.”⁴⁸

In the meantime, somebody had discovered a case of type, and with it Truman O. Angell constructed a makeshift press that produced the first printed currency. This greatly expedited the printing of money, but Young, Kimball, Whitney, and Bullock still had to personally sign the bills, and Thomas was required to stamp the notes with the seal of the Twelve Apostles. The production of these bills was the first printing of any kind done in the Salt Lake Valley.⁴⁹ The pioneers used paper money exclusively for about eight months. Then, on September 12, 1849, Thomas Bullock and John Kay⁵⁰ started melting gold for the purpose of making hard currency. On the following day, they minted the valley’s first gold coins.⁵¹

In addition to his moneymaking activities, Bullock became clerk for several other entities in 1848 and 1849. In September 1848, he was elected to the office of Salt Lake County recorder.⁵² Three months later, he also began taking minutes for the Council of Fifty.⁵³ This body was a behind-the-scenes political organization headed by the President

of the Church; it included all the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and many other leaders.⁵⁴ On February 13, 1849, Bullock was appointed to serve on a committee to divide Salt Lake City into wards. The chairman of the committee was Bishop Whitney, and the other members were President Young, President Kimball, Elder Parley P. Pratt, Elder John Taylor, and Elder Amasa M. Lyman.⁵⁵ In September 1849, Bullock was the clerk for President Young's exploration party to Brownsville (later Ogden). Thomas would serve as clerk for several other exploration parties over the next seven years.⁵⁶ Bullock also served as official clerk for the general conference held in October 1849. He would act as clerk for all general conferences thereafter until 1856 when he departed on a mission to England.⁵⁷

One would think that with all of his heavy assignments, Bullock would become overwhelmed with his workload. Nevertheless, during the year 1850, he took on several more demanding responsibilities. Early in the year, President Young called on four capable men to establish the first newspaper in the community—to be called *Deseret News*. Elder Richards became the first editor; Horace K. Whitney, the printer; Brigham H. Young, the pressman; and Thomas Bullock, the proof-reader. On June 15, the first edition of the *Deseret News* rolled off the press, and it has been in continuous publication ever since.⁵⁸ It is still “one of the most influential newspapers in the Intermountain West.”⁵⁹

By the middle of the nineteenth century, thousands of Latter-day Saints in the eastern United States and Europe desired to gather with the Saints in the Rocky Mountains but did not have the money to do so. In the fall of 1849, Church leaders established the Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF) to help finance the migration of these low-income individuals. In return, the immigrants were expected to reimburse the PEF for their loans. By 1850, the organization was incorporated, and its name was expanded to Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company. On September 15, Brigham Young asked Thomas Bullock to be the official recorder for the organization. The PEF remained in business until 1887

and did much good. It has been estimated that it "assisted more than 30,000 individuals to travel to Utah."⁶⁰

In 1849, before Utah had become an official territory of the United States, the Mormon pioneers organized a provisional government they called the State of Deseret. Brigham Young was chosen governor, and territorial leaders recommended the establishment of a bicameral legislature patterned after the federal government.⁶¹ On December 2, 1850, the general assembly of the State of Deseret met in the newly constructed Council House. On that occasion, Thomas Bullock was chosen as the official clerk for the House of Representatives.⁶² Soon thereafter, the State of Deseret was dissolved, but Bullock continued as clerk for the House of Representatives for several years after Utah officially became a United States territory.

After Utah became a territory, Governor Young assigned Bullock the responsibility of taking a census for the entire territory. This proved to be one of the most unique and demanding assignments Bullock would undertake during all of his years in governmental service. The governor gave the assignment to Bullock in a formal letter, on March 28, 1851. Thomas efficiently completed the arduous assignment three months later. His count reported 11,354 residents in the territory.⁶³

After finishing the census, it did not take Bullock long to get involved in other important projects. By 1852, the Mormons had been living in the Salt Lake Valley for nearly five years, but there was still no library in the city. Therefore, Bullock took action, and on January 9, 1852, he helped organize the community's first official library. "He assisted in making a catalogue of the books and stamped them with 'Utah Library.'"⁶⁴

