

Utah War Chronology

1847	July	21	Advance company of Mormon Pioneers arrives in Salt Lake Valley, followed on July 24 by Brigham Young, establishing the first permanent white settlement in the valley.
1849	March	8	Opening of a political convention in Salt Lake City, resulting in a draft constitution for the proposed State of Deseret and the election of Almon W. Babbitt as delegate to carry the state's first petition to the United States Congress seeking admission to the Union. Officers for the provisional government were also chosen, including Brigham Young as governor.
	March	28	The Nauvoo Legion (first established in Illinois) was reorganized in Salt Lake and recognized as the militia of the State of Deseret.
	June		The first of many thousands of transcontinental travelers headed for the California gold fields arrive in Salt Lake City. Sales of the travelers' surplus goods provide desperately needed supplies to Mormon settlers, but friction between settlers and travelers reignite old hostilities.
	August	28	Capt. Howard Stansbury and his party, including First Lieutenant John W. Gunnison, arrive in the Salt Lake Valley to begin a military survey of the Great Salt Lake region.
	August	30	Lieut. Robert M. Morris and a detachment of riflemen serving as escort to a federal officer en route to California arrive in Salt Lake City. Although the company spends only two days in the city, a confrontation with citizens over an assault on a local woman sets the tone for Utah's Mormon/military relations for the next decade
1850	February	8	The first serious conflict between white settlers and native Utes erupts near Provo, resulting in the deaths of combatants on each side and the taking of Ute prisoners.
	March	26	Thomas L. Kane , a friend to the Mormons, delivers an important lecture concerning the Mormons to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
	June	15	The Deseret News begins publication in Salt Lake City.
	September	9	The United States Congress passes the Organic Act creating the Territory of Utah, rather than admitting Deseret as a state.
	September	20	President Millard Fillmore appoints the first officers for Utah Territory, including Brigham Young as governor, non-Mormons Benjamin D. Harris as secretary and Perry C. Brocchus as one of the associate justices.
	October	15	Unofficial news of the creation of Utah Territory arrives in the Salt Lake Valley. The officers and general assembly of the State of Deseret continue to function as the state's government until official word arrives from Washington, D.C.
1851	January	27	Official announcement of the creation of Utah Territory arrives in the Salt Lake Valley.

	February	3	Brigham Young takes oath of office as Governor of Utah Territory. Over the next three months the governing apparatus of the State of Deseret shifts to a territorial government without waiting for the arrival of the eastern appointees.
	June		A Mormon colony is established at San Bernardino, California
	June	7	Chief Justice Lemuel G. Brandenbury, the first of the territorial officers from the east, arrives in Salt Lake City.
	July	19	Four more territorial officers arrive in Salt Lake City.
	August	4	In the first territorial election, John M. Bernhisel is elected as Utah's delegate to Congress.
	August	17	Judge Perry E. Brocchus arrives in Salt Lake City; the slate of officers is finally completed ten months after Utah Territory was created.
	September		Following a series of misunderstandings and insults by both eastern appointees and Utah residents, Judges Brandenbury and Brocchus, Secretary Harris, and sub-Indian secretary Henry R. Day leave Utah and return to Washington, D.C.; the "runaway officials," as they have come to be known, make highly critical reports to President Fillmore and Congress about conditions in Utah.
	October	29	Fillmore, in Millard County, is selected as Utah's first territorial capital.
1852	February		The Territorial Library is opened in Salt Lake City, with a collection worth far more than the \$5,000 appropriated by Congress due to the creative efforts and solicitations of Delegate Bernhisel.
	August	12	Following years as an "open secret," the practice of polygamy in Utah is formally announced; antagonism to Mormon beliefs and practices begins to build in the East.
		31	President Fillmore appoints new officers to replace Brandenbury, Brocchus, and Harris.
1853	February	14	Ground is broken for the building of the Mormon temple in Salt Lake City.
	July-November		Deadly skirmishes between white settlers and Utes take place in several Utah counties, in what has come to be known as the "Walker War."
	October	26	Capt. John W. Gunnison, U.S. Topographical Engineers, and seven members of his party are killed in Millard County; although modern historians accept that the murders were committed by a band of Pahvants led by Moshokuop in revenge for the killing of an Indian by a passing emigrant company, rumors begin to circulate that Gunnison was killed by Mormons.
	November	12	Mormons establish a settlement at Fort Bridger, Green River County (present day Wyoming), followed soon thereafter by a settlement at nearby Fort Supply.
1854	February	7	John C. Fremont's exploring party stumbled into the Mormon settlement at Parowan, exhausted and nearing starvation; they were cared for and reprovisioned by that community, and after two weeks' rest continued on toward California.

