WILLIAM A. ("BILL") HICKMAN:
SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

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Leonard J. Arrington and Hope A. Hilton

No. 28 August 1979

TASK PAPERS IN LDS HISTORY

Submitted to History Division
Historical Department
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Salt Lake City, Utah

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This detailed study of William A. ("Bill") Hickman presents information gleaned from the LDS Church Archives, from family sources, and from other available materials. Although this paper may be submitted for publication, some details, especially the footnotes, will likely be omitted in a published article. Therefore, the information and interpretations in this fuller account are made available in this form to aid scholars, researchers, and family members. Leonard Arrington is director of the History Division, Historical Department of the Church, and Hope Hilton is a great-granddaughter of Bill Hickman, presently living in Cairo, Egypt. The ideas and interpretations presented here do not necessarily represent the views of the LDS Historical Department, nor is this an official LDS Church publication.

FOREWORD

The basic problem of a person doing research on William A. Hickman is the extent to which he or she should depend on Brigham's Destroying Angel, Being the Life, Confession, and Startling Disclosures of the Notorious Bill Hickman, the Danite Chief of Utah (New York, 1872; Salt Lake City, 1904). Unquestionably, Bill wrote an autobiography that served as the basis for the book. Although it is no longer extant, family members report having seen the manuscript, and Brigham's Destroying Angel could not have been prepared without such a personal history. On the other hand, enough manuscript material in Bill's handwriting survives for us to assert with confidence that the published draft of Brigham's Destroying Angel was not written by Hickman. The style is different, and the editorializing and sensationalizing are alien to Bill's spirit. Clearly, the text of Brigham's Destroying Angel, as published, was prepared by the same John H. Beadle who wrote the "Preface" and "Introductory History," and furnished the "Appendix" and notes. (These represent almost one-fourth of the book.)

What information, then, is from Hickman's autobiography and what is added by Beadle? Much about Beadle and his work on Brigham's Destroying Angel can be learned by comparing it with his previously published work on the Mormons, Life in Utah; or, The Mysteries and Crimes of Mormonism . . . (Cincinnati, 1870). The reader of both works cannot fail to note that there are phrases in the Hickman "confessions" that are typically Beadle. Brigham's Destroying Angel may or may not be an accurate confession, but unquestionably the autobiography was subjected to tampering, if not ghost-writing, and was almost certainly given a

market orientation by Beadle. We are confident that the editorializing, the facile attempts to connect Brigham Young with nefarious doings, are part of the editing by John Beadle.[1] Hickman's own statement to William H. Kimball about Brigham's Destroying Angel after it appeared in published form was as follows (this statement relayed to Orson F. Whitney by Kimball on November 15, 1892): "My book is a lie from the beginning to the end—from the boar fight through. . . . I was bribed to write that book. I was told that I could make fifty thousand dollars out of it, and that is why I did it."[2] Bill's son Warren wrote: "My oldest sister, Kathrine [also Catherine], saw the manuscript, and she said it was changed to a novel form, much to her and to my father's sorrow. My father told his brother, Dr. G. W. Hickman, that there were many things in that book which Beadle had written unauthorized and which were wholly untrue. Beadle had gotten his data, then went East and wrote the book and published it, without my father ever seeing the manuscript [let alone galley or page proofs]."[3]

Since Brigham's Destroying Angel cannot be accepted as Hickman's own testimony, we have used information from it only when it could be verified by other sources.

Brigham's Destroying Angel, by referring in the subtitle to Hickman as "the Danite Chief of Utah," makes a serious error which, unfortunately, has been perpetuated by many historians and journalists. In the summer of 1838, Sampson Avard, member of the LDS Church in Missouri, formed a secret society to defend the Church against dissenters and threatening mobs. The organization may at first have had the support of some Church authorities, quite possibly Sidney Rigdon, member of the First Presidency. But Avard and some of his followers began a campaign of retaliation against those who had committed crimes against the Saints. There is some contemporary evidence that the group, even though repudiated by

Church leaders, began to rob, plunder, lie, and even kill in its attempts to avenge for wrongs or supposed wrongs done to the Latter-day Saints. Bound together by secret oaths and signs for identification and warning, the men in the group were variously known as Daughters of Gideon, Sons of Dan, Daughters of Zion, and Avenging Angels, but most commonly as Danites. After five months of terrorizing the region, some of the group were arrested and brought to court. Joseph Smith, who was in the Liberty, Missouri, Jail during much of the time this was going on, apologized for having been unaware of the extent of the group's "frauds and secret abominations and evil works of darkness."[4]

Two points need to be made: (1) Hickman was almost certainly never a Danite; and (2) the Danites, as an organization, did not function after 1839, whether in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, or in the Great Basin. As to Hickman's alleged involvement, Harold Schindler, a careful student of the Danites, concluded: "This sobriquet ['chief of the Danites'] was entirely the invention of J. H. Beadle, under whose guiding hand the manuscript was printed. Nowhere in his confession does Hickman call himself the Danite chief, or for that matter refer at All to the Sons of Dan. Beadle's preoccupation with Danites was due in great measure to the unquestioning acceptance in the East of blood-curdling stories about Mormon assassins."[5]

Nevertheless, scholars not so skilled in Mormon studies have sometimes seized on the term as having some validity. For example, the distinguished student of Western outlaws, Philip Jordan, in his introduction to the recent reprint of Edward Bonney, The Banditti of the Prairies (Chicago, 1850; Norman, Okla., 1963) has ingenuously copied Beadle in stating that Bill Hickman succeeded Sampson Avard as "chief of the Danites" (p. ix). Jordan apparently confused Hickman's Church security assignments with the work of the earlier Danites. These two groups were as much unlike as the Mafia and the FBI. Edward Bonney

himself mentions Hickman only once, and not in a Danite connection. But he does call Hickman "one of the most notorious rascals unhung; a fugitive from justice for several larcenies he had committed in the County of Lee [Iowa]" (p. 218 of the 1850 edition).

Having found no contemporary evidence to support the functioning of the Danites after 1838-1839, we join other historians in assuming that the actions once attributed to the Danites were probably those of individuals or of Mormon security forces--deputy sheriffs, territorial militia, and/or minutemen. We attribute the extensive folklore about Destroying Angels to four factors: (1) the Danites did exist in Missouri for a period; (2) nearly everyone going west went through Missouri, picked up the folklore about Danite activities there, and supposed its continued existence in Utah; (3) Mormon leaders, particularly during the Reformation of 1856, taught that murderers and others who have committed heinous sins should atone for those sins with their own blood (capital punishment), thus leading some persons to conclude (wrongly) that Mormons believed in killing unbelievers, apostates, and "enemies" of the Church;[6] and (4) there were law enforcement organizations and agents in Mormon country, functioning under Brigham Young as territorial governor. Recognizing the de factor merger of Church and State, writers thus inferred Church direction of these law enforcement agencies and individuals. The anti-Mormon sentiment of the 1860s and '70s was such as to encourage belief in stirring tales of these Avenging Angels. Examples: Mayne Reid, The White Huntress, 3 vols (London, 1861; New York, 1861); Theodore Winthrop, John Brent (New York, 1861; Boston, 1862); Arthur Conan Doyle, A Study in Scarlet (London, 1887; Philadephia, 1890); and many others. In this century the theme has been repeated with dramatic force in Zane Grey, Riders of the Purple Sage (New York, 1913), one of the most widely read of all Western novels.[7] It should be clearly understood that this theme in folklore or fiction bears little resemblance to the short-lived and unauthorized Danite activity in

early Missouri.

Incidentally, there is a significant similarity between the literature about Bill Hickman and John D. Lee. Both were indicted for "crimes" committed during the Utah War period; both regarded themselves as pardoned for those "crimes" by President James Buchanan's amnesty; both wrote simple autobiographical accounts; both were "used" by anti-Mormon forces who rewrote and sensationalized their reminiscences and then sought to use the supposed author as a symbol justifying legislative and judicial actions against the Church. In the case of Lee, a manuscript was written while he was in prison. It was then edited and fashioned by Lee's lawyer-journalist, William W. Bishop. The account, published as The Confessions of John D. Lee (New York, 1881) was then used by the anti-Mormon ring to support its attacks on the Mormon theocracy.[8] The similarity of this whole scenario to the life and writings of Bill Hickman lends more than a little plausibility to the interpretation advanced in the present study.

Leonard Arrington

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By Leonard J. Arrington and Rope A. Hilton

The single largest enterprise launched by Brigham Young in the nineteenth century was the Brigham Young Express and Carrying Company. Anticipating the national pony express system by four years, the Y X Company, as it was called, was designed to provide mail service between Salt Lake City and Independence, Missouri. The organization would also transport immigrants from the Missouri River to the Salt Lake Valley, and carry the immense volume of freight needed by the thirty-five thousand Latter-day Saints in the Mountain West. The leading persons in the Y X enterprise, besides Brigham Young, were Hiram B. Kimball, John Murdock, William A. Hickman, and Orrin Porter Rockwell. The roles of Young, Kimball, Murdock, and Rockwell have been described elsewhere, but little has been written of the participation of William ("Bill") Hickman.[1] That this most ambitious of all Mormon enterprises was suddenly cancelled by order of the federal government, without formal notification or explanation, and that the enormous investment in men and materials was almost entirely lost, explains much of the subsequent life and attitude of Bill Hickman.

William Adams Hickman was born in 1815 in western Kentucky, the oldest of thirteen children. He came from an old American family--his grandfather told Bill that he had twenty-one blood relations in the War of the Revolution--"and not one Tory among them!"[2] When he was four years old, Bill's parents moved to northeast Missouri, where they built and operated a gristmill and farmed. Bill's mother, Elizabeth Adams Hickman, was able to read and write, and saw that her children acquired the same skills.

Asserting his independence at the age of seventeen, Bill married "the pretty, black-eyed" Bernetta Burckhartt, three years older than he, daughter of a Missouri judge and assemblyman at whose house Bill had boarded while getting instruction in law. Hard-working Bill at first taught school, but soon acquired a considerable acreage and settled down to farming and stockraising.

In 1836 Mormons leaving Clay and Ray counties, Missouri, or enroute to Caldwell County, passed in front of Hickman's farm in Randolph County, and Bill, a student of the Bible and converted Methodist, was attracted to their religion and people. In 1838, when the Mormons were expelled from Missouri and fled eastward to Quincy, Illinois, Bill and Bernetta, with four children, left their 320-acre farm and went with the Saints to Illinois. Some of their store of food and feed, and some of the cash they received from the sale of their farm, was used to assist the suffering migrants. In May 1839, about the time the Saints moved their headquarters to Nauvoo, in western Illinois, Joseph Smith ordained Bill a Seventy, signifying Hickman's full acceptance as a trustworthy and informed Latter-day Saint. Bill, who was twenty-four, wrote that he liked Joseph very much, and considered his preaching "Bible doctrine."

Within a year or two Bill was chosen as one of a group of twelve men who served as body-guards and "protectors" of Joseph Smith.[3] He was apparently a "regular" with the Mormon security forces during the period (1843-1844) when Mormon communities in Hancock County, Illinois, were periodically invaded by hostile mobs. Despite many assertions to the contrary, there is no hard evidence that Bill was a member, even for a brief period, of the so-called Danite Band of Sampson Avard, which at first tried to protect the Mormons in Missouri and later, sorely tried, began to wreak vengeance on Missourians (and allegedly, later, on Illinoisians) who were engaged in persecuting the Saints.[4] If Bill was a member he was not prominent enough to have been mentioned in surviving accounts of that outlaw band. At no time does he seem to have lost

the confidence of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other LDS leaders who had repudiated the group. The documentary History of the Church suggests a possible source of confusion:

> The companies of tens and fifties got up by [Sampson] Avard [i.e., the Danites] were altogether separate and distinct from those companies of tens and fifties organized by the brethren for self defense, in case of an attack from the mob. This latter organization was called into existence more particularly that in this time of alarm no family or person might be neglected; therefore, one company would be engaged in drawing wood, another in cutting it, another in gathering corn, another in grinding, another in butchering, another in distributing meat, etc., etc., so that all should be employed in turn, and no one would lack the necessaries of life.[5]

In any case, from 1839 to 1846 Bill farmed, at first in Lee County, Iowa, and later in Hancock County, Illinois, and carried out occasinal assignments in connection with law enforcement agencies in Nauvoo. His loyalty to the Church and commitment to its principles is suggested by the fact that he was "endowed" in a sacred religious rite in the Nauvoo Temple on January 23, 1846, and a week later contracted his first plural marriage--to Sarah Elizabeth Luce, sister of one of his associates, Jason Luce.[6]

Participating in the exodus from Nauvoo in 1846, Bill started across Iowa in what was known as the Artillery Company. He was first captain in John Scott's division of four companies. When the company reached Council Bluffs, in preparation for the trek to the Great Basin, Church leaders accepted an offer from the United States Army for five hundred Mormon men to be recruited into the Army and serve as a part of General Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West, in his campaign against Mexico. Bill would have liked very much to have been part of this Mormon Battalion, but was ill with measles at the time of the muster and could not go. When he recovered, in the fall of 1846, he returned to Nauvoo for his family and was caught up in the hostilities between lingering Latter-day Saints and anti-Mormon mobs trying to storm Nauvoo.[7]

In the spring of 1848, after two years in Iowa, Bill was asked by Brigham Young to remain in Kanesville (Council Bluffs) to supervise security, possibly as a sheriff, in that temporary community of Mormon refugees. During this period Bill's ability to catch lawbreakers, control Indian thievery, and restrain outlaws earned for him a reputation as a zealous, perhaps overzealous, lawman.