Soon after the pioneers entered the valley, they organized a militia and called it the Nauvoo Legion, with General Daniel H. Wells as commander. On April 12, 1852, Wells appointed none other than Thomas Bullock to be the military secretary. Within the next three years, the dedicated clerk had achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel.⁶⁵

Bullock's responsibilities in the Church, government, and community were so wide-ranging and significant that it causes a person to wonder, which of all his assignments did he consider the most important? Perhaps the answer might be found in a letter that he wrote to his cousin on September 21, 1850. After quickly enumerating many of his responsibilities, Bullock humbly wrote this insightful sentence: "I am honored with the office of Secretary to the first Presidency, and have the privilege of receiving instructions which tens of thousands of people would be glad to have."⁶⁶

One of Bullock's primary assignments was to continue his work with Church historical records. From the time the Mormons entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 until June of 1853, Elder Willard Richards and Thomas Bullock were so busy helping to establish their pioneer community that they did not have the time to even unpack the historical records they brought with them from Nauvoo. Finally, on June 7, 1853, the two dedicated historians unloaded a whole wagon full of manuscripts, letters, periodicals, and other documents. On December 1, 1853, Elder Richards resumed work on the "History of Joseph Smith." He wrote one line and then became so ill that he was unable to contribute anything else. He died on March 11, 1854.⁶⁷

During the April 1854 general conference, President Young called Elder George A. Smith to take Elder Richards's place as Church historian.⁶⁸ Elder Smith and Thomas Bullock, chief clerk in the Church Historian's Office, resumed work on the "History of Joseph Smith" on April 10, 1854. They were assisted in the project by at least three other clerks—Robert Campbell, Leo Hawkins, and Jonathan Grimshaw. These men worked diligently for the next two years and completed the history in August 1856. During this time, they produced over eight hundred pages of manuscript.⁶⁹

Several scholars have tried to calculate Bullock's contribution to the "History of Joseph Smith," but perhaps Elder Smith's assessment is the best. In 1856, Smith wrote to Wilford Woodruff: "Thomas Bullock acted with me as chief clerk in the history office previous to,

and at the time of Prest. Smith's death, and he continued in it ever since. His pen wrote the principal part of the rough manuscript from my dictation, and his acquaintance with all the papers was of great assistance to me."⁷⁰

In addition to Elder Smith's tribute, a contemporary historian gave the following appraisal of Bullock's contribution:

Thomas Bullock in some ways contributed as much as Willard Richards or George A. Smith to the "History of Joseph Smith." Though he was not the immediate author of the manuscript, his journals and memory were extensively drawn on. He wrote the final or rough draft of the manuscript for each year from 1839 to 1844. His participation in the history spanned from nearly the beginning of the renewed emphasis on the work in 1843 until it was completed in 1856, something neither Richards [nor] Smith could claim.⁷¹

The "History of Joseph Smith" was first published as a series of articles in the *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo and the *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City from 1842 to 1858. It was also published in the *Millennial Star* in England from 1842 to 1863.⁷² The "History of Joseph Smith" eventually became the basis for the *History of the Church*, which B. H. Roberts was assigned to edit in May 1901. The first six volumes of that work contained the "History of Joseph Smith" and were published from 1902 to 1912.⁷³ It continues to this day to be the most frequently cited primary source of the teachings and events in the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

As soon as Thomas completed his work on the "History of Joseph Smith," the Church called him on a mission to his beloved homeland, England. There he served faithfully from 1856 to 1858. Upon his return to Utah, he continued in some of the assignments he had before his mission, specifically chief clerk in the Church Historian's Office and clerk to the House of Representatives. In 1863, the Territorial

Legislative Assembly voted to make Bullock one of the regents of the University of Deseret (later University of Utah). This assignment was his highest academic honor.