	May		The “Walker War” ends with a peace treaty involving Chiefs Walker (Wakara) and Kanosh, and Brigham Young.
	August	24	John F. Kinney appointed chief justice of Utah.
	August	31	Col. Edward J. Steptoe, U.S. Army, and a detachment of approximately 175 soldiers, arrives in Salt Lake City to investigate the murder of Col. Gunnison, observe conditions in Utah generally; unknown to the public, Steptoe is authorized to assume the office of territorial governor should conditions warrant.
	November	30	A petition seeking another gubernatorial term for Brigham Young is sent to Washington, D.C.; among those signing the petition is Col. Steptoe.
1855	February	5	Dr. Garland Hurt arrives in Salt Lake City to serve as territorial Indian Agent.
	April	6	Dozens of Mormon men are called as missionaries to establish colonies among the Indians; these missions included those at Fort Limhi (Salmon River, Idaho); Elk Mountain (La Salle Mountains, southern Utah); and Las Vegas.
	March		Pahvant chief Kanosh surrenders a handful of Indians, including old men and a woman who clearly had no part in the slaughter, to stand trial for the murder of Capt. Gunnison and his party; the defendants are found guilty of manslaughter rather than murder; federal officers claim the weak verdict was dictated by Brigham Young, while Mormon jurors and witnesses complain that the prosecution was ill prepared, inefficient, and even drunk during the trial.
	May		Col. Steptoe and his command leave Utah en route to California, taking with them approximately 100 Mormon women, including a handful of girls as young as 13; anger over this activity further sours Mormon/military relations, and several officers, one of whom had been arrested for abducting an underage girl, submit scathing reports to their Washington superiors on Utah conditions without mentioning their own criminal behavior.
	July	27	David H. Burr arrives in Salt Lake City to serve as territorial surveyor-general.
	September	12	William W. Drummond is appointed as associate justice for Utah.
1856	January	26	A mass meeting, followed by a series of organizational meetings, calls for creation of the B. Y. Express Carrying Company to import freight and to cure the inadequacies of the U.S. mail by forwarding daily dispatches between the Missouri River and California.
	February	23	Brigham Young orders Nauvoo Legion to protect central Utah settlements from the depredations of local Indians in what has come to be called the “Tintic War”; skirmishes occur throughout the summer.
	March	17	A citizens’ convention meets in Salt Lake City and drafts a new constitution and petition for admitting Utah into the Union; Mormon apostles John Taylor and George A. Smith are delegated to present the petition to Congress.
	June	18	The Republican party platform, announced at its Philadelphia convention, names slavery and polygamy as the “twin relics of barbarism” to be suppressed in the territories.