The leader of the Latter-day Saint community in Missouri in these years was Orson Hyde. Some documents suggest that Hyde was so infuriated by the tactics of the anti-Mormons that he condoned extralegal methods of fighting them.[8] Hyde was also so irritated with the continous Indian thievery that he found it difficult consistently to apply Brigham Young's policy of firmness and patience.[9] An 1849 episode in a repetitive cycle of toughness and pity involved Bill Hickman. The Omahas had been stealing two or three cattle per day--or, at least, that is what the sources suggest. Bill, in his resolute manner, apprehended two suspects and shot them. Later, when Mormon leaders were informed that Bill had been too precipitate--that the Pawnees Bill shot were innocent--a council of Mormon elders adjudged Hickman guilty of violating Church policy of friendliness toward the Indians and disfellowshipped him.[10] Bill was released from his position in Pottawattamie County and instructed to migrate to the Great Basin.[11]

At the start of his crossing in 1849 Bill was delegated to help Minerva Wade, a nineteen-year-old single girl who had been left alone after the death of her mother and the departure of her father and brother to the Mormon Battalion. He married Minerva as a plural wife and in the years that followed she was a loving and faithful companion. She eventually bore eight children, and never remarried after Bill's expulsion from the Church, as some of his other wives did.

Bill arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in August 1849. "Hickman," Orson

Hyde wrote to Willard Richards, "is sometimes a little rash and may shoot an innocent Indian, mistaking him for an Omaha horse thief." But in a letter to Brigham Young, Hyde noted that although Hickman might be rash and hasty, "this is even better than many do, who will do nothing thmselves to save or preserve the property of the Saints."[12]

Bill was refellowshipped in Utah, and there is record of a ritual rebaptism in Jordan Ward in 1852. In an early meeting with Brigham Young after his arrival, Bill was given a blessing which promised him "that he might be able to protect the Saints from the wild savage Indians and outlaws."[13] In fulfillment of that blessing, Hickman was among those called to fight hostile Indians at Battle Creek, near Provo, Utah, in February and March 1850.[14] He was also involved in militia activities against hostile Shoshones and Bannocks in Ogden and Tooele, and against "deaperadoes" in several parts of Utah Territory.[15]

Bill crossed the Plains again in 1850 to direct Bernetta and Minerva west. During that crossing he married an additional plural wife, Sarah Basford Meacham (also spelled Meachem), a sixteen-year-old girl by whom he eventually had four children.

After his family's arrival in the Great Basin, Bill located them on a ranch about ten miles southwest of Salt Lake City at a place called North Jordan, now Taylorsville. The ranch, just west of the Jordan River in a grazing region called Rush Valley, a part of Tooele County, was often referred to as Hickman's Fort.[16] As the area began to build up in number of ranches and households, the legislature, at Bill's prodding, created Shambip County in January 1856 from the southern portion of Tooele County. "Shambip," the name suggested by Bill, was the Indian word for the rushes which predominated in the valley. The area was returned to Tooele County in 1862.[17] Bill fenced and built houses, corrals, and other structures, and irrigated and traded with California overlanders. He

herded stock for the Church for one year, and then herded his own stock.

In the fall of 1851 Bill got the gold fever and went to California, starting with a few Mormons and later joining forces with some Gentiles. Because of his reputation as a scout and Indian fighter, Hickman was named captain.[18] The California papers were full of rumors about trouble in Utah, however, so Bill decided to return, in the summer of 1852, in order to be with his family and render any needed service for the Church.

In March 1853 Bill went to set up a wayside trading post near Fort Bridger, in Green River County, Utah Territory, now the southwestern corner of Wyoming.[19] Having seen the possibilities of profit in the Mormon Station in Carson Valley, which he visited the previous year on his return from California, Bill now traded with the Overlanders in the Green River area and performed horseshoeing and wagon repairing. Several thousand Mormon immigrants passed through the Green River area each summer on their way to the Salt Lake Valley, and had been "held up", as they believed, by Jim Bridger and other Mountain Men. Mormon leaders believed that the Mountain Men charged exhorbitant prices for provisions and for ferriage across the Green River, and also that they were illegally selling the Indians whiskey and guns.[20] As Superintendent of Indian Affairs and as Governor, Brigham Young thought it imperative that this illegal traffic be controlled.

For the purpose of controlling the Green River region, which was then part of Utah Territory, the legislature now created Green River County. Bill was directed to make contact with Bridger, other Mountain Men, and the Indians, and to report conditions to Brigham Young.[21] In order to properly stock a new station, Bill took with him from the Salt Lake Valley a large supply of goods.

On the basis of Hickman's reports, the Governor obtained a warrant from Associate Supreme Court Justice Leonidas Shaver, in August 1853, for the seizure of illegal goods and the arrest of Bridger. Hickman and a posse of 150 men went

to arrest Bridger on charges of selling arms and ammunition to the Indians; there was a fight in which two or three of Bridger's associates were killed, but Bridger escaped. Empowered by the warrant, the posse took possession of contraband whiskey, ammunition, and cattle. In his holograph report on the exercise, dated October 27, 1853, Hickman stated: "I used my utmost exertions to have all the liquor spilled and carry out the Governor's [Brigham Young's] orders to the letter. There was none of the liquor used that was found at Fort Bridger to my knowledge, during the time I was there."[22] During his stay in Green River County Hickman married Hannah Diantha Harr [also spelled Horr], a seventeen-year-old immigrant enroute to Utah. She bore Hickman two children and in 1857 remarried.

In October 1853, after Hickman had established a bridgehead--i.e., built corrals and cabins and established a ferry--fifty-three other Latter-day Saints were called at general conference to join Hickman in establishing an independent settlement, Fort Supply, twelve miles southwest of Fort Bridger. This fort was termed by Hosea Stout "the most forbidding and godforsaken place I have ever seen."[23]

Under the direction of Bill's former ecclesiastical superior, Orson Hyde, Bill had been reading law in his spare time and had received an appointment, in 1854, as Deputy United States Marshal, doing most of the Marshal's business in the courts and "making all the arrests of the hard men." He became a licensed lawyer in the winter of 1854. Thus, it was consistent with Bill's training and experience that Brigham Young should appoint him Green River sheriff, prosecuting attorney, collector, and assessor.[24] Bill was also elected representative of Green River County in the territorial legislature.[25] His principal activity, of course, was as sheriff. It was a region populated with "outlaws." One member of the Green River contingent, James S. Brown, wrote: "We [often] met men face to face, with deadly weapons, and if it had not been for the cunning

and the cool head of 'Bill' Hickman, . . . blood would have been shed more than once when it was avoided. . . . In his official capacity he was cunning, and was always ready to support the law while I was with him on Green River."[26] Keeping peace between the Mormons, Gentile Mountain Men, and the Indians of the region must have been like trying to walk a sagging high wire. On at least one occasion Hickman warned Brigham Young against Porter Rockwell, who threatened to "stir things up by killing Indians."[27]

Bill was later called upon, in November 1854, to go to Ogden with L. B. [or Elisha] Ryan and Dimick Huntington to assist in dispersing a group of Shoshonis who threatened that small community. Earlier, Brigham Young had met the Shoshonis, talked friendship, distributed presents, and encouraged them to "settle down like the white man, and learn of him how to cultivate the land as he did, so that when the game was all gone they could live and have something to eat and to feed their families on." The Indians seemed to accept this suggestion, missionaries were appointed to work with them, and the situation seemed resolved. But in the months that followed they had once more become troublesome by "killing cattle, burning fences, and intimidating isolated families." The courage of Hickman, Ryan, and Huntington, together with James S. Brown and elements of the militia who were also present, was persuasive, and the Indians were dispersed without bloodshed.[28]

There is indication that Bill felt he should have received some compensation from the supplies confiscated at Fort Bridger and for his work in 1853-1856: when none was forthcoming he showed some resentment. Brigham Young, on the other hand, did not see the need to reward persons who were merely "doing their duty," although Bill may have felt that he should have helped the Hickman family in the same manner that his own (Brigham's) family was taken care of.

And Bill's family was growing, perhaps irresponsibly. Already responsible for Bernetta, Minerva, Sarah Meacham, and Hannah as wives, Bill married Sarah Eliza Johnson in March 1855 and Martha Diana Case Howland (a widow) and Mary Lucretia Harr [Horr] in 1856. He was also sealed to Margaret, a Shoshone Indian raised in Brigham Young's home, in 1855, but this may have been simply a religious ceremony relating to a celestial future—he seems never to have lived with her conjugally.[29] By the end of 1856 Bill had the responsibility of caring for seven wives and fifteen children. Why Brigham Young and his associates in the First Presidency permitted these marriages or sealings to men without substantial means of support is difficult to understand. Even in 1859, when rumors circulated that Bill was involved with persons of doubtful reputation, he was married to Mary Jane Hetherington, age seventeen. Mary Jane was Bill's "final" plural wife—the last of ten wives sealed to William Hickman. Two of the wives, Sarah Luce and Margaret, the Shoshone, bore him no children. The remainder bore thirty-four children—the youngest born in 1865. Twenty-three of the thirty-four children survived to adulthood. The failure of many plural marriages, as suggested by Eugene and Bruce Campbell, may have been as much a result of lack of vigilance in approving sealings as in the personal idiosyncracies and sins of participants after the sealings were performed.[30]

Despite obvious problems of supporting his families, Bill was not neglectful, and he had a good relationship with his wives and children. The diaries of John Bennion, William McIntosh, and Joseph Harker, other ranchers in the North Jordan area, have many references to visiting with the Hickmans—Bill and his wives. The Hickmans frequently invited their neighbors to dinner; the Hickmans and neighbors frequently borrowed from each other, and frequently attended meetings and parties together.[31] Bishop Harker and his counselor, John Bennion, joined together in baptizing and confirming the Hickman family during the Reformation

of 1856.[32] Both Bennion and Hickman were elected year after year to serve as trustees of the ward school, and often labored together on the expansion of the schoolhouse. Clearly, Hickman was regarded as an active and loyal churchman, at least until 1859.

In July 1855, Governor Brigham Young sent Bill as Church emissary to purchase Fort Bridger. Bridger asked for $8,000 and that figure was agreed upon. A document, dated August 1, 1855, duly signed by Louis Vasquez, Bridger's partner, and Lewis Robison, representing the trustee-in-trust of the Church, acknowledges receipt of the money and the transfer of the property to the Church.[33] This acquisition, with its store of supplies for immigrating Saints and Oregon-bound travelers, effectively removed the Gentile Mountain Men to other parts, and promised to furnish the Church with a base for protecting its travelers and immigrants.[34]

Expected to continue to pacify the Indians of the region, Hickman held a Council with forty lodges of Indians numbering about three hundred persons on August 19, 1856.[35] Gifts were presented, every effort was made to demonstrate friendship, and their chief, Washakie, remained on a friendly basis with the Mormons during most of his life.

Having established Fort Supply and acquired Fort Bridger, Brigham Young and his associates now developed plans for the Y X Express and Carrying Company. It is probable that with the successful working of that company Brigham Young expected to reward Bill and others for their important contributions toward establishing the conditions for its successful operation.

Under the immediate direction of Brigham Young, the Y X Company was to establish nine way stations (including Fort Supply and Fort Bridger) between Salt Lake City and Independence. Caravans of freight wagons would move from Independence to each station, where drivers might spend a night or two,

find provisions and have repair work done, and move on to the next. Freighters would thus transport to Utah Territory such States-purchased goods and supplies as sugar, coffee, cloth, iron, and agricultural implements and industrial machinery. Using the same way stations as a kind of frontier inn or hotel, stagecoaches would carry passengers across the twelve-hundred-mile expanse. Stocked with supplies, the way stations would provide handcart immigrants with supplies and provisions, making it unnecessary for them to carry a large stock of goods with them. Finally, ponies galloping from station to station would carry the mail. It was a magnificent conception, precisely the kind of grand design that Brigham Young enjoyed promoting. Bill was to be in charge of the portion of the route from Fort Laramie (Wyoming) to Independence; Porter Rockwell was in charge of the mail from Fort Laramie to Salt Lake City. John Murdock and Hiram Kimball were other leading participants.

An enormous effort was involved in stocking the twelve-hundred-mile route with animals, provisions, supplies, and men. A stock of animals had to be left at each way station, and facilities had to be constructed. Hundreds of hardy men were "called" to participate in the enterprise during the year 1856. While these were working, Brigham Young and associates secured a four-year government contract to carry the mail, arranged with previous mail contractors to take over their stock and facilities, conducted negotiations with Indian tribes along the route to secure their friendship and assistance, and negotiated with suppliers in the Midwest and East to sell livestock, equipment, provisions, and other needed goods. In all of these activities, Hickman played a key role. He made contacts with Indians, Mountain Men, government officials, and suppliers.[36]

Some idea of the magnitude of the tasks in which he was involved is suggested by the fact that at one depot, one of nine being established, a fort

320 feet square enclosed forty-two buildings; an irrigation ditch was dug and fifteen acres of land planted; and sixty tons of flour, supplies of grain, and two hundred head of cattle were assembled.[37]

Above all, Bill carried the mail. Minutes before his scheduled departure from Salt Lake City with the mail, on February 8, 1857, Bill was given a patriarchal blessing by Patriarch John Young. The blessing promised him prosperity, which would undoubtedly have come if the Y X Company had operated as long as two or three years. The blessing also promised that if Bill were faithful he would "assist in avenging the blood of the prophets of God, and in accomplishing the great work of the last days." Bill may have wrongfully interpreted this phrase as sanction for some of the activities in which he later engaged.[38]

Hickman was accompanied by Porter Rockwell, Archibald Gardner, and five others on this inaugural mail expedition, partly because of the necessity of making arrangements along the way for those to follow. It was still winter, and in parts of the Utah-Wyoming mountains the snow reached the horses' bellies.[39] The group arrived safely back in Utah with the eastern mail on June 24, 1857. There was a joyous welcome. Bill and his companions had covered some twelve hundred miles in thirty-four days, or an average of more than thirty-five miles per day.[40]

One of Bill's associates left an account of the second trip out. They left Salt Lake City on July 1, 1857, and reached Independence fifteen days later. The method of traveling was as follows:

> We arose at daylight, hitched up and traveled twenty miles, then stopped for breakfast and rested an hour or two while our stock fed and watered. We then traveled twenty miles and made another stop. In the afternoon we made a like drive and stopped for supper, after which we made a fourth drive into the night, thus making an average of eighty miles' travel each day for fifteen days.[41]

Within a year, however, all of this activity came to naught. A United States Judge appointed to Utah Territory, W. W. Drummond, wrote a letter to the

President of the United States, James Buchanan, alleging that the Mormons refused to recognize federal officials and were guilty of many illegalities. Without investigating the charges, and perhaps wishing to establish the administration's firmness because of threats of southern secession, President Buchanan ordered the bulk of the United States Army to Utah to install a new governor and other federal officials, and to keep the "rebellious Mormons" under control.[42]

Without official notification, the government cancelled the mail contract; the Mormons learned of the cancellation only when they tried to pick up the mail in Independence for delivery to Utah on July 1, 1857.[43] Some 2,500 troops and about as many suppliers, blacksmiths, and teamsters were ordered to depart from Fort Leavenworth and head for Utah, without any notice to Brigham Young, Governor of the Territory. The Governor, who learned of the approach of the troops only from Mormon participants in the Y X Company, was put in the position of assuming that those headed for Utah were a hostile mob similar to the ones which had been dispatched against them in Missouri and Illinois.

