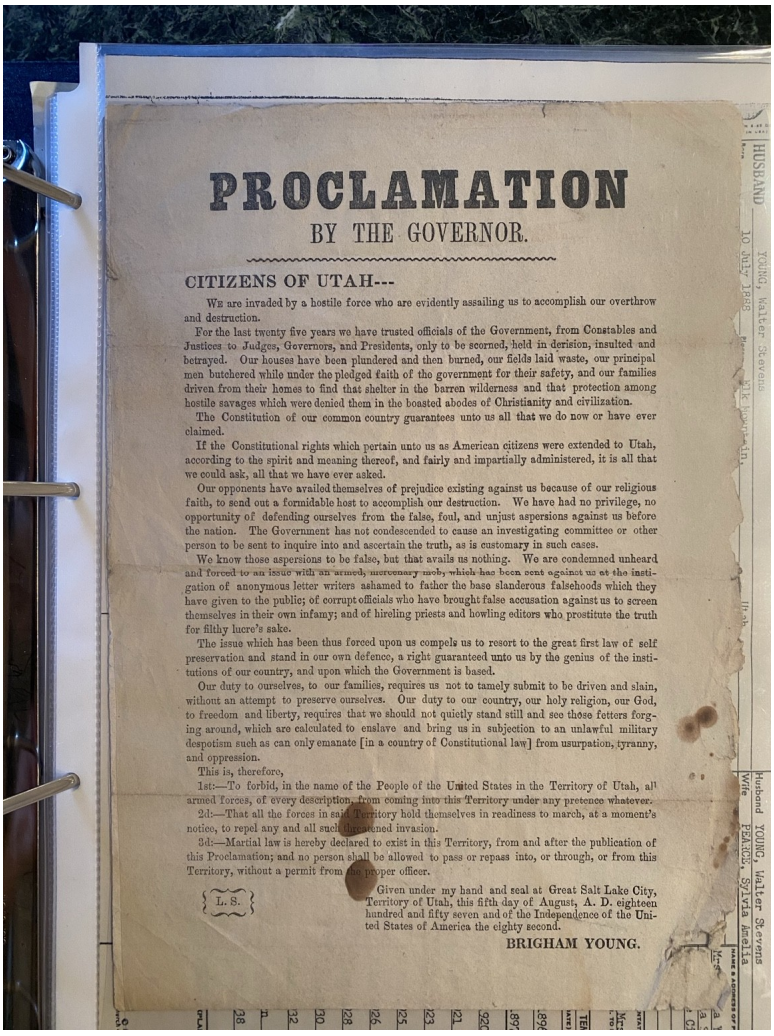
The Brigham Young Family Copy of the Proclamation by the Governor

The 5 August 1857 Utah War Broadside and Its Young Family Provenance

Research report and project record



PROCLAMATION

BY THE GOVERNOR.

CITIZENS OF UTAH---

We are invaded by a hostile force who are evidently assailing us to accomplish our overthrow and destruction.

For the last twenty five years we have trusted officials of the Government, from Constables and Justices to Judges, Governors, and Presidents, only to be scorned, held in derision, insulted and betrayed. Our houses have been plundered and then burned, our fields laid waste, our principal men butchered while under the pledged faith of the government for their safety, and our families driven from their homes to find that shelter in the barren wilderness and that protection among hostile savages which were denied them in the boasted abodes of Christianity and civilization.

The Constitution of our common country guarantees unto us all that we do now or have ever claimed.

If the Constitutional rights which pertain unto us as American citizens were extended to Utah, according to the spirit and meaning thereof, and fairly and impartially administered, it is all that we could ask, all that we have ever asked.

Our opponents have availed themselves of prejudice existing against us because of our religious faith, to send out a formidable host to accomplish our destruction. We have had no privilege, no opportunity of defending ourselves from the false, foul, and unjust aspersions against us before the nation. The Government has not condescended to cause an investigating committee or other person to be sent to inquire into and ascertain the truth, as is customary in such cases.

We know those aspersions to be false, but that avails us nothing. We are condemned unheard and forced to an issue with an armed, mercenary mob, which has been sent against us at the instigation of anonymous letter writers ashamed to father the base slanderous falsehoods which they have given to the public; of corrupt officials who have brought false accusation against us to screen themselves in their own infamy; and of hireling priests and howling editors who prostitute the truth for filthy lucre's sake.