The previous year he had moved to the little town of Wanship, Summit County, east of Salt Lake City. Thereafter his assignments in the Salt Lake Valley began to decrease as he accepted increasing responsibilities in Summit County such as county clerk and recorder. In 1868, Thomas moved to Coalville, Utah, where he lived the rest of his days. He died on February 10, 1885, at age sixty-eight.⁷⁴

Conclusion

Thomas Bullock was a man of tremendous capacity and talent. People sometimes use the term *Renaissance man* to describe a person who is “knowledgeable or proficient in more than one field.”⁷⁵ Bullock was clearly deserving of the designation *Renaissance man*. He was heavily involved in the affairs of church, government, education, politics, publishing, the military, pioneering, moneymaking, and census taking. Historian Thomas Carlyle once summarized the effect of studying heroes: “Great Men, taken up in any way, are profitable company. We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man, without gaining something [from] him.”⁷⁶ Does Thomas Bullock deserve to be called great? The world tends to apply this term to people who are rich, famous, powerful, and beautiful. However, the New Testament gives a much different definition for the word. The Savior proclaimed, “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11). If this is the criteria for greatness, Bullock clearly qualifies. His service as secretary to the First Presidency, clerk for the Territorial House of Representatives, journalist for the vanguard pioneer company, chief clerk in the Church Historian’s Office, and major scribe for the “History of Joseph Smith” surely qualify him for greatness. Thomas Bullock was a man of courage, a man of loyalty, a man of ability, a man of achievement, a man of honor, and a man of God. He certainly magnified the

distinctive title of "the Lord's clerk," leaving a lasting legacy in Salt Lake City as well as the entire Church.

Notes

1. Many authors say there were between 600 and 650 Mormons in Nauvoo in September 1846. See B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 3:135; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 234; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Nauvoo, Battle of," in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, ed. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 818. However, Thomas Bullock estimated that there were only about 150 Mormons in the city at the time. See Thomas Bullock "Letter from the Camp to Elder Franklin D. Richards," *Millennial Star*, January 15, 1848, 28.
2. See Godfrey, "Nauvoo, Battle of," 818–19.
3. Bullock, "Letter from the Camp," 28.
4. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1914), 2:599.
5. C. Ward Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956), 6.
6. "Thomas Bullock—Pioneer," in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, comp. Kate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1965), 8:265.
7. "Letter from Elder Thomas Bullock to Elder John O. Angus," *Millennial Star*, July 3, 1852, 299.
8. Jerald F. Simon, "Thomas Bullock as an Early Mormon Historian," *BYU Studies* 30, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 71.
9. "Letter from Elder Thomas Bullock," 299.
10. "Letter from Elder Thomas Bullock," 299.
11. "Thomas Bullock—Pioneer," 230.
12. "Letter from Elder Thomas Bullock," 299.
13. Gregory R. Knight, "Introduction to the 1845–1846 Journal of Thomas Bullock," *BYU Studies* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 6.

14. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1964), 5:415.
15. "Thomas Bullock—Pioneer," 232.
16. Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:302.
17. Donald Q. Cannon, "The King Follett Discourse: Joseph Smith's Greatest Sermon in Historical Perspective," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 179, 185.
18. *History of the Church*, 6:325. For more on Joseph Smith's campaign for president, see Arnold K. Garr, *Joseph Smith: Presidential Candidate* (Orem, UT: Millennial Press, 2007).
19. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 15.
20. *History of the Church*, 6:362.
21. *History of the Church*, 6:377.
22. "Letter from Thomas Bullock to Elder John O. Angus," 299.
23. Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 454; H. Dean Garrett, "Richards, Willard," in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, 1025.
24. B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period 2: Apostolic Interregnum*, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1932), 7:324.
25. Simon, "Thomas Bullock as an Early Mormon Historian," 76.
26. Jessee, "Writing of Joseph Smith's History," 469.
27. Thomas Bullock, "Letter from the Camp," 28.
28. Bullock, "Letter from the Camp," 29.
29. Bullock, "Letter from the Camp," 30.
30. "Thomas Bullock—Pioneer," 8:238.
31. "Thomas Bullock—Pioneer," 8:238.
32. "Thomas Bullock—Pioneer," 8:239.
33. Will Bagley, ed., *The Pioneer Camp of the Saints: The 1846 and 1847 Mormon Trail Journals of Thomas Bullock* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark, 1997), 209–13.
34. Bagley, *Pioneer Camp of the Saints*, 232.
35. Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 257.
36. *Deseret News 1997–1998 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1998), 167–68.
37. "Letter from Thomas Bullock," *Millennial Star*, April 15, 1848, 117.