One of the consequences of the Utah Expedition was that the Mormons were forced to abandon each of their way stations: those at Fort Supply, Fort Bridger, Sweetwater, Rocky Ridge, Devil's Gate, Deer Creek, La Bonte Creek, Horseshoe Creek in Wyoming; and the one at Beaver Creek (Genoa) in Nebraska. In abandoning Fort Supply and Fort Bridger, the Mormons burned them as part of the scorched earth policy they adopted to slow down the "enemy." Thus the Mormons forfeited all of the labor of the hundreds of men who had set up the stations and most of the supplies used in stocking the stations. And of course they lost the labor of those operating the stations, carrying the mail, and otherwise participating in the gigantic enterprise.

At the same time that the Y X stations were being abandoned, the territory mobilized for defense. An army of volunteers had to be supplied with horses and

equipment, arms and ammunition, food and clothing. Civilians in the territory were organized to produce the wherewithal to supply the volunteer army, harvest the crops, scout for places of refuge, and assure the protection and welfare of families left behind by the soldier-volunteers.

In the midst of such preparations, struggling for its survival, the Church had no money to compensate the men who had labored on behalf of the Y X Company.[44] Hickman and others probably felt that, since the Government was responsible, they were justified in some "midnight requisitioning" from federal troops, supply trains, and suppliers. One thing is certain: Bill would not "run out" on the Mormons and troubles; he would continue as a valiant soldier in "the cause." When one of his neighbors took off for Carson Valley, Bill told his home teacher that he "would not give two bits a dozen for men that would act like that at this time."[45]

Having been a mobile officer (horseback) and mailman with the Y X Company, Bill Hickman was assigned to lead one of the parties of scouts delegated to "spy" on the Army to determine its purposes and destination. Hickman's intelligence reports to Governor Young show him to have been effective in the tasks assigned to him. Some of his spies disguised themselves as California emigrants and went in among the troops. They reported that the troops were "itching for a fight," and "anticipating fine times here this winter while walking over our people, hanging up our rulers, and prostituting our women." When asked what they were going to do, one group of soldiers replied: "Scalp old Brigham. . . . We shall sweep them [the Mormons] from the face of the earth and Mormonism in Utah shall cease to exist."[46]

While on the Green River in August (1857), Bill observed the wagon train of Major Stewart Van Vliet, Assistant Army Quartermaster, moving through Wyoming in advance of the troops. Bill noted also that the wagon train was in close

proximity to two companies of handcart Saints on their way to the Salt Lake Valley. Fearing a confrontation between the two, he reported the matter to Brigham Young on August 23, from Fort Supply.[47]

On September 7 Major Van Vliet arrived in Salt Lake City to discuss with Brigham Young accommodations for the troops. In Brigham's office when these discussions were held, Hickman suggested that the soldiers should be bivouacked west of Salt Lake City, in Rush Valley, where there was "feed and grain sufficient for their animals."[48] This was very nearly the compromise eventually worked out in April 1858 by Colonel Thomas L. Kane, Brigham Young, and Alfred Cumming.

Bill's next assignment was to lead a party of mounted troops following the caravans of Army suppliers as they moved through Wyoming. The Mormon Raiders, as these men were called, were directed to impede the movement of supplies by felling trees to block their path, burning grass which might be used for forage, driving away their horses, stampeding their cattle, and, when possible, burning their supply trains. The reports suggest that Bill and his companions were effective in this activity. Hickman quite probably was one of a party of twenty-one men who, on October 5, caught a group of freighters by surprise, ordered them away from their wagons, and set torches to the wagons. In all, fifty-two wagons in two wagon trains were burned, and the oxen and cattle accompanying them were driven off. The supplies they carried would have supplied the troops for three months.[49] One of the teamsters, William Clark, later claimed that he and several other teamsters were taken captive by Hickman, accompanied to a Mormon camp, where they were held until Brigham Young gave them a "pass," after which they proceeded on to California.[50]

One of the federal soldiers recalled the harassment of Lot Smith, Porter Rockwell, Bill Hickman, and their Mormon Raiders as follows:

> Every day when coming to camp they [the Mormons] would set the grass on fire, using long torches, and riding swift horses, so that before pitching tents we always had to fight fire. . . . One morning, just before daybreak, they rushed through the camp, firing guns and yelling like Indians, driving off all our mules and horses, numbering about a thousand, and before we could get into line they were safely out of reach of our rifles. It was ten o'clock [at night] before we recovered our animals. They hovered around daily, watching and taking every advantage of us, feeling safe in their tactics, knowing our inability to cope with them, as we had no cavalry, while they had the fleetest of horses.[51]

The activities which led to Bill's difficulties with federal officials and with Brigham Young seem to have begun during this period. They may have been stimulated in part by the purposeful camaraderie with Mormon-hating Gentiles--an unquestionable service to the Church to which he owed first loyalty. Unquestionably they are also attributable to Bill's feeling of justification for extralegal activity after President Buchanan's unjustifiable dispatch of federal troops and the consequent inability of the Church or territory to compensate him for his prodigious labors on its behalf.

Stunned by the effectiveness of the Mormon guerrillas and by the determined nature of Mormon opposition to the intended occupation of their territory by federal troops, the Buchanan administration authorized the calling of an additinal 3,000 officers and men, and awarded contracts involving the employment of about 5,000 teamsters, blacksmiths, and suppliers. The Quartermaster Genetal calculated that the whole supply train enroute to Utah in the spring of 1858, if bunched together, would make a line of about fifty miles.[52]

Confronted with the enormity of the government's commitment to "putting down the Mormon Rebellion," the Saints responded by strengthening their own defensive force and at the same time sought to achieve a negotiated settlement. Bill Hickman played an important role in both of these responses. He and other members of North Jordan Ward outfitted several persons to serve as part of a standing army of one thousand mounted riflemen. These men were completely fitted and ready for action by the end of February 1858. Hickman himself was

elected captain of an independent company of this volunteer army, some of whose members were from North Jordan.[53] Bill's personal assignment, under an official appointment from Brigham Young as Governor, was to "keep watch on the Army."[54] And apparently Bill did this, and perhaps magnified his calling by keeping watch on its horses as well. At least later stories began to drift in of a group of men, allegedly connected with Hickman, who rustled some of the Army's livestock.

At the same time, Hickman and other ward members prepared to cooperate with the decision made in the LDS General Conference of March 1858 to minimize the possibility of conflict by migrating to central and southern Utah. There they would hold themselves ready to "flee to the desert" in case the Army or the new governor (Alfred Cumming) did not live up to the pledge of peaceful passage and inoffensive occupation. Any intimation of Army plunder, occupation of Mormon soil, or hostile action of any kind would set in motion plans to destroy the Mormon countryside and retreat "to the mountains in the desert."

The diaries of John Bennion and William McIntosh, both long-time North Jordan neighbors of the Hickmans, suggest preparations throughout the spring of 1858 for the Move South. North Jordan and West Jordan residents were assigned to settle at Pondtown (Salem) and Spanish Fork in the southern part of Utah County. Each family was instructed to transport furniture, in addition to food and clothing. Shavings, kindling, and dried grass were to be left in the entrances of homes so that if the Army offered to occupy the habitations, a select group of "valiant young men" would be able to set fire to all buildings as part of a "scorched earth" policy. The Move South was to be carried out in strict Mormon military order. Each ward was organized into tens, fifties, and hundreds, with a captain over each. The housing when they reached their destination would have to consist of the bodies of their heavy covered wagons, or canvas tents. Some lived in dugouts and temporary board shanties and cabins. About six hundred

wagons passed through Salt Lake City daily during the month of May when the move was at its peak. We have no information as to the number of wagons involved in the move of the North Jordan congregation.

Bill Hickman was one of those appointed to supervise the movement of his ward, and for that purpose was sustained as a member of the bishopric of the ward--a counselor to Bishop Harker.[55] After the region was abandoned, one of those assigned to remain behind to stand guard described the Salt Lake Valley as "still as death--not a woman or child to be seen. . . . What has this people done that they must be harassed and persecuted in such a manner? What law have they broken? The answer is . . . the government has been deceived through the lying reports of their judges, and being urged on by wicked and designing men who assured the President that the 'Mormons' were in open rebellion against the Government, and was establishing an independent government of their own."[56]

In July of 1858, when the Utah Expedition has passed through the Salt Lake Valley and established its camp in Cedar Valley (Camp Floyd) without trespassing Mormon property or mistreating any of Utah's citizens, Brigham Young then announced, "All who wish to return to their homes in Great Salt Lake City are at liberty to do so." North Jordan residents, again with Bill Hickman's help, returned in July and August 1858.[57]

One incident which occurred in Provo in 1858 during the Move South deserves mention because it reveals that already "the notorious Bill Hickman" had acquired a reputation for strength and violence. A journalist writing for Harper's Weekly and three men from California went to Provo, seeking lodging at the Provo House. It was crowded, but eventually a small room was found to accommodate them. They retired in their blankets on the floor. Next morning they noticed an open door to an adjoining room and two men lying on their blankets.

One, a heavy-built muscular man with a broad grin on his face looked at them and said: "How are you, sir?" "Very well I suspect. Whom may I call you?" "I am generally, if not always, called Bill Hickman." A cold chill came over the room. In a few seconds tension disappeared and Charley Samson, the youngest of the Californians, exclaimed, "Est il possible! Can it be that I have slept all night with Bill Hickman and am not dead, and have not got my throat cut . . . ?" He then checked his pocketbook and revolver. They all laughed; Hickman laughed louder than anyone. Perhaps some of Charley's words didn't set too well, but he didn't want to show his discomfort at them. "Bill Hickman could not be such a bad person after all." They became fast friends. The correspondent concluded, "I regard him [Hickman] as the ablest man in the Mormon ranks to lead a small body of desperate or determined men on a dangerous expedition. Great kindness is sometimes expressed upon his countenance. He is a man susceptible of strong affections as well as bad passions."[58]

Two illustrations of acts which perpetuated the Hickman folklore are told by Hickman's grandchildren. A young man on a beautiful horse, a grandson said, was traveling alone and passed by Grandpa Bill's home in West Jordan on his way to Provo. Several days later he came back on a dilapidated nag. Grandpa Bill was surprised to see the change in horses and was told the young man had been persuaded to change horses at the point of a gun by a certain man. Grandpa Bill, knowing the man in question, told the young man to go back and tell him to "give you your horse or Bill Hickman will come to see him." The next day the young rider was back on his beautiful horse happily making his way to Salt Lake City.

The second story is told by a granddaughter. Two young brothers who had been out with their sheep all day came into town in the evening to a large celebration, the climax of which was a dance. The boys felt they could not go into the dance because they didn't have any shoes or what they did have were entirely too shabby to dance in. They decided to sit on the fence outside the

dance hall and enjoy the merriment inside vicariously. Bill Hickman came along and asked them why they were sitting on the fence and not inside dancing. When he learned the reason he said, "I'll sit on the fence while you young boys go in there taking turns using my boots" which they proceeded to do for several hours.[59]

For several months after the return from Pondtown, Bill frequented Fairfield, the village which served Camp Floyd during the occupation (1858-1861). His motivation is not entirely clear. Had his son-in-law John Allen and his daughter Bernetta moved there that early? Was he appointed by Brigham Young to be the Church's "eyes and ears" with federal officials around Camp Floyd? He at least served in that capacity. Or did he have the intention of taking advantage of the Army's presence to earn some private income? There were allegations--allegedly admitted by Hickman himself--that he moved four or five of his "friends" onto his Taylorsville property with his wives and children, and that these "boys" drove away some of the Army's livestock and sought to sell them for profit.[60] Did Bill see this as a continuation of the guerilla tactics he and his Raiders had practiced on the trail? Did he think Brigham Young would approve of this activity? Or is the entire story simply an anachronism which confuses his earlier guerrilla activity with the Camp Floyd period? Or are the stories simply an exaggerated retelling intended to impress visiting journalists and other convivial "friends" with "Mormon" cleverness in dealing with the unpopular Army of Occupation?[61] The evidence is not clear.

What is clear is that on April 22, 1859, five United States Marshals left Camp Floyd sworn to arrest or kill Bill Hickman on sight. A young friend rode across the mountains from the camp to Hickman's ranch and told him of their approach. Indeed, the young man rode so fast that his horse died an hour afterward. But Bill was warned in sufficient time to escape the marshals.[62] Less than a month later, Bill was in the office of Brigham Young, attempting to persuade the president to allow him to lead a horse drive to California.[63] Did

Brigham Young suspect that Bill's horses were stolen? At any rate, the president declined to participate in or encourage the scheme. Quite possibly, Brigham Young, though appreciating Bill's intelligence gathering, came to believe that Bill's sense of loyalty to the Kingdom and its religious mission was beginning to ebb.[64]

It is also clear that Hickman's cultivated friendliness with unscrupulous "characters," the possible resumption of pre-Mormon drinking habits, and the transformation of his gift of storytelling into an exaggerated braggadocio produced a reputation which remained with him the rest of his life. In rendering a valuable service to Brigham Young, he was associating with people who used that friendship to accomplish unwholesome purposes.