The issue which has been thus forced upon us compels us to resort to the great first law of self preservation and stand in our own defence, a right guaranteed unto us by the genius of the institutions of our country, and upon which the Government is based.

Our duty to ourselves, to our families, requires us not to tamely submit to be driven and slain, without an attempt to preserve ourselves. Our duty to our country, our holy religion, our God, to freedom and liberty, requires that we should not quietly stand still and see these fetters forging around, which are calculated to enslave and bring us in subjection to an unlawful military despotism such as can only emanate [in a country of Constitutional law] from usurpation, tyranny, and oppression.

This is, therefore,

1st:—To forbid, in the name of the People of the United States in the Territory of Utah, all armed forces, of every description, from coming into this Territory under any pretence whatever.

2d:—That all the forces in said Territory hold themselves in readiness to march, at a moment's notice, to repel any and all such threatened invasion.

3d:—Martial law is hereby declared to exist in this Territory, from and after the publication of this Proclamation; and no person shall be allowed to pass or repass into, or through, or from this Territory, without a permit from the proper officer.

L. S.

Given under my hand and seal at Great Salt Lake City, Territory of Utah, this fifth day of August, A. D. eighteen hundred and fifty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty second.

BRIGHAM YOUNG.

Figure 1. The Brigham Young family copy of the Proclamation by the Governor, dated 5 August 1857. Owner-supplied photograph.

Purpose and principal conclusion

This report examines the Brigham Young family copy of the Proclamation by the Governor, a printed broadside beginning, "Citizens of Utah—We are invaded by a hostile force," and dated 5 August 1857. It places the proclamation in the opening phase of the Utah War and records the document's reported descent through the Young family into the possession of Brigham Young's great-granddaughter, Viola Young Laxton.

The photographed document is the scarce first issue of the proclamation rather than the better-known reissue of 15 September 1857. Its modern provenance is clear: Viola Young Laxton possessed the broadside, sold it to Benchmark Books in Salt Lake City during the 1980s, and the present owner acquired it from Benchmark Books shortly thereafter. The precise transaction dates and the names of each earlier family custodian are no longer known.

Document identification

The owner's copy carries the caption "PROCLAMATION / BY THE GOVERNOR," opens with the warning "CITIZENS OF UTAH:— / We are invaded by a hostile force who are evidently assailing us to

accomplish our overthrow and destruction," and concludes with the printed date 5 August 1857 and the printed name "BRIGHAM YOUNG." Brigham Young University describes its institutional example as a broadside approximately 28 by 19 centimeters.

The name at the end is printed and is not represented as Brigham Young's manuscript signature. The printed letters "L. S." conventionally indicate the place of a seal, locus sigilli. No impressed seal is evident in the supplied photograph.

Historical setting and issuance

In 1857 President James Buchanan decided to replace Brigham Young as territorial governor and sent a federal expedition west with the incoming governor, Alfred Cumming. The decision followed years of conflict between Utah's Latter-day Saint leadership and federal appointees, together with reports in Washington that Utah was in rebellion. Troops began moving before Young received official notice of his removal or a clear explanation of the expedition's purpose.

The Tenth Infantry left Fort Leavenworth on 18 July 1857. On 24 July, while Utah residents celebrated the tenth anniversary of the pioneers' arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, A. O. Smoot, Orrin Porter Rockwell, Judson Stoddard, and Elias Smith arrived with confirmation that an army was approaching. Against memories of expulsion and violence in Missouri and Illinois, Young and other territorial leaders treated the expedition as a hostile invasion rather than a routine transfer of administration.

On 5 August, acting as territorial governor and commander in chief of the territorial militia, Young issued the proclamation represented by this broadside. Its operative provisions forbade armed forces from entering Utah Territory under any pretense, directed territorial forces to remain ready to repel the threatened invasion, and declared martial law. Movement into, through, or out of the territory required permission from the proper officer.

The first issue and the September reissue

BYU's bibliographical description reports that the 5 August broadside received little, if any, circulation. During August, territorial leaders continued developing their response to the federal expedition. Young instructed Daniel H. Wells on 29 August to prepare another proclamation, but formal action was delayed during the visit of army quartermaster Captain Stewart Van Vliet.

Van Vliet arrived in Great Salt Lake City on 8 September and departed on 14 September, persuaded that the army intended to enter Utah and that the Latter-day Saints intended to resist it. On 15 September Young reissued the proclamation. BYU describes the September text as identical to the August issue except for its changed date and one rewritten sentence near the end. The owner's 5 August copy is consequently associated with the earliest formal phase of the territorial response.