38. Bagley, *Pioneer Camp of the Saints*, 241–42.
39. "Letter from Thomas Bullock," 117–18.
40. Bagley, *Pioneer Camp of the Saints*, 276–77.
41. Bagley, *Pioneer Camp of the Saints*, 318n96.
42. For an in-depth discussion on the issue of reorganizing the First Presidency, see Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri: Winter Quarters, 1846–1852* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 199–214. See also Gary James Bergera, *Conflict in the Quorum: Orson Pratt, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 53–83.
43. *History of the Church*, 7:621.
44. *History of the Church*, 7:623.
45. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 214.
46. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 47, 52.
47. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 55.
48. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 57–58.
49. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 58.
50. John Moburn Kay was born on October 6, 1817, in Bury, Lancashire, England. As a boy he worked in his uncle's iron and brass foundry. He joined the Church in 1841 and immigrated to the Salt Lake Valley in 1848. After he arrived in the valley his "trade of moulding and pattern-making in iron and brass came at once into play." For further information on John Kay, see Andrew Jensen, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History Company, 1920), 661–63.
51. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 59.
52. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 67.
53. D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 185, 193.
54. For more on the Council of Fifty, see Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Council of Fifty" in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, ed. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cannon (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 256–57; James R. Clark, "The Kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty, and the Star of Deseret." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 26 (April 1958): 130–48; and Andrew F. Ehat, "It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 3 (Spring 1980): 253–79.

55. Despain, “Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer,” 60.
56. “Thomas Bullock—Pioneer,” 8:261.
57. Despain, “Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer,” 60.
58. “Thomas Bullock—Pioneer,” 8:262.
59. J. Michael Hunter, “Deseret News,” in *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History*, 291.
60. David F. Boone, “Perpetual Emigrating Fund (PEF),” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1075; see also Despain, “Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer,” 63; “Thomas Bullock—Pioneer,” 260; Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 291; and 2010 *Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2010), 278.
61. Richard D. Poll, “Deseret,” in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Alan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 138–39.
62. “Thomas Bullock—Pioneer,” 8:261.
63. Following are the results of his census, as of April 1, 1851:

	Males	Females	Total
1st Great Salt Lake County	3,119	3,036	6,155
2nd Davis County	596	532	1,128
3rd Weber County	691	452	1,143
4th Utah County	1,125	880	2,005
5th San Pete County	197	168	365
6th Iron County	191	169	360
7th Tooele County	85	67	152
8th Green River Precinct	22	24	46
Total	6,026	5,328	11,354

(See Despain, “Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer,” 64–66).

64. Despain, “Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer,” 69.
65. Despain, “Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer,” 69–70.
66. “Thomas Bullock—Pioneer,” 8:266.
67. Jessee, “Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” 470.
68. Howard C. Searle, “Authorship of the History of Joseph Smith: A Review Essay,” *BYU Studies* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 117.

69. Jessee, "Writing of Joseph Smith's History," 460, 470, 472; Simon, "Thomas Bullock as an Early Mormon Historian," 77.
70. Simon, "Thomas Bullock as an Early Mormon Historian," 77.
71. Simon, "Thomas Bullock as an Early Mormon Historian," 79.
72. Searle, "Authorship of the History of Joseph Smith," 113, 119.
73. Searle, "Authorship of the History of Joseph Smith," 120.
74. Despain, "Thomas Bullock: Early Mormon Pioneer," 73, 94, 96–98, 101.
75. *Random House Webster's College Dictionary*, "Renaissance man."
76. Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1902), 2.



Entrance to the Salt Lake City Cemetery, which was established just one year after the first pioneers arrived in the valley. (Courtesy of David F. Boone.)