Bill's neighbors began to sense that things were going wrong in the latter part of 1859. John Bennion, Hickman's closest friend among the North Jordan ranchers, reported in his diary on October 23, 1859, that he and his brother Samuel had a long talk with Archibald Gardner, who had succeeded Joseph Harker as bishop in the spring of 1859, and reported "some things concerning W. A. Hickman and family, which [whose] conduct was unchristianlike." This was followed by home teaching visits and prayer meetings, and apparently things in the Hickman household went well for the next several weeks.[65]

Then, on Christmas Day (1859), there was shooting and swearing in downtown Salt Lake City and Bill was nearly killed. The Deseret News described the episode as "one of the most disgusting and disgraceful affrays that ever transpired in the city [Salt Lake City]."[66] According to a reporter, Bill and an erstwhile confederate, Lot Huntington, had a disagreement about some stolen property the preceding day. Lot had vowed to "get Bill." The next day--Christmas Day--Bill and some companions discussed the matter over a bottle. As Bill left the alley behind the Townsend Hotel (First South and West Temple Streets),

Lot drew his gun. Bill grabbed the gun barrel with his right hand and took his knife out from the scabbard with his left. He would have killed Huntington with one thrust, but men intervened and separated them. Lot fell backward on the ground, took quick aim, and shot Bill twice. Almost mortally wounded with a bullet deep in his thigh and one in his side, Bill nevertheless blazed away at Lot as he ran for cover in a nearby house. Supporters of the two men fired at each other from behind building walls and windows for additional minutes.

Five days later, from his sickbed in the hotel, Bill wrote to Brigham Young his version of what had happened. One is nearly persuaded of his complete innocence and of the temperate habits of his "boys."[67] Brigham was not deceived. He sent a severe reprimand to Bill, still confined to bed, by way of Bill's brother, Dr. George Washington Hickman, who was attending him. Brigham accused Bill of having bad associations and of drunkenness. In a reply to Brigham Young, written in January 1860, Hickman defended himself by claiming that his associations and drinking were conducted with only one object in view--"with as little exertion as possible to find out what is going on at Camp Floyd."[68] He added that in an earlier drinking bout where he "had to keep up his corners" with the free-talking Judge Delany R. Eckels (also Eckles), he even had to "drink whiskey when no conversation was going on to keep natural."[69] Bill confessed that he had drunk a great deal of whiskey, but wouldn't touch another drop if Brigham told him not to! He boastfully added that no one had ever seen his "boys" drunk in town, as he lectured them once a week with his family on the evils of drinking, after which they always prayed together. He confessed to using profanity, but added that he was "always trying to overcome it."

There is a claim in Bill's "confession" that while he was still in bed unable to move, Joe Rhodes, a member of Lot Huntington's gang, entered his room and tried to knife him. Bill was saved by the quick action of Jason Luce, who

was in the room standing guard. If this account is true, it explains certain of Luce's statement at the time he was executed at the Utah Penitentiary in 1864.[70]

Bill recovered only partially from his bloody encounter with Lot Huntington.[71] He suffered the rest of his life from after-effects. Typhoid infection twice entered the shattered bone and made him immobile for months at a time. When he finally died twenty-four years later, death was attributed to diarrhea and "old bullet wounds."[72]

One suspects that the Christmas Day drinking, shooting, and swearing caused Church officials to lose some of their faith in Bill. The same day of the shooting, possibly at the same hour, Elder Amasa Lyman, member of the Quorum of the Twelve, preached a sermon in Salt Lake City and, with a finger pointing westward toward North Jordan, said, "We hear that there is stealing done over yonder, and that it is Bill Hickman and his gang that do it."[73] Lyman was intending the remark as a criticism not only of Bill but also of the general spirit of lawlessness which the occupation of the territory by federal troops had induced. Nevertheless, as a result of the fight and "the talk," Bill Hickman and Lot Huntington were disfellowshipped.[74]

At the time of the shooting, Bill was caring for eight wives and thirteen children. Bill's third wife, Minerva, was four months pregnant; her son, born the following May while Bill was still recovering, was named Survivor Hickman, perhaps in recognition of Bill's survival of what could have been a death wound. Bill was bedfast for almost a year.

When John Bennion once more had a talk with Bishop Gardner about Hickman, on August 26, 1860, the bishop decided to hold a "mass meeting" of High Priests. According to Bennion:

> Bishop Gardner said there was much prejudice against W. A. Hickman, and that he knew nothing against him. . . . Intimated that he, W. A. Hickman, was oppressed, and that he [Gardner] would stand by him or any other brother until he knew their guilt. Hickman being called upon, confessed to his weaknesses and foibles like other men, but strongly denied his guilt as to things commonly reported about him--stealing &c. Bishop Gardner requested any who knew anything against Hickman to report to him and stop running to Bishop [Edward] Hunter [the Presiding Bishop of the Church], or he [Gardner] would be after them with a sharp stick.[75]

Several weeks later, Bennion once more talked with Bishop Gardner "about W. A. Hickman's wicked course." A bishop's trial was held that evening, but the trial was interrupted when Apostle Orson Hyde showed up. Elder Hyde admitted that Hickman had been guilty of stealing in years past, but said he "would never institute a trial against a brother for stealing from the Gentiles [under circumstances such as those which apparently provoked Bill]. . . . Gave it as the word of the Lord to set him free for the past, and bid him go and sin no more."[76] That counsel, however, was clarified in a public sermon by President Heber C. Kimball in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City the following December 16:

> People may say there is no sin in stealing from an unbeliever; but I tell you that the man who will do it will, if I let him have the chance, steal from me; and such a course will lead them down to death and destruction. And now I prophesy that the day will come when the man who will do this will become poor, and be a vagabond upon the earth; and probably it may affect his children, if they partake of the same influence. . . .
>
> Brethren, these very men who lie and steal will try to hide their own sins by saying that the Presidency both do this and sanction it. God will curse all who say such things, and all Israel will say Amen. . . .
>
> Saints, rise up to the dignity of men and women in Christ Jesus, do right, learn to be men, learn to lay aside every bad practice, cease your drinking, and put away everything else that is evil.[77]

Bill began to feel the estrangement from his neighbors. He felt angry and hurt that his neighbors and local ward did not take better care of his ranch and families while he was in bed.[78] He asked Brigham Young for a loan, making the request from his North Jordan home on October 10, 1861.[79] He promised to repay the money as soon as money owed to him was received. He ended the letter, "Your

word is law to me. May the Lord bless you forever."[80] Possibly because of this poverty, the two Harr sisters, Hannah and Mary, left Bill in 1861 to marry Hyrum Byington. Each took their two children with her, and they were raised under the Byington name.

Bill continued to accept assignments as scout and Indian troubleshooter. In November 1860, for example, he agreed to serve as guide for the expedition of Colonel Davis, superintendent of Indian Affairs for Utah Territory, to the Goshutes and Shoshonis along the route of the Pony Express between Salt Lake City and Carson Valley (now Nevada). These Indians had reportedly been "killing, robbing, and shooting at the mail and express riders all along the route." The expedition's purpose was to distribute gifts and create good will, and this result was achieved, according to Hickman's report:

> When they first approach us they appear timid and suspicious; but, by his superior knowledge of the Indian character and from his past experience, Col. Davis soon dispels their fears, and they begin to laugh and jabber as if we were all Indians together. He has literally fed the hungry and clothed the naked, and carried universal joy into the hearts of these poor, destitute creatures to an extent they never felt before. . . .
>
> Had the reader been present as I have been, and witnessed their merrymaking and rejoicing as they sported the fine blankets, shirts, leggings, hats, feathers, and other ornaments, women's dresses, socks, rings, beads, paints, bells, hatchets, knives, looking glasses, combs, boots, shoes, pants, and so on, whilst others were feasting on the flour, beef and bacon he furnished them, it would have done the soul good. . . . While I am writing, their merry songs in their wikkiups are ringing in my ears and their chiefs and head men are delighted beyond measure.[81]

Obviously, if Bill Hickman could be mean to "bad Indians," he could also rejoice when he saw such unalloyed human happiness among other Indians.

During the last half of 1862, Bill was in Idaho, along the Salmon and Snake rivers, searching for gold with a partner, Harry Rickards. Having previously earned temporary income with the Mormon ferry on the Green, Bill suggested they build a ferry across the Snake, at an Indian and freighter ford about eight miles north of present-day Idaho Falls. New gold discoveries in

Bannack, Montana, in the summer of 1862 held out the promise of heavy traffic over the route. While Bill was completing the ferry, Harry Rickards rode to Soda Springs, where he persuaded two immigrant trains to try the short-cut road to Montana by way of the new ferry. On June 20, 1863, the completed ferry carried 230 persons across the river. The ferry crossed near a lava rock island where some eagles made their nest, and the ferry quickly became known as Eagle Rock Ferry. According to one account, Hickman and Rickards made $30,000 in 1863 by charging healthy prices for the crossing--$4 for a wagon and team, 15 cents for a sheep, and so on. Hickman, at least, disposed of his interest in the ferry in 1863, but the ferry lasted until the completion of a wagon bridge ("Taylor's Crossing") two years later.[81a]

In a letter written just before his departure for Idaho, Bill expressed his dislike for Bishop Gardner, who he now thought was not giving him fair treatment. Bill pled with Brigham Young to put him, Bill, in another jurisdiction.[82] According to earlier instructions from Brigham, Bill wrote, he had "unbosomed" himself to Bishop Gardner, "and kept nothing back." It was after this "unbosoming" that Gardner had, according to Bill, advised his wives to leave him and searched for stolen property on his ranch.[83] Gardner, according to Hickman, had organized a group of twenty-six men to hunt for stolen property on Hickman land, but to their surprise they discovered nothing. Bill was angered, infuriated, and retreated into self-pity.[84] Nevertheless, Hickman was one of fifty-two persons who gathered at Bishop Gardner's house in September 1863 to organize the Jordan Silver Mining Company, the first mining district organized in Utah. Some of Bill's land was included in the district.[85]

In the fall of 1863 Hickman was once more involved with the "Indian problem" of the territory. In January 1863 Colonel Patrick Conner sent a major force to Cache Valley and massacred a large camp of Indians. He then deployed a unit to

Fort Hall (near Pocatello) and Fort Boise to counter the "Indian menace" in southern Idaho, and "in view of a [later] campaign against the Mormons." Hickman, serving as part-time scout for the group, reported Connor's movements and intentions to Brigham Young in a letter written September 5, 1863, once more carrying out an important intelligence assignment for the pioneer leader.[86]

An event which affected Hickman deeply was the January 1864 execution in the Utah Penitentiary of his long-time friend Jason Luce. In order to save his own life, or perhaps as an act of revenge--or, for that matter, to set the record straight--Luce implicated Bill in his crimes by confessing the day before his death that all he had done was Bill Hickman's fault, and done as a member of "Hickman's Hounds."[87] Hickman from that time lived in fear of death, or in fear of being committed for some real or alleged crime. He wrote to Brigham Young complaining that he could not get in to see him as in times past because of the guards at Brigham's gate. Bill pled with Brigham to forgive him, stating that he was willing to make any restitution required of him.[88] The President's reply advises Bill to "give yourself up, and if there are no grounds for the charge against you, your innocence will be made manifest in open Court." "If you give yourself up, nobody will hurt you."[89] Young then adds: "I have said, publicly and privately, that I had no sympathy with men who meddle with things which are not their own and take that which belongs to others. So far as I can learn, however, there is no evidence against you for wrong-doing in this case, except the testimony of those criminals whose statements cannot be heard as evidence in Court."[90]

On April 25, 1866, Bill wrote to Brigham Young to express his willingness to repent and follow counsel. The letter is reproduced in full:

It has been some time since I have seen you or wrote to you. I saw you, you convinced me to raise corn and wheat. I went to work, have worked very hard ever since. I find that my labor will not support my family without doing some other business and let everybodies [sic] else alone. But I find the town officials are in a rage again, determined to bring some trouble and destruction on me. They say that just as soon as they can find something to put me under arrest that they will use me up and put an end to me--I know of no crime or offense that I have committed.

I have done the best I knew. I have violated no covenants nor betrayed a single confidence so far as these things are concerned. I have been light as a drum--anything that is said to the reverse is false as hell. I am tired of having to always be on the lookout, being annoyed and in danger of my life. I wish I could have peace. I wish we had good honest and truthful men in office.

If you want me to do anything, just let me know it. If you want this or that or whatever you may think, I will or try. Or if you want my life you can have it without a murmer or a groan. Just let me know late or early; I will be there and there will be no tale left behind. What more can I say? What more can I do? I am on hand.

Now when I say this to you I do not mean any of those who have for the last four or five years sought my destruction. I will never yield a hair, if I can help it, to them. I remember my covenants but they do not. I seek not their destruction but they do mine. If it were not for those obligations I am under things would be different.

Wm. A. Hickman

P.S. I would like you to keep this and not let any know of it. Use your own council and I am satisfied.[91]

Obviously, for real or imagined reasons, Bill is suffering from a "persecution complex" fostered, perhaps, by years of dealing with Indians, hostile Gentiles, Army prosecutors, and outlaws. Threats had been made against him, and he was beginning to feel their impact.[92]

Shortly after his return from California (about 1867), Bill decided to grant his wives their freedom. Perhaps he felt his own inadequacy so strongly that he decided to split with them. According to one wife, "Each one agreed to going, and doing the best we could for our children."[93] Bill was as generous as he could afford to be with each wife. To Minerva, for example, he gave "one yoke of oxen, a wagon, two cows worth $150, a span of mares, two colts, and 100 pounds of flour." Minerva by then had eight children. Minerva supported herself for the rest of her life by delivering babies in northern Utah and southern Idaho--from North Ogden to Pocatello, Idaho--a total of 352 babies

from 1867 to 1902.[94] Bill's first wife, Bernetta, remained faithful to him and refused to abandon him; likewise, Sarah Basford Meacham remained with him until 1869, when she married John Franks.