The Utah War after the proclamation

Utah militia forces subsequently obstructed the army's advance, burned or destroyed supplies, and prepared defensive positions while generally avoiding a pitched battle. The federal expedition wintered near Fort Bridger. Negotiations and a presidential pardon produced a settlement in 1858: Young yielded the governorship to Alfred Cumming, and federal troops passed through the Salt Lake Valley before establishing Camp Floyd southwest of the city. The confrontation therefore became an armed conflict without the large conventional battle many contemporaries feared.

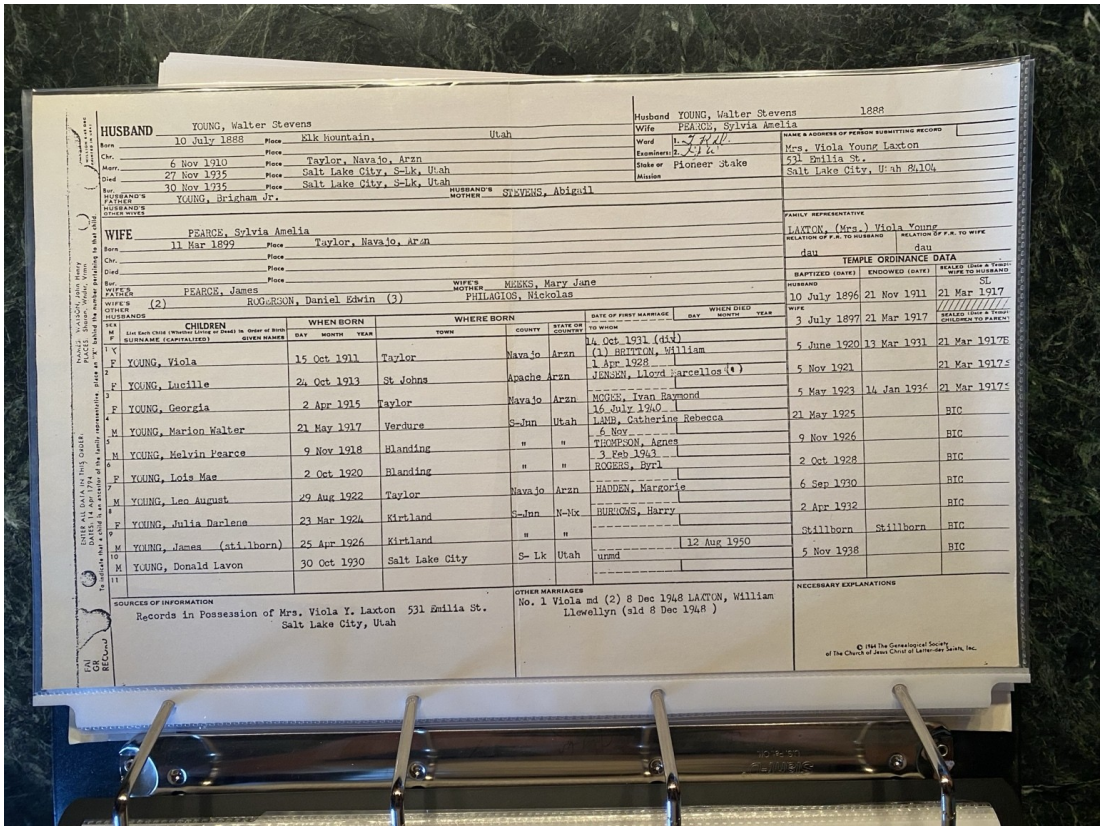
Genealogical line to Viola Young Laxton

The family-group sheet accompanying the proclamation records the direct line from Brigham Young to Viola Young Laxton. Public genealogical records independently corroborate the principal parent-child relationships, although a final proof-standard genealogy should cite each underlying vital, census, marriage, and probate record individually.

Generation	Person	Relationship	Evidence

1	Brigham Young 1801–1877	Issuer of the proclamation	Historical and church records
2	Brigham Young Jr. 1836–1903	Son of Brigham Young and Mary Ann Angell	Established biographical and genealogical record
3	Walter Stevens Young 1888–1935	Son of Brigham Young Jr. and Abigail Stevens	Family-group sheet and corroborating public records
4	Viola Young Laxton 1911–2007	Daughter of Walter Stevens Young and Sylvia Amelia Pearce	Family-group sheet and corroborating public records

The descent is therefore: Brigham Young → Brigham Young Jr. → Walter Stevens Young → Viola Young Laxton. Viola was Brigham Young's great-granddaughter.