After the split, Bill then decided to go to Nevada and California; in preparation for that trip he wrote Brigham Young requesting a pass out of the territory. The request was granted.[95] Later in 1867 he was in Carson City, Nevada, employed as a teamster for freighting between Carson Valley and California. "Laid up" because of an infection in his lame leg, Bill sent from there a letter whose contents we know only from Brigham Young's response. The letter must have intimated that Bill would "disclose all," for Brigham replied on January 22, 1868: "As far as your being able to talk is concerned, I am willing you should tell the whole world what you know about Mormonism or my private and public character. All that you or any other man can say about the Gospel will injure it none, while on the contrary if the truth be told naught but good will be done." He reminded Bill that it was a well-established Mormon principle not to attach one's faith "to any human being." Brigham expressed appreciation for Bill's offer to "seek my interests," but declared that "if you had sought your God you would not now have fled to His enemies for protection." "There is no place on earth," he wrote, "so fitting for those who wish to serve God with an undivided heart, as the place He has appointed for their gathering [meaning, presumably, Utah]." Brigham adds, "Your sudden flight brings forcibly to my mind a passage of scripture 'the wicked flieth when no man pursueth.'" Brigham concludes: "There is no place but Utah where you can live in peace, and the sooner you return to your family the better for your temporal and spiritual salvation."[96]

In a letter to his wife Minerva, Bill accuses her of making false statements in her letters and of speaking bad about him to their children. "I know nothing but getting out of the clutches of those who have robbed me

of pretty near out all, as you very well know, what went, with our cattle killed, and eat money unjustly taken, hundreds of dollars, and then my life sought, and I was reckless for not suffering them to kill me." Clearly he was suffering physical and mental anguish, becoming increasingly bitter, and blaming others for his troubles.

Up to the end of 1867 Brigham Young and local church officials had been willing to take him at his word, to accept his repentance, and to confine their remarks to reprimands and admonitions. On June 12, 1868, however, as the result of a trial in West Jordan Ward, Bill was excommunited "for apostasy."[97] One can hardly conclude that the action was hasty, or that the action was taken without years of "taking up a labor."

Hickman then wrote a "last" letter to Brigham Young:

> Dear Brigham, I feel bad to have so many false charges brought against me. I feel bad when I think you do not feel well towards me. What am I to do when I do not know of wrong I have done? How or of what can I repent? I wish you would point out a course and have it under your immediate notice for me to take, not under Gardner. I asked you once to release me from his jurisdiction and understood you had. I hope you will remember me and do me justice. I ask nothing more.
>
> Wm. A. Hickman
>
> I know I was always your friend at home or abroad and true in every sense of the word. I do hope you'll be kind to me--how bad I feel, you do not know.[98]

No answer is known to have been sent. The break had become complete.

Brigham's Destroying Angel claims that Bill saw Brigham several times after his excommunication and "the last time" (presumably 1871) Brigham asked, "When are you going to join the Church again?" Bill's alleged reply was that he had for three years tried to find out what was against him and could not, and therefore had put it off. Brigham responded that he would give him a recommend to a bishop and wished him to be baptized. But Bill did not carry it through.[99]

Family documents show that Bill contributed tithing to the Church until 1864. His tithing from 1851 to 1856, principally in labor, was valued at $454. Tithing in 1858, again in labor contributions, amounted to $39. He made a large tithing contribution in 1862, consisting of $544 worth of livestock--perhaps two dozen cows. In 1863 he paid $76 in cash, produce, and labor. The last payment in this record is $24 in labor tithing contributed in 1864. The family has no record of what he paid before 1851, and of course these donations might not be complete.[100]

A family letter says that when Bill's daughter, Avilda Diana Hickman, went to the Salt Lake Endowment House in 1877 to marry John Henry Dickson, Bill took Avilda by the hand and said, "I want you to know that I love the gospel. I have a firm testimony of its truthfulness, and I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Whatever may be said of me, whoever may criticize me or condemn me for some of my actions, always remember that your father loves the gospel and knows that the Church is true."[101] A nephew, Francis Hickman, reportedly told family members: "I remember Uncle Bill being on a wagon, and it seems he was ill, and it was after his excommunication. He said to me: 'The Church is true, don't ever leave it."[102]

Bill returned from Nevada and California in 1868. He moved his two remaining wives and some children to Fairfield in Cedar Valley, where the census of 1870 shows no less than six households closely related to Bill They include a daughter and son-in-law and three chilren; a former wife and her husband, with four of Bill's children; another daughter and son-in-law, with two children; another daughter and son-in-law with one child; a son and his wife and four children; and Bill himself with his wife Bernetta, together with two sons by other wives. All these lived in adjacent houses, apparently living as one big happy family--wives, ex-wives, sisters, brothers, half-sisters, and -brothers, children, and grandchildren!

A person who saw Hickman about this time left the following description of him:

> [He was] a man of heavy build, round head, a somewhat awkward, shuffling gait; five feet nine inches in height, with bright, but cold blue eyes, of extreme mobility, hair and beard dark auburn--the latter now tinged with gray--and a square, solid chin. His vitality is evidently great, and his muscles well developed.[103]

About the time that Bill returned to Utah, in pain and in poverty, the transcontinental railroad was completed, with the "Joining of the Rails" taking place on May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit, west of Ogden. In the wake of the railroad came a swarm of opportunists--merchants, bankers, lawyers, miners, journalists--persons wishing to exploit the Utah situation for personal gain. These newcomers were angered to find a tightly-knit community of Latter-day Saints, wary of "the world" and insistent on maintaining control of their hard-won religious commonwealth.

Coming in as President of the United States about the time of this developing Mormon-Gentile confrontation was Ulysses S. Grant--a political leader very much influenced by certain national interests seeking to put down Mormonism. An early Grant appointment was James B. McKean to be Chief Justice of the Utah Supreme Court. A New Yorker who had been active in the abolitionist movement, McKean was determined to rid the nation of "the Mormon menace," and he conceived ways in which that might be accomplished by wresting control of the judicial process from the Mormons. In addition to McKean, two other personalities important in the anti-Mormon "crusade," as it was called, were Robert N. Baskin, an attorney representing Gentile mining interests, and John H. Beadle, a Cincinnati journalist doggedly attempting to make a national reputation as a writer about the mysterious West. These three joined with others in forming what observers called "the Gentile Ring"--a group which used every opportunity to reduce the influence and power of Mormon leaders, and to magnify that of the Gentiles. Bill Hickman became a "pawn of circumstance" in this Gentile crusade.

In essence, the Gentile crusade boiled down to a series of efforts to assure control of the system of law and order in Utah: Get non-Mormon judges and juries; arraign Mormon leaders on every indictable offense; sentence and imprison, embarrass and discredit. Bill was vulnerable to their entreaties, although he surely did not know the full extent of their purpose nor did he foresee how they would misuse him.

The scenario began to unfold when Bill was arrested for murder. The murder they had in mind (the murder of Richard Yates) had taken place in 1857, and most had forgotten it, but this was as good a reason for arresting Bill as any the Ring could think of. (The Statute of Limitations does not apply to murder.) The next step was to persuade Bill that he had an interesting life story, and he should write it or dictate it while he had time on his hands. He would be persuaded to assign the rights of publication to an experienced journalist with Eastern connections. With full power to edit the manuscript, the journalist would "touch it up"—not to hurt Bill but to provide ample fodder for a campaign against Mormon leaders. At the same time, the leading anti-Mormon lawyer in the territory would look over the manuscript, find an incident in which Brigham Young was vulnerable, and secure Hickman's agreement to testify in return for dismissal of the murder charge. Brigham Young and Mormonism would be discredited by one who had been a long-time member. In addition, no small inducement to someone in Bill's circumstances, he was assured that he would receive $50,000 from publication of his story.

If the above were not a deliberate plot, but just a chain of circumstances without a master design, it nevertheless happened as indicated—with one unplanned exception. Beadle, who was in the process of writing an anti-Mormon book, The Mysteries and Crimes of Mormonism, did visit Hickman, did work with acting U. S. Attorney Robert Baskin and Deputy U. S. Marshal S. H. Gilson, in

persuading Bill to write or dictate a personal history, did edit the manuscript to make it count for the maximum in the anti-Mormon cause, and did introduce phrases that linked Brigham Young and the "Mormon hierarchy" to criminal activities. The work went to the publisher, presumably late in 1874, under the incendiary title Brigham's Destroying Angel, Being the Life and Confessions of the Notorious Bill Hickman, the Danite Chief of Utah.[104] At the same time, Robert N. Baskin, leading anti-Mormon attorney in the territory, used Hickman's "confession," poring over the manuscript to find a basis for indicting Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders on a charge of murder.

Then a windfall. The Deseret News carried an article in its issue of October 12, 1870, entitled "Murder in Rush Valley," which reported that on October 6, Bill Hickman had murdered, in passion, "Spanish Frank." While Bill neither confirmed nor denied the killing, the family say that "The Spaniard" had boasted publicly of having stolen one of Bill's wives while he (Bill) was in Nevada, and that he had vowed to seduce one of Bill's daughters.[105] On the same day the story appeared, an indictment for the murder of "Spanish Frank" was issued against Hickman in Judge McKean's Third District Court.[106] Bill immediately went into hiding and it seems doubtful that a summons was ever served.

The following spring, having read and gleefully discussed Bill's "confession," the Ring concocted their plot to ensnare Brigham Young. They went back to events which reportedly occurred in 1857-1858.[107] No one supposed that there was solid evidence on this or related cases, or they would have been prosecuted long before. But the court was now in the hands of a person determined to use his judicial power for what he regarded as worthy purposes:

> . . . the mission which God has called upon me to perform in Utah [said Judge McKean], is as much above the duties of other courts and judges as the heavens are above the earth, and whenever or wherever I may find the Local or Federal laws obstructing or interfering therewith, by God's blessing I shall trample them under my feet.[108]

Under McKean's direction, indictments were issued in Third District Court for the arrests of Bill Hickman, Brigham Young, Hosea Stout, Porter Rockwell, Daniel H. Wells, Morris Meacham, William Kimball, John Flack, and others for the murders of Richard Yates, "Bucks," and the Aiken Party, and Hickman alone for the murder of Charles M. Drown.[109]

It is to be noted that the "murders" of Yates, "Bucks," and the Aiken Party took place in Green River County when Bill was sheriff there and Deputy U. S. Marshal; that each episode had occurred during the "invasion" of Utah by the Utah Expedition, for the opposition to which the Mormons had received a full "pardon" by the President of the United States; and that little attention had been given to this kind of an indictment until Bill's "confession" and agreement to testify had persuaded "the Ring" that the murder of Richard Yates was "the one on which we [the Ring] could with the greatest safety rely for prosecuting Brigham Young."[110] Clearly, the purpose of the United States Attorney and Judge McKean was harassment intended to discredit.[111]

Sometime after the incarceration of the Mormon men and Bill in 1871—presumably in the spring of 1872—the latter managed, after several attempts, to have an interview with William Kimball. He asked for two witnesses to be present to hear his message. He solemnly declared that his so-called confessions, as now published, were "a lie from the wild boar story onward," and that he had been promised $50,000 for his story and his willingness to testify in connection with the indictment against Brigham Young.[112]

The denouement of these events proved to be an enormous disappointment to the Gentile Ring. In his zeal to destroy Mormon institutions, Judge McKean had engineered handpicked juries composed only of non-Mormons and known Mormon dis-

senters. Cases presided over by him were appealed to the United States Supreme Court, and on April 15, 1872, in the Englebrecht Case, the court ruled that McKean had illegally impaneled juries, and that all of those convicted under these arrangements were to be freed. The judge was finally removed in 1875.[113]

Although Bill was released from prison, along with Mormon leaders, on May 1, 1872, life would never be the same for him. He was the chief casualty of the campaign directed by the Gentile Ring. No matter that all those he had killed were dispatched in pursuance of his appointment as sheriff or deputy marshal; or, as in the case of "Spanish Frank," in a justifiable passion against a person who had violated the marriage bed and insisted on visiting his wife and threatened to violate his daughter. No matter that Bill had rendered long and valiant service for his people. He was now, even in the bland histories of his people, referred to as "the notorious Bill Hickman," "a remarkable scoundrel," "a human butcher," "a cold-blooded murderer," and "a common desperado."[114] And all this primarily because of the publication of a "confession" which was sensationalized by a skilled anti-Mormon journalist. In 1873 Tom Monaghan wrote, "Today he [Hickman] walks the streets of Salt Lake City shunned like a leper by every respectful man, no one pays attention."[115]

The rest of Bill's story is anti-climactic. After his release from jail he went to Fairfield and did some farming, ranching, and land selling. On one occasion his brother, George W. Hickman, confronted him with "the book." Bill's reply, as related by George to his son, was, "I had to put in things that would make it more interesting to the people who would read it and buy it, because I need the money."[116] In 1875 Bill was again briefly in the limelight when he was asked to be one of the guards sent to escort John D. Lee from Beaver City, Utah, where he had been tried, to the territorial penitentiary.[117] In the late 1870s he went into the mining areas of Eureka, Tintic, and Tooele, ending up, in 1880, in Nephi, where he lived several months with his son George.

In late 1881 he went to Lander, along the Big Horn River, in Wyoming, to live with his daughter Bernetta Hickman Allen, and other relatives. He died at Lander on August 23, 1883, at age sixty-eight. Cause of death is listed as diarrhea and old bullet wounds.[118]

During his last illness, Bill may very well have reminisced with children and grandchildren about the high points in his career in Mormondom—when he served as a body-guard to his beloved Prophet Joseph Smith; when, as a lawman, he protected the innocent and punished the guilty; when he was called by "Brother Brigham" to be a principal participant in the grandly designed Express and Carrying Company; when he served as a member of the bishopric of the North Jordan Saints during the difficult Move South in 1858.

Bill's state of mind is perhaps best reflected in a letter he wrote to his daughter Catherine, from his prison at Camp Douglas, the Army establishment on the eastern bluff overlooking the Salt Lake Valley. In the letter, written January 7, 1872, Bill, speaking of his own manuscript (Brigham's Destroying Angel had not yet been published), stated, "I have written a rough book, but no more rough than true." He then denied any wrongdoing and restated his long service to the Church. Though he had sacrificed a great deal, he was not appreciated. He had now suffered enough. He was not vengeful, he wrote, but wanted what was right. He always believed Mormonism and still did; he was very unhappy when they would not give him a recommend to go to the Endowment House. People had treated him worse than a dog. He still believed in Mormonism, he declared, and wanted good for his posterity and friends. He wanted to see Zion established. "I do know God Almighty rules and reigns," he concluded.

Most of the family of William A. Hickman remained true to the Church he embraced in Missouri in 1838. Some of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren have achieved important status in the Mormon community. One child, Deseret

Hickman, son of Sarah, served as a bishop in Wayne County for many years. A granddaughter, Minerva Kohlhepp Teichert, a talented artist, probably produced more paintings on Mormon history than any other painter: her paintings hang in the Manti and Oakland temples and in many chapels, schools, and public buildings in the Mountain West. A nephew, Josiah E. Hickman, a professor at Brigham Young College, Utah State University, and Brigham Young University, secured Bill's reinstatement in the Church posthumously on May 5, 1934, at which time "all former blessings" were restored.

Warren Hickman, Bill's son, in his "Sketch of the Life of William Adams Hickman," furnished an appropriate conclusion for this paper:

> The last time I saw my father was at Murray, Utah. We were camped there. Bishop [Edward] Hunter [Presiding Bishop of the Church] came along. I heard him say to my Father, that he had been misrepresented and greatly wronged. My father said: "Let it go, things will be made right, some day."[119]

Hopefully, this paper contributes toward making things more right than they have been.

NOTE ON THE SOURCES

The basic sources on William A. Hickman are Hope A. Hilton, Edwin and Elender Webber Hickman (Salt Lake City, 1978); and (J. H. Beadle), Brigham's Destroying Angel, Being the Life, Confession, and Startling Disclosures of the Notorious Bill Hickman, the Danite Chief of Utah (New York, 1872; Salt Lake City, 1904). The Hilton volume is by a great-granddaughter of William A. Hickman, and much of the volume is devoted to progenitors and descendants of William A. Only the final chapter, pp. 117-175, deals specifically with Bill Hickman.

As for manuscript materials, the LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City has a short holograph autobiography, which we have used without attribution; ten holograph letters written by Hickman to Brigham Young, 1850 to 1868; photoduplicate letters written by Hickman to Brigham Young, 1850 to 1868; photoduplicate copies of two letters he wrote to family members; and letterpress copies of four letters written to Hickman by Brigham Young. Some of Hickman's letters are of considerable length.

The brief autobiography and letters show Bill to have been intelligent, educated, and acutely aware of people's feelings and reactions. He was a reasonable, not a fanatical, person. He possessed a proud and restless spirit, a sense of humor, and was somewhat playful. Although he enjoyed a drink and on occasion may have drunk to excess, he does not come through as a wicked man or "notorious" except in popular folklore. His indiscretions, or whatever they may have been, even those which seem unjustifiable today, appear to have been committed under circumstances that he, at least, felt gave him justification.

We have also profited from using the diary of Minerva Wade Hickman, to which she gave the title "My Story," copy in the possession of Hope A. Hilton;

"Sketch of the Life of William A. Hickman," by Warren D. Hickman, 1919, among the Hickman Papers in the Church Archives; and a number of letters of recollections by persons who knew him, in the possession of Hickman's descendants.

We have found many references to Hickman in the forty-eight-volume Manuscript History of Brigham Young, Church Archives, and in the scrapbook-type, day-to-day record of the Church, 1830 to the present, called the Journal History. We have also used records of the wards where Hickman had his residence, particularly the records of West Jordan Ward, and have combed the Deseret News for references to him in that pioneer paper. We have also examined the records of the Third District Court of Utah, October Term 1870 and March Term 1871, Salt Lake City.

References to Hickman in histories by Mormon scholars of a generation ago are highly judgmental. For example, Orson F. Whitney, in History of Utah, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1892-1904), 2:630, refers to Hickman as "a red-handed and multifarious murderer"; B. H. Roberts, in Comprehensive History of Utah, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1930), 4:133, calls Hickman "a typical western desperado"; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, in The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, 1976), p. 347, refer to him as "a notorious gunman." Disgusted with this treatment, which they regard as unfair, family members refer to "Grandpa Bill" as "foolish and reckless at times, quick to take offense, outspoken and boastful"; but also as "a man of strength and courage, obedient and faithful to his principles and devoted to his superiors; a rancher proud of his fine cattle and horses; a builder; a daring and loyal defender of truth; a deeply sympathetic and generous man; a colorful fun-loving man; a story teller; a straightforward person." See "William Adams Hickman: A Gentleman by the Standards of the Times," a thirty-page typescript by Golda Busk and other family members, 1979, copy in possession of the writers.

Secondary sources that have been helpful in the preparation of this paper include Milton R. Hunter, Brigham Young the Colonizer (Salt Lake City, 1942); Harold Schindler, Orrin Porter Rockwell--Man of God, Son of Thunder (Salt Lake City, 1966); and Joan Erikson, "William Adams Hickman, an Enigma in Mormon History," typescript, 1968, Church Archives. Each of these demonstrates careful study of original documents, and good judgment in using controversial materials. The Daughters of Utah Pioneers has also utilized manuscript material sent in by some of Bill's descendants in two articles that refer to him: "Rugged Men of the West: Bill Hickman," in Kate B. Carter, ed., Heart Throbs of the West, 12 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1936-1951), 6:427-430; and "Mormon Scouts: William A. Hickman," in Kate B. Carter, ed., Our Pioneer Heritage, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1958-1977), 15:415-420.

Most articles in Western magazines have portrayed Bill as a swaggering, vindictive, cold-blooded killer. Representative of these is John Carson, "Use Him Up Bill," in True West, May-June 1964. Such treatments are almost invariably superficial and based on hurried research--primarily a rewriting of Beadle's Brigham's Destroying Angel.

We are particularly grateful to the Hickman Family Organization for their help in this project. They have furnished letters, documents, and genealogical information; they have responded to many questions; and they have furnished us copies of all the results of their own research. We are particularly grateful to Golda Busk, Devona Hancock, Leona Holt, and Tom Hickman. All have been generous with time and materials. We are also grateful to Dean Jessee of the L.D.S. Historical Department for research notes, and to Kathy Stephens for the typing.

FOOTNOTES OF THE FOREWORD

[1] See Leonard J. Arrington, Kate Field and J. H. Beadle: Manipulators of the Mormon Past (Salt Lake City, 1971), American West Lecture at the University of Utah, especially, note on page 17.

[2] See Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1892-1904), 2:637-638.

[3] Warren Hickman, "Sketch of the Life of Wm. Adams Hickman," typescript, Church Archives.

[4] Letter to the Church, 16 December 1838, in Joseph Smith, History of the Church . . . , 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1946), 3:231.

[5] Harold S. Schindler, Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder (Salt Lake City, 1966), p. 43, note 22.

[6] The charge has been made by many writers. The literature is discussed in Charles W. Penrose, Blood Atonement (Salt Lake City, 1916); B. H. Roberts A Comprehensive History of the Church . . . , 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1930), 4:126-137; and Martin R. Gardner, "Mormonism and Capital Punishment: A Doctrinal Perspective, Past and Present," Dialogue, 12 (Spring 1979): 9-26.

[7] A major source of popular knowledge about the Mormons for many years, Riders of the Purple Sage is discussed by Leonard Arrington and Jon Haupt in "Community and Isolation: Some Aspects of 'Mormon Westerns'," Western American Literautre, 8 (Spring-Summer 1973): 15-31.

[8] For documentation, see Leonard J. Arrington, "Crusade Against Theocracy: The Reminiscences of Judge Jacob Smith Boreman of Utah, 1872-1877," The Huntington Library Quarterly, 24 (November 1960): 1-45, esp. note 60, page 43).

FOOTNOTES OF THE ESSAY

[1] See Leonard J. Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 162-170; Joseph M. Tanner, A Biographical Sketch of John Riggs Murdock (Salt Lake City, 1909); Harold S. Schindler, Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder (Salt Lake City, 1966). Much about Hiram Kimball is given in Jill Mulvay Derr, "Sarah M. Kimball," in Vicky Burgess-Olson, ed., Sister Saints (Provo, Utah, 1978), pp. 22-40, although there is not much mention of Kimball's Y X enterprise.

[2] From the William A. Hickman Autobiography, holograph manuscript, Hickman Collection, Church Archives, p. 1.

[3] Journal History (hereafter referred to as JH), 6 June 1841; also Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1946), 4:365.

[4] See Leland H. Gentry, "The Danite Band of 1838," BYU Studies, 14 (Summer 1974): 421-430.

[5] Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 3:181-182.

[6] By this time Bernetta had given birth to seven children, of whom four were still alive. Bill found it necessary to send Sarah on to the Salt Lake Valley with her father—before his own crossing. When he learned that Sarah bore a child a full year after she left him, he renounced her. He had no children by Sarah.

[7] See Brigham's Destroying Angel, pp. 40-45.

[8] See Hyde's letters to Brigham Young, 1849-1852, Church Archives; also trial involving Hyde and Phineas Young, Pottawattamie High Council Record Book.

[9] Brigham Young letter to Orson Hyde, 16 May 1850.

[10] See JH, 1 June 1849; Lawrence G. Coates, "Brigham Young and Mormon Indian Policies: The Formative Period, 1836-1851," BYU Studies, 18 (Spring 1978): 432-433; Joseph Young to Brigham Young, 26 June 1849, gives a full description of the shooting. Young, a brother of Brigham, said there were no extenuating circumstances. Indeed, this "bloody fray" reminded him of the tragic scene at Haun's Mill—"an outrage on the principles of humanity." The outrage was "unprovoked on the part of the Indians and without council or pretext for such cruelty. William Hickman is a cold blooded murderer, and as such he stands before every tribunal of justice in Heaven and on Earth and when the Judge of all the Earth makes inquisition for innocent blood it will be found dripping from the hands of William Hickman." This attitude on the part of a local resident probably explains why Bill was disfellowshipped—he was overzealous in exercising his calling as peace officer. Elder Hyde's comment about the disfellowshipment: "We cut Hickman off, it is true, because of such a wonderful pious prejudice against him; but if the people at Carterville [where the killing took place] had not fed and fostered the Indians, contrary to our counsel, there would have been no Indians killed there." Hyde to Brigham Young, 25 April 1850.

[11] The minutes of the Pottawattamie High Council in the Church Archives skip the period from February to September 1849. Apparently, minutes were taken on loose sheets and were lost without having been copied into the Minute Book. But the Pottawattamie County High Priests Record, 1848-1851, page 21, Church Archives, mentions that Lyman Stoddard told the High Priests that on 2 June 1849, William Hickman and others were "cut off" by the High Council. See also Orson Hyde to Brigham Young, 1 June 1849; JH, same date.

The way this incident is told in Brigham's Destroying Angel (page 47) is a good illustration of how Beadle probably "jazzed up" Hickman's matter-of-fact mention of the matter in his autobiography. Beadle transposes the event to 1848 in order to involve Brigham Young. A half-breed Indian, Beadle writes, had an argument with Brigham Young, and swore that he would have the President's scalp before he reached Fort Laramie, and that he would have a war dance over that scalp. "Brigham sent me word," wrote Beadle's Hickman, "to look out for him. I found him, used him up, scalped him, and took his scalp to Brigham Young, saying—'Here is the scalp of the man who was going to have a war-dance over your scalp; you may now have one over his, if you wish.' He took it and thanked me very much.

He said in all probability I had saved his life, and that some day he would make me a great man in the kingdom. This was my first act of violence under the rule of Brigham Young." The truth is that the killing occurred in the spring of 1849, not 1848, and that Brigham Young had been in the Salt Lake Valley since September 1848. Finally, Hickman was disfellowshipped for the action, not made "a great man in the kingdom."

[12] JH, 1 June 1849: Hyde to Brigham Young, 25 April 1850.

[13] Warren Hickman, "Tribute," in Heart Throbs of the West, 6:428.

[14] Coates, pp. 445, 448. See also Howard A. Christy, "Open Hand and Mailed Fist: Mormon-Indian Relations in Utah, 1847-52," Utah Historical Quarterly, 46 (Summer 1978): 216-235.

[15] Coates, p. 451. As a deputy marshal, Bill cornered and shot "the notorious Ike Hatch" in the Big Field, east of Salt Lake City, in December 1852. Isaac Hatch died the following March. Ike had been accused of stealing and trying to escape. See JH, 11 March 1853. The incident was first brought to national attention in Benjamin G. Ferris, secretary of Utah Territory, in his book Utah and the Mormons (New York, 1854). Ferris alleged that Hickman was a Danite functionary and claimed that Hickman shot Hatch "by command of council." (pp. 190-192) John Taylor, editor of The Mormon (New York City, 1855-1857), commented: "The 'notorious Bill Hickman,' . . . is a United States Deputy Marshal for Utah, a man that none can fool with, and this the rowdies that come to Salt Lake will soon find out. I know he is a terror to them, for he will not be imposed upon by them, neither suffer his friends to be imposed upon." The Mormon, 20 October 1856.

[16] Some of the hand-hewn logs from Hickman's Fort are still lying on a rounded hill overlooking the Jordan River at 1200 West Bullion Street, Murray, Utah.

[17] See James B. Allen, "The Evolution of County Boundaries in Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly, 23 (Spring 1955): 268.

[18] Brigham's Destroying Angel, which tells of the California trip, also tells of some hair-raising experiences which are almost certainly embellishments (pp. 70-82).

[19] Green River County was created by the Utah Legislative Assembly in March 1852. It included all the Bear Lake region, and also the Green River region of present-day Wyoming. Little settlement had been made there by 1853, but Brigham Young wanted to establish this gateway each year. After a successful settlement had been made at Fort Supply in 1853-1855, Green River County was enlarged to include a far greater area, and in terms of area was the largest county in northern Utah. Most of Green River County was taken into Wyoming in 1866. See Allen, "The Evolution of County Boundaries," pp. 251-278.

[20] On 12 February 1850, the legislature of the State of Deseret granted the ferry rights to the Mormons, and this was reaffirmed by the legislature of Utah Territory in 1852; but the legislature waited until 1853 to enforce this action. James Brown wrote: "They [a party of "rough Mountain Men"] had taken charge of the ferry, and were running it and pocketing the money. There were twenty-eight

of them, determined 'cut-throats,' a part of the desperado band. . . ." Brown tells of the Mormon clash with this group and how Bill's "prompt action," "cunning," and "bravery" managed to "keep the peace" (pp. 349-390). See also Fred R. Gowans and Eugene E. Campbell, Fort Bridger: Island in the Wilderness (Provo, Utah, 1975), p. 44; Fred R. Gowans, "Fort Bridger and the Mormons," Utah Historical Quarterly, 42 (Winter 1974): 50.