HUSBAND YOUNG, Walter Stevens
Born 10 July 1888 Place Klk Mountain, Utah
Chr. Place
Marr. 6 Nov 1910 Place Taylor, Navajo, Arzn
Died 27 Nov 1935 Place Salt Lake City, S-Lk, Utah
Bur. 30 Nov 1935 Place Salt Lake City, S-Lk, Utah
HUSBAND'S FATHER YOUNG, Brigham Jr. HUSBAND'S MOTHER STEVENS, Abigail
HUSBAND'S OTHER WIVES

WIFE PEARCE, Sylvia Amelia
Born 11 Mar 1899 Place Taylor, Navajo, Arzn
Chr. Place
Died Place
Bur. Place
WIFE'S FATHER PEARCE, James WIFE'S MOTHER MEEKS, Mary Jane
WIFE'S OTHER HUSBANDS (2) RUGGERSON, Daniel Edwin (3) PHILAGIOS, Nickolas

	SEX M	SEX F	CHILDREN — SURNAME (CAPITALIZED) GIVEN NAMES	WHEN BORN — DAY MONTH YEAR	WHERE BORN — TOWN	COUNTY	STATE OR COUNTRY	DATE OF FIRST MARRIAGE — TO WHOM	WHEN DIED — DAY MONTH YEAR
1		F	YOUNG, Viola	15 Oct 1911	Taylor	Navajo	Arzn	14 Oct 1931 (div) (1) BRITTON, William	
2		F	YOUNG, Lucille	24 Oct 1913	St Johns	Apache	Arzn	1 Apr 1928 JENSEN, Lloyd Marcellus (1)	
3		F	YOUNG, Georgia	2 Apr 1915	Taylor	Navajo	Arzn	MCGEE, Ivan Raymond	
4	M		YOUNG, Marion Walter	21 May 1917	Verdure	S-Jun	Utah	16 July 1940 LAMB, Catherine Rebecca	
5	M		YOUNG, Melvin Pearce	9 Nov 1918	Blanding	"	"	6 Nov THOMPSON, Agnes	
6	M		YOUNG, Lois Mae	2 Oct 1920	Blanding	"	"	3 Feb 1943 ROGERS, Byrl	
7	M		YOUNG, Leo August	29 Aug 1922	Taylor	Navajo	Arzn	HADDEN, Margorie	
8		F	YOUNG, Julia Darlene	23 Mar 1924	Kirtland	S-Jun	N-Mx	BURIGMS, Harry	
9	M		YOUNG, James (stillborn)	25 Apr 1926	Kirtland	"	"		12 Aug 1950
10	M		YOUNG, Donald Lavon	30 Oct 1930	Salt Lake City	S- Lk	Utah	urmd	
11									

SOURCES OF INFORMATION
Records in Possession of Mrs. Viola Y. Laxton 531 Emilia St. Salt Lake City, Utah

OTHER MARRIAGES
No. 1 Viola md (2) 8 Dec 1948 LAXTON, William Llewellyn (sld 8 Dec 1948)

Husband YOUNG, Walter Stevens 1888
Wife PEARCE, Sylvia Amelia
Ward 1. 2.
Examiners:
Stake or Mission Pioneer Stake

NAME & ADDRESS OF PERSON SUBMITTING RECORD
Mrs. Viola Young Laxton
531 Emilia St.
Salt Lake City, Utah 84104

FAMILY REPRESENTATIVE
LAXTON, (Mrs.) Viola Young
RELATION OF F.R. TO HUSBAND dau RELATION OF F.R. TO WIFE dau

TEMPLE ORDINANCE DATA

	BAPTIZED (DATE)	ENDOWED (DATE)	SEALED (SPOUSE & TEMPLE) WIFE TO HUSBAND
HUSBAND	10 July 1896	21 Nov 1911	21 Mar 1917 SL
WIFE	3 July 1897	21 Mar 1917	SEALED (SPOUSE & TEMPLE) CHILDREN TO PARENTS
	5 June 1920	13 Mar 1931	21 Mar 1917E
	5 Nov 1921		21 Mar 1917S
	5 May 1923	14 Jan 1936	21 Mar 1917S
	21 May 1925		BIC
	9 Nov 1926		BIC
	2 Oct 1928		BIC
	6 Sep 1930		BIC
	2 Apr 1932		BIC
	Stillborn	Stillborn	BIC
	5 Nov 1938		BIC

NECESSARY EXPLANATIONS

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Figure 2. Family-group sheet for Walter Stevens Young and Sylvia Amelia Pearce. Mrs. Viola Young Laxton is identified as the family representative. This record accompanied the proclamation when Mrs. Laxton sold it to Benchmark Books. Owner-supplied photograph.