[21]The best review of the situation is in Gowans and Campbell, Fort Bridger, pp. 49-99.

[22]Hickman, "Statement with regard to Ferguson's Expedition to Bridger of August 1853," 7 October 1853, Hickman Papers, Church Archives. Here is another instance in which Beadle has Hickman asserting something different from his own contemporary statement. In Brigham's Destroying Angel, Beadle has Hickman saying: "No ammunition was found, but the whisky and rum, of which he [Bridger] had a good stock, was destroyed by doses: the sheriff [James Ferguson, sheriff of Salt Lake County], most of his officers, the doctor and chaplain of the company, all aided in carrying out the orders, and worked so hard day and night that they were exhausted--not being able to stand up. But the privates, poor fellows! were rationed, and did not do so much." (p. 92) Actually, Hickman's chief contemporary holograph criticism of the "Ferguson expedition" was concerned with its military--as opposed to the Saintly--control: "Shortly after starting we were put under strict military discipline. Every man had to know his place and act accordingly. The spirit of truth was not the governing spirit. . . . The spirit of aristocracy and bigotry ruled. The spirit of the Lord seemed to have fled and the "boys" seemed generally oppressed in their feelings. . . . [Ferguson and fellow officers] took into our baggage waggon a heavy bull dog and hauled it all the way to Bridger, and refused to have a bag of flour hauled for the poor, which Daniel Miller desired. They suffered no one to be in council except officers. Ferguson had been told by Wells [commander of the territorial militia] & the Governor [Brigham Young] to counsel with me, which was not done until some days after our arrival at Bridger."

[23]Gowans and Campbell, p. 60.

[24]Gowans and Campbell, pp. 59-60; JH, 30 July 1853. Beadle's account of the Green River experience is in Brigham's Destroying Angel, pp. 88-108. Hosea Stout, a frontier Mormon attorney and law enforcement officer, was in Green River County during the same period as Bill; his diary entries for 1854-1857 make frequent mention of him. Often Hickman served as prosecuting attorney in cases in which Stout was lawyer for the defense. See Juanita Brooks, ed., On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1964), 2:518-603 et passim.

[25]Hosea Stout served in the legislature with Hickman and his diary of legislative doings makes frequent mention of bills proposed by Hickman. Stout Diary, 2:572-585.

[26]James S. Brown, Life of a Pioneer (Salt Lake City, 1900, reprinted 1960), p. 352.

[27]Hickman to Brigham Young, 13 July 1854.

[28]"The Indian and the Pioneer," in Kate B. Carter, ed., Our Pioneer Heritage, 8:120-121, and James S. Brown, Life of a Pioneer, pp. 363-364.

[29] Elder Orson Hyde, leader of the Green County group, counseled the men to marry squaws, presumably for diplomatic reasons. A few did. See Juanita Brooks, ed., On the Mormon Frontier, 2:516, entry for 9 May 1854.

[30] Eugene E. Campbell and Bruce L. Campbell, "Divorce Among Mormon Polygamists: Extent and Explanations," Utah Historical Quarterly, 46 (Winter 1978): 4-23.

[31] See Joseph Harker, "History of Joseph Harker," holograph, Church Archives, entries for 1855-1859; John Bennion's Journals, 1855-1862, typescript, Utah State Historical Society; and William McIntosh Diary, 1855-1859, typescript, Brigham Young University Library.

[32] During the "Reformation" of 1856, moral principles were urged with great intensity, and individual members were catechized and asked to discover and cast out sources of evil doing and evil thinking. As a token of their solemn covenant to "do away with" ugly thoghts and actions, most of the people were rebaptized. See Gustive O. Larson, "The Mormon Reformation," Utah Historical Quarterly, 26 (1958): 45-63.

Hickman was away on Y X business when the rest of the family was baptized, but after his return, he expressed his desire to be baptized, was catechized apart from the family, and was then baptized and confirmed into the Reformation. Hickman frequently attended Thursday night prayer meetings, monthly priesthood meetings, and other services of North Jordan Ward. See John Bennion's Journal, entry for 20 September 1857.

[33] Lewis Robison to Brigham Young, 5 August 1855; Gowans and Campbell, Fort Bridger, pp. 63-83. Brigham's Destroying Angel (p. 118) has Hickman saying, quite accurately, that he was "one of the carriers of the heavy load of gold it took to purchase said place [Fort Bridger] with the stock and goods thereon."

[34] Note that, despite anti-Mormon inferences, Brigham Young and his associates did not drive the Mountain Men out, but sought to rid themselves of the troubles they caused by simply buying out the enterprise which supported them.

[35] Hickman to Brigham Young, 19 August 1856.

[36] For example, Brigham Young Papers contain an appointment, dated 11 August 1856, for Hickman to proceed to Fort Bridger to meet Washakie. Also Brigham Young to Isaac Bullock and Lewis Robison, same date, say that Hickman has been appointed "to take a quantity of presents out to Washakie and his band," and ask Bullock and Robison to assist him in the distribution of the goods and help make a favorable impression on the Indians: "Induce them to the arts of peace and civilization, to cultivate the earth and raise stock for a subsistence." See also Brigham Young Letter Book, No. 2, p. 939.

[37] Norman Furniss, The Mormon Conflict, 1850-1859 (New Haven, 1960), p. 52. Also JH, 29 August 1857; Neff, History of Utah, 328-332; Tullidge, History of Salt Lake City, 150 ff; Deseret News, 6 February 1856, 1 April 1857.

In August 1856 David H. Burr, surveyor-general for Utah, complained to the General Land Office in Washington that one of his deputies, Joseph Troskolawski, had been "assaulted and severely beaten by three men under the direction of one Hickman, a noted member of the so-called 'Danite band.'" See Samuel Hawthornthwaite,

Among the Mormons, As an Elder During Eight Years (Manchester, England, 1857), pp. 32-33. The Historian's Office Journal, Church Archives, explains the whole business with the following entry under 4 August 1856: "About 8 P.M. A slight disturbance on Main St. caused by a surveyor (Troskalawski) calling the 2 Mechanics "God damned Mormon sons of bitches." Troskalawski was knocked down & severely hurt. The Mechanics were set on [urged on?] by Wm. Hickman who said he would foot the bill." Hickman was Deputy U. S. Marshal at the time.

Considering some of the stories that were in circulation about Hickman, Nelson Winch Green, in Fifteen Years Among the Mormons (New York, 1859) invents a story involving Hickman, about 1856 (pp. 70-71, 77, 343-344). This work, almost wholly imaginary, was an early attempt at "realistic anti-Mormon adventure fiction" of the type later popularized by Mayne Reid, Theodore Winthrop, and "Maria Ward." We have paid our respects to some of these early anti-Mormon Westerns in Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," Western Humanities Review, 22 (Summer 1968): 243-260.

[38] A copy of this blessing is in the possession of the family. A file copy, not examined by the writers, is in "Early Church Blessings," vol. 26, p. 108, Church Archives.

[39] Deseret News, 1 March 1857.

[40] JH, 24 June 1857.

[41] John R. Murdock account in Tanner, John Riggs Murdock, pp. 122-123.

[42] This, of course, is an oversimplification. See treatment in Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom; also Leland H. Creer, Utah and the Nation (Seattle, 1929); and Furniss, The Mormon Conflict.

[43] The letter from the Second Assistant Postmaster in Washington cancelling the contract was dated 10 June 1857, but Salt Lake officials did not learn of it until August 1857, after they had learned of the approach of the troops

[44] The books of the Express and Carrying Company in the Church Archives show Hickman credited with $757, presumably for labor performed. Some of the services of this nature were later reimbursed in Church cattle or horses, but it would take interminable hours to determine the specific entry by which this was done in Hickman's case if indeed it was done.

[45] William McIntosh Diary, 31 May 1858.

[46] See Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, pp. 175, 464 note 59.

[47] Hickman to Young, 23 August 1857.

[48] JH, 9 September 1857.

[49] Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 178; Lot Smith, "The Echo Canyon War," The Contributor, 3 (1882): 273; Brigham's Destroying Angel, pp. 118-123; William Clark, "A Trip Across the Plains in 1857," Church Archives.

[50] Clark, "A Trip Across the Plains," p. 200. Not all of Clark's account "checks out" with other information; some of his story may have been invented, or at least sensationalized.

[51]Henry S. Hamilton, Reminiscences of a Veteran (Concord, 1897), pp. 80-81. Mormon guerilla activity is also described in "Santiago [James H. Martineau]," "A Scouting Party," The Contributor 11 (1890): 395-398; and Brigham's Destroying Angel, pp. 118-123. Brigham Young and the Utah Saints took a certain pride in the skirmishes and partyings connecting with the harassment of federal troops. On January 17, 1858, in an address to the Saints gathered in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, the President made the following statement: "We have a goodly share of the genius, talent, and ability of the world; it is combined in the Elders of this Church and in their families. And if the Gentiles wish to see a few tricks, we have 'Mormons' that can perform them. We have the meanest devils on the earth in our midst, and we intend to keep them, for we have use for them; and if the Devil does not look sharp, we will cheat him out of them at the last, for they will reform and go to heaven with us. We have already showed the invading army a few tricks; and I told Captain Van Vliet that if they persisted in making war upon us, I should share in their supplies. The boys would ride among the enemy's tents." Journal of Discourses, 6:176.

[52]See Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 179.

[53]Bennion Journal, 30 January 1858.

[54]JH, 16 February 1858.

[55]There is considerable confusion between North Jordan and West Jordan in the Church records of the 1850s. Some sources suggest that both formed West Jordan Ward. Others suggest two wards. In any case, William Hickman and John Bennion served in early 1858 as councilors to Joseph Harker, bishop of North Jordan or West Jordan Ward. On 13 March 1859, Archibald Gardner was sustained as bishop of West Jordan Ward, of which North Jordan was clearly designated as a branch. Bishop Harker was released. See Andrew Jenson, The Historical Record 6 (December 1887): 343; Andrew Jenson, "West Jordan Ward" and "Taylorsville Ward" in Encyclopedic History of the Church (Salt Lake City, 1941); John Bennion Journal, 13 March 1859; Delila Gardner Hughes, The Life of Archibald Gardner (West Jordan, Utah, 1939), pp. 72-73.

[56]"Extract from Warren Foote's Journal," Church Archives. This "Extract," which deals with the Move South, is in the back of Warren Foote, "Emigrating Company's Book," MSS, Church Archives. Foote lived in Union Fort, which was about six miles south of Salt Lake City, and east of North Jordan Ward.

[57]Diaries and Journals of Joseph Harker, John Bennion, and William McIntosh.

[58]"From our Utah Correspondent," dated Provo, 21 August 1858, Harper's Weekly, 9 October 1858, p. 653. The other man with Bill, according to the correspondent, was Bill's younger brother, Dr. George Washington Hickman.

[59]Dan Hickman and Mary Ella Hickman Kohlhepp, as published in Hilton, Edwin and Elender Hickman, pp. 148-149. Another possibility is that Bill married Margaret to insure successful negotiations with the Shoshonis. The marriage occurred just a few months after Bihl's letter to Brigham Young stating that those with Indian wives were more successful in making peace with the Indians. See Hickman to Brigham Young, 13 July 1854.

[60]Hickman to Brigham Young, December 1859.

[61]For that matter, some of the allegations may confuse Hickman's 1861 purchase, after the Army had gone, of a considerable quantity of Army merchandise and livestock at an Army surplus sale.

[62]JH, 22 April 1859. William McIntosh, who had been a councilor in the North Jordan bishopric, and a home teacher to the Hickman family, wrote in his diary for 27 April 1859: "There are several of our brethren under hideings and some have gone away. We hear of squads of men, some five or six in number, from Camp Floid I suppose, going about kind of secretly with writs for individuals. Brother Hickman is under hiding nearly all the time. We hear now and then that the troops are comeing to the City. Mormonism is the same [meaning, we presume, the Church is standing firm despite such irritations]." Three weeks later, McIntosh again reports: "Apparently all is very quiet with the Army at present. Only a writ issued once in a while, and sometimes Brother Hickman is hunted pretty close nearly caught sometimes. He is not alone in this situation." Diary, 18 May 1859.

[63]JH, 16 May 1859.

[64]JH, 30 August, 23 September 1859.

[65]It may be worth noting that Bill and Samuel Bennion had been on opposite sides in a ward controversy in 1855, and that Samuel may have been inclined to "believe the worst" about Bill. See "History of Joseph Harker," p. 45, entry for 1855.

[66]Deseret News, 28 December 1859; also Historian's Office Journal, 25 December 1859, Church Archives, which describes the fracas in some detail.

[67]Hickman to Young, December 1859.

[68]Hickman to Young, January 1860.

[69]Brigham's Destroying Angel (p. 132) has Hickman saying that Eckels was "a fine clever old gentleman," and that he [Hickman] "got seven or eight persons out of the probate court [Mormon court] jurisdiction and placed them before his honor; gained my case everytime by the rulings of the court against probate jurisdiction in criminal cases." This was an independent course for Hickman to take. Brigham Young could not tolerate Eckels, a person he regarded as conducting a crusade against the Church.

[70]Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 147; JH, 12 January 1864. The Historian's Office Journal, under 19 January 1860, verifies the incident as follows: "Joe Rhodes killed by Jason Luce when Rhodes tried to get in to see Hickman at gun point."

[71]Lot Huntington, the man who shot Bill, was killed by Porter Rockwell on 18 January 1861, at Faust Station, Rush Valley. Whitney, History of Utah, 2:38.

[72]Deseret News, 24 August 1883.

[73]Sermon in Ninth Ward School House, Salt Lake City, Sunday, 25 December 1859, Journal of Discourses, 7:307.

[74]West Jordan Ward Records, Historian's Office Journal, 6 January 1860. The William Hickman Papers in the Church Archives include a holograph statement by John Flack, dated West Jordan, 24 June 1862, in which he states: "This is to certify that I lived with William A. Hickman from the fall of 1853 until about one year ago. I do not know of his taking anything from any person in this Territory. He never allowed anything of the kind done by anyone on his place. Neither do [I] know of any one doing anything except two men who were in his employ while he was wounded in the City some 2½ years ago, and as soon as he found it out he made them leave. John Flack."

[75]John Bennion Journal, 26 August 1860.

[76]John Bennion Journal, 13, 14 October 1860. In September 1860, at a prayer circle attended by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and six members of the Quorum of the Twelve, there was a discussion of gangs of thieves. President Young said that one certain person (an alleged friend of Hickman), upon being accused of stealing, "denied having taken anything from any member of the Church." Apparently he was seeking justification for having stolen from the Army and hostile Gentiles: whatever he had done, he hadn't stolen from Latter-day Saints! Brigham Young deplored this kind of thinking in the strongest terms and said, by way of ridicule, "I think if the Lord wants any stealing done he would reveal it to me as soon as to Bill Hickman [and other persons, some of whom are named]. . . ." Wilford Woodruff, in "Historian's Private Journal," 9 September 1860, Church Archives.

[77]The sermon is in Journal of Discourses, 8:256-257. Also John Bennion Journal, 16 December 1860.

[78]This may have been true of 1860, but can hardly be true of 1861, for, according to Brigham's Destroying Angel, when the U. S. Army held a surplus disposal sale after Johnston's Army had gone, Bill had bought provisions enough to fill ten wagons. Flour sold for 25 cents per sack and whiskey for twenty-five cents a gallon. "There was rejoicing when the troops left the Territory," Beadle has Hickman writing. "They had come here, spent a great quantity of money, and went away without hurting anybody--a victory, of course." (pp. 147-148)

[79]Hickman to Young, 10 October 1861.

[80]See also his letter 25 June 1862.

[81]Hickman's letter to the Deseret News from Ruby Valley, Utah Territory (now Nevada), 16 December 1860, in Deseret News, 26 December 1860.

[81a]Janet Thomas and KID Broadcasting Station, This Side of the Mountains: Stories of Eastern Idaho (Idaho Falls, 1979), p. 37.

[82]Hickman to Young, 25 June 1862.

[83]Hickman to Young, 25 June 1862.

[84]In Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 172, Bill is credited with saying that Bishop Gardner encouraged his wives to leave him because, as the Bishop allegedly said, "Bill is a bad man."

[85]Hughes, Life of Archibald Gardner, pp. 81-83; Leonard J. Arrington, Abundance from the Earth: The Beginnings of Commercial Mining in Utah," Utah Historical Quarterly, 31 (Summer 1963): 192-219.

[86] Hickman to Young, 5 September 1863. An excellent account of the background of Connor's maneuvers is Brigham D. Madsen, "Shoshoni-Bannock Marauders on the Oregon Trail, 1859-1863," Utah Historical Quarterly, 35 (Winter 1967): 3-30.

[87] JH, 12 January 1864.

[88] Hickman to Young, 7 January 1865.

[89] Young to Hickman, 7 January 1865. Brigham Young Letter Book No. 8, p. 440. Hickman wrote a letter to Brigham Young, 17 January 1865, complaining of his arrest by officers of the probate court, and his indictment for larceny. This apparently related to some government property taken in 1858, for which he thought he was answerable only to the military. He spoke of it as an "ungodly damnable raid" upon him. "I will not lay down and be still against those who unjustly try to injure," he wrote. "I will not die as a skunk . . . I have had enough trouble." "I am this morning for the first time in my life," he wrote, "determined to throw back and that with all my might if I am not let alone." "My God," he went on, "I know my innocence and I believe you know it. Such hellish treatment to me is more than I can or will stand any longer."

[90] Young to Hickman, 7 January 1865. With respect to Hickman's expressed wish to "see" him, Brigham replied: "I have understood that you use the fact of your having interviews with me to convey wrong impressions to the minds of others. Now, I do have objections to your making capital out of the interviews which I grant you; but call and see me when you are here." Young to Hickman, 9 January 1865. Brigham Young Letter Book, No. 8, p. 427.

[91] Church Archives. Some of the punctuation is introduced, for readability. See also A. M. Musser to Hickman, 2 April 1867, indicating Hickman still owed Brigham a note for $129.25, dated 9 April 1860, and one for $155.33, dated 1 July 1866.

[92] Perhaps as one aftermath of Bill's family troubles, one of Bill's wives left him to live with a Spaniard or Mexican. When Bill returned home, perhaps in 1866, he discovered "Spanish Frank" with this wife. "Spanish Frank" apparently taunted Bill on occasion, mistreated Bill's four children by this wife, and reportedly threatened to seduce one of his daughters. This was too much for Bill, and after many months of patience and forbearance, Bill killed "Spanish Frank." Bill was indicted for the murder in October 1870, as indicated below. See Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 187; Utah Court Records, Third District Court, 12 October 1870, available at the office and warehouse, 23rd West and 23rd South, Salt Lake City.

[93] Diary of Minerva Wade Hickman, MSS, owned by Dan Hickman, Snowville, Utah.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Because of occasional unflattering public references to him, and because he had earlier received threats against his life, Bill apparently thought a letter from Brigham Young would help protect him from his enemies. We have not seen other similar letters of this character, and certainly no one desiring to leave the territory was required to show a "pass." Brigham Young's letter was as follows: "To Whom It May Concern: I understand that Brother William Hickman is intending to leave this Territory, and in view of his doing so he should be at liberty to go on to the Range and gather up his stock and do other legitimate business that may be necessary for his departure. He informs me that some persons have been threatening him. This should not be. I know of no reason why he should not be permitted to attend to his business and leave, when he gets ready, in peace and quietness. Brigham Young." Young to Hickman, 4 June 1867, Church Archives.

[96] Young to Hickman, 22 January 1868, Brigham Young Letter Book, No. 11, pp. 609-610.

[97] JH, 12 June 1868. Beadle has Hickman declaring in Brigham's Destroying Angel (p. 183) that he was disfellowshipped in the fall of 1867, but the West Jordan Records do not verify this.

[98] Hickman to Young, 15 August 1868.

[99] Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 184.

[100] Statement of Tithing paid by William A. Hickman," copy in possession of the writers.

[101] Letter of Ola D. Whitlock to John, 10 May 1975, copy in Brigham Young University Library.

[102] Told by Francis Hickman to Devona P. Hancock in 1948 and duplicated in "William Hickman--Gentleman: Church Activities," pp. 7-8.

[103] Beadle in "Preface" to Brigham's Destroying Angel, dated 10 December 1870.

[104] It is quite possible that Bill simply dictated his "confession" to Beadle. The family understood there was a manuscript, the original of which has never been found. If it was dictated to Beadle and was in his handwriting, he would certainly have destroyed it himself to give credence to Hickman's authorship. Beadle says in the Preface to Brigham's Destroying Angel that Bill authorized him to "Fix it up in shape so people would understand it." After the book was printed in 1872 Bill admitted to his brother, Dr. George W. Hickman, of Benjamin, Utah, that, "I had to put in things that would make it more interesting to the people who would read it and buy it, because I need the money." (Hilton, Edwin and Elenda Hickman, pp. 161-162.) George Washington Hickman forbade his thirteen children to read the book, and most of Bill's children shunned the book as a lie. However, several family members, including Catherine, saw the manuscript and know that one existed. But they were not specific on whether it was in Bill's handwriting.

[105] Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 188; Hickman's letter to Catherine Hickman Butcher, 7 January 1872.

[106] Court Record, Third District Court, 12 October 1870. Minute Book B, available at Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City.

[107] See Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 191. The acting district attorney, Robert N. Baskin, later stated that he was the one who obtained from Bill the material that was used to incriminate Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders. Baskin said he obtained it in two long interviews conducted before the appearance of Brigham's Destroying Angel. Baskin says he also obtained statements from other persons that "tended to corroborate his [Bill's] confessions," but he does not indicate who those persons were or what they said. Baskin is quite open in saying that his primary purpose was to damage "the high priesthood of the Mormon Church." See R. N. Baskin, Reminiscences of Early Utah (Salt Lake City, 1914), pp. 36-38, 54-57.

[108] McKean to Judge Louis Dent, brother-in-law of Ulysses S. Grant, quoted in Edward W. Tullidge, Life of Brigham Young: or, Utah, and Her Founders (New York, 1876), pp. 420-421. George C. Bates, who was United States Attorney for Utah, 1871-1872, resigned from the position primarily because of the way he observed Baskin, McKean, and others using the courts for what he regarded as private ends. "Bates declared that President Grant had placed in office in Utah a gang of crooks who could not be trusted with the horse blankets in the executive stables." See Salt Lake Herald, 20 July 1873; Nels Anderson, Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah (Chicago, 1942), p. 288-289; Whitney, 2:547-549, 786-787. Bates thereafter sought to "right" justice by serving as attorney for the Mormons.

[109] In the March 1871 term of the Third District Court Hickman was exonerated for the murder of "Spanish Frank." Then in the October 1871 term, the case was continued. Clearly the judge and prosecuting attorney wanted to hold some threat over Hickman until his book was printed and the noose they were preparing for Brigham Young's neck was drawn tighter. See Court Records, Third District Court, Pending Indictments, March and October terms 1871, Utah State Archives.

In April 1871 Deputy Marshal H. Gilson met with Hickman, who was ill in Nephi, and told him that if he would testify to all he knew, it would be in his favor when he was tried for his crimes. Beadle, Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 190. It makes some sense that Bill, realizing he was guilty of the killing of "Spanish Frank," and fearful of spending his life in prison or getting shot at the penitentiary, may have agreed to testify for the United States District Attorney before the grand jury.

[110] Brigham's Destroying Angel, p. 191. There is much literature, much of it fanciful, on the "murders" of Yates, "Bucks," and the Aiken Party. This literature is reviewed in Whitney, History of Utah 2:630-638; Hal Schindler, Orrin Porter Rockwell, pp. 278 ff.; and Erikson, "William Adams Hickman," pp. 11-12. The diary of Hosea Stout also has contemporary entries. Diary, 2:643, entries in October 1857. Hickman regarded the events connected with these persons as simply part of the defensive operations directed against the Utah Expedition. Yates sold supplies to the Expedition and was regarded as a spy. "Bucks," according to Schindler, was really A. J. ("Honesty") Jones, connected with the Aiken Party.

The Church Archives has two letters from Iva B. Eddy to the President of the Church: the first to Brigham Young in 1858 which, rather hysterically, prophesies destruction and damnation toward the Church because of blood atonement and polygamy. The second, to Wilford Woodruff in 1889, mingles accusations with a supposed eyewitness account of the murder. The tone of the letters is such as to cast doubt on the man's rationality and judgment; it is difficult to place much credence in Eddy's letters.

[111] Brigham Young's reaction to all this is contained in a letter he wrote to General Thomas L. Kane, in McKean County, Pennsylvania, on 27 September 1871. Young writes of the "tyrannical course of the 'Ring' of Judicial and other federal officers here, who by arbitrary, new, and strange rulings have deprived the old settlers here of the right to sit on all juries, and in other ways deny to us the rights belonging to the common people. By these means they have at last succeeded in what they trust will be a death blow to Mormonism. They have, I am informed, brought before their exclusive, packed grand jury one Wm. Hickman who was excommunicated from our Church several years ago . . . , and he, evidently to save himself from justice, has laid at my door some or all of those crimes—an accusation which our enemies are only too eager to accept." Brigham Young Letter Book No. 13, pp. 859-860.

[112] Whitney, History of Utah, 2:636-637. We hypothesize that when Bill wrote the January letter to his daughter Catherine Butcher, declaring "I have written a rough book but no more rough than true," Beadle's Destroying Angel had not yet appeared, and that his reference to "no more rough than true" applies to the way the manuscript appeared when he last saw it. All the evidence from family letters and family reminiscences suggests that Bill was disgusted and sickened by the published version. See also Hickman to his friend Lewis Robison, 9 October 1871, Church Archives.

[113] The judicial administration of Judge McKean is reviewed in Edward W. Tullidge, The History of Salt Lake City and Its Founders (Salt Lake City, 1886), pp. 512-557; and Roberts, Comprehensive History, 5:382-454. See also Thomas G. Alexander, "Federal Authority versus Polygamic Theocracy: James B. McKean and the Mormons, 1870-1875," Dialogue 1 (Autumn 1966): 85-100.

[114] Comments on Hickman's testimony before the grand jury which indicted Brigham Young and his associates, on the appearance of Brigham's Destroying Angel, and on the reaction of Hickman's fellow Latter-day Saints to all this may be found in: Whitney, History of Utah, 2:628-638; Roberts, Comprehensive History, pp. 404-417; James B. Allen and Glen Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, 1976), pp. 341-347; Robert J. Dwyer, The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict (1862-1890) (Washington D.C., 1941), pp. 78-80 et passim. See also George A. Townsend, The Mormon Trials at Salt Lake City (New York, 1871).

[115] Tom Monaghan, "Utah and the Mormons," The Kansas Magazine, 4 (September 1873): 281.

[116] Hilton, Edwin and Elender Hickman.

[117] Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, ed., A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1847-1876, 2 vols. (San Marino, California, 1955), 2:343, 345, 361, 382. As noted in the Foreword, R. N. Baskin, who gave himself credit for masterminding the 1871 indictment of Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders, was a principal prosecutor in the first trial of John D. Lee, and followed the same tactics there that he had fostered in the Hickman episode described here.

[118] Deseret News, 24 August 1883; Salt Lake Tribune, 25 August 1883.

[119] Warren Hickman, "Sketch of the Life of Wm. Adams Hickman," typescript, Church Archives.

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Bob Hart <grandpabobhart@gmail.com>

M270.1 H628a 1979 / 1 folder / William A. ("Bill") Hickman : setting the record straight / by Leonard J. Arrington and Hope A. Hilton. from Rebekah Elizabeth Westrup

1 message

Rebekah Elizabeth Westrup <Rebekah.Westrup@churchofjesuschrist.org> Thu, Jan 20, 2022 at 3:20 PM
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In a letter dated, December 28, 2021, Susan Arrington Madsen granted permission on behalf of her father, Leonard J. Arrington, for the Historical Department of the Church to release the paper to Robert Hart as a PDF file.

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