Provenance

The family-group sheet was supplied by Mrs. Viola Young Laxton with the proclamation to establish her descent from Brigham Young. Mrs. Laxton possessed the proclamation and sold it to Benchmark Books in Salt Lake City during the 1980s. The present owner acquired the document from Benchmark Books shortly thereafter. The exact dates of both transactions are not presently available.

The reported provenance is:

Brigham Young family descent → Viola Young Laxton → Benchmark Books in the 1980s → present owner shortly thereafter

The direct transfers from Mrs. Laxton to Benchmark Books and from Benchmark Books to the present owner establish the modern ownership sequence. No surviving record presently identifies each individual custodian between Brigham Young and Mrs. Laxton. That earlier portion of the provenance

rests upon the family history transmitted with the document: that it came from Brigham Young and passed directly through succeeding generations until it reached Mrs. Laxton.

The most accurate complete description is:

> *This copy of Brigham Young's 5 August 1857 proclamation was preserved in the family of Brigham Young and descended through succeeding generations into the possession of his great-granddaughter, Viola Young Laxton. The accompanying family-group sheet, supplied by Mrs. Laxton with the document, records her descent through Brigham Young Jr. and Walter Stevens Young. Mrs. Laxton sold the proclamation to Benchmark Books in Salt Lake City during the 1980s. The present owner acquired it from Benchmark Books shortly thereafter. Exact transaction dates and a generation-by-generation identification of the document's earlier custodians are not presently available.*

Preferred characterization

The Brigham Young family copy of the Proclamation by the Governor

This description accurately conveys the Young family provenance without making the narrower, presently unprovable assertion that the sheet was Brigham Young's personal retained copy or that he personally presented it to Brigham Young Jr. A fuller catalogue formulation is "the Brigham Young family copy, with Viola Young Laxton–Benchmark Books provenance."

Physical observations

- The document is a single printed broadside on toned paper.
- Irregular losses and chipping are visible, especially along the right and lower edges.
- Horizontal and vertical folds are visible.
- Several stains occur in the lower half.
- The lower-right corner is substantially damaged, but the printed name remains legible.
- The sheet is housed over the family-group record in a ring binder; the photograph does not establish whether adhesive is present.

No final conclusion about the paper, ink, printing date, or authenticity should rest on photographs alone. Direct examination by a qualified paper conservator or rare-book specialist could compare the type, paper, dimensions, and printing characteristics with institutional examples.

Remaining research opportunities

1. Ask whether Benchmark Books retains acquisition, consignment, catalogue, or sales records that could narrow the dates of Mrs. Laxton's sale and the present owner's purchase.
2. Preserve and examine any receipt, catalogue entry, envelope, frame label, note, or older photograph associated with the broadside.
3. Search Laxton and Young family papers, inventories, correspondence, probate materials, or reunion histories for a reference to the proclamation.
4. Measure the sheet precisely and compare its typographic setting and physical characteristics with BYU's copy and other institutional examples.
5. Seek any surviving family testimony that identifies one or more custodians between Brigham Young and Viola Young Laxton.

Sources

- Brigham Young University, Harold B. Lee Library. "Proclamation by the Governor." Mormon Publications 19th and 20th Centuries. Bibliographical description of the 5 August 1857 broadside and its 15 September reissue.
- Crawley, Peter, and Chad J. Flake. A Mormon Fifty. Provo, Utah: Friends of the Brigham Young University Library, 1984, item 50, as excerpted by BYU.
- FamilySearch public ancestor profiles for Walter Stevens Young and Sylvia Amelia Pearce, used as genealogical finding aids pending citation of the underlying records.
- Owner-supplied materials: photograph of the 5 August 1857 proclamation; family-group sheet for Walter Stevens Young and Sylvia Amelia Pearce; and the present owner's provenance statement concerning Viola Young Laxton, Benchmark Books, and the owner's subsequent acquisition.