	September		Almon W. Babbitt and others of his party are killed while traveling through Nebraska Territory; although all evidence confirms that the attackers were Cheyenne Indians, rumors begin to circulate that this was a Mormon atrocity.
	October	3	W.M.F. Magraw writes a scathing letter to President Fillmore complaining about Mormon society, based on his experiences as the former contractor for mail delivery between Utah and the Missouri River.
	October-November		Two companies of Mormon emigrants traveling with handcarts are trapped by early winter snows, resulting in great suffering and loss of life before the survivors are rescued and brought into Salt Lake City.
	November	4	James Buchanan is elected as president of the United States.
	autumn-winter		The Mormon "Reformation," a period of intense religious revival accompanied, some have argued, by excessive and even fanatical zeal, sweeps through Utah society.
	December	1	Jedediah M. Grant, counselor in the Mormon First Presidency and moving spirit behind the Reformation, dies of pneumonia.
	December	29	A nighttime incident occurs at the office of George P. Stiles: surveyor David H. Burr and others claim that Mormons dump court records and the court library into a privy vault and burn them, a charge vehemently denied by Mormon sources; an examination of court property is among the first actions undertaken by Gov. Alfred Cumming upon his arrival in Salt Lake City in 1858; although he declares the library and records in good order, debate over the incident continues to this day.
1857	January	6	Utah's legislative assembly adopts new memorials and a petition demanding statehood and recognition of citizens' constitutional rights; these documents are considered tantamount to declaration of war when they are received in Washington, D.C. in March 1857.
	February	17	Four travelers en route to California are attacked in an early morning ambush a few miles beyond Mountain Meadows in southern Utah; widespread publicity given to John Tobin, seriously wounded in the attack, fan the national flames of antagonism toward Mormon and Utah affairs.
	March	4	James Buchanan is inaugurated as president of the United States.
	March	14	William and Beason Parrish and Duff Potter are murdered at Springville in an incident seen by the public as another indication of conditions in Utah requiring military intervention.
	March	20	Judge Kinney writes to Attorney General Jeremiah S. Black expressing a highly critical view of the legal climate in Utah, urging that Brigham Young be replaced as governor and that an army regiment be sent to Utah.
	March	30	Judge William W. Drummond, after a tempestuous period on the Utah bench, resigns his position with an incendiary letter calling for the destruction of Mormon society, which is widely published in American newspapers.
	April-May		Brigham Young with a large company is absent from Salt Lake City for six weeks on a tour to the Mormon settlement of Fort Limhi in Oregon Territory.

May	13	Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt is murdered near Van Buren, Arkansas.
May	26	A scathing letter written by “Verastus” (generally believed to be Judge William W. Drummond) appears in the <i>New York Times</i> , further inflaming public opinion against the people of Utah.
May	28	Brevet Lieut. Gen. Winfield Scott, general-in-chief, issues orders to the army staff organizing the Utah Expedition.
June	12	Senator Stephen A. Douglas, formerly a friend and advisor to Utah’s citizens, speaks at Springfield, Illinois, characterizing Mormon society as a “loathsome ulcer” on the body politic, and calls on Congress to “apply the knife” in cutting it out.
June	23	Howard Egan and Bill Hickman, returning to Salt Lake City with the eastern mail, bring the first rumors that a military expedition is being organized to march on Utah.
June	26	Abraham Lincoln delivers a speech at Springfield, Illinois, rebutting Sen. Douglas’s earlier views on critical current issues.
June	29	Gen. William S. Harney is formally notified of his appointment to command the troops detailed to march on Utah.
July	11	Alfred Cumming is appointed governor of Utah.
July	18	The first elements of the Utah Expedition march from Fort Leavenworth, commanded by Col. E.B. Alexander.
July	24	During a Pioneer Day celebration in Big Cottonwood Canyon, public announcement is made of the march of approximately 2,500 soldiers toward Utah.
August	1	The Nauvoo Legion is notified to prepare for the “Eastern Expedition,” an effort to fortify the mountain passes and prevent the entrance of the U.S. Army into the Salt Lake Valley
August	7	The first elements of the Utah Expedition arrive at Fort Kearney on their march toward Utah.
August	15	A force of 70 men under the command of Cols. Robert T. Burton and James W. Cummings leave Salt Lake City with the mission to bring in emigrant trains still on the plains, and to observe the movements of the federal army.
August	28	Col. Albert Sidney Johnston is appointed commander of the Utah Expedition, in place of General William S. Harney.
September	8	Capt. Stewart Van Vliet of the U.S. Army’s Quartermaster’s Department, arrives in Salt Lake City to negotiate the purchase of supplies for supporting and housing the federal troops upon arrival in Utah.
September	11	Approximately 120 men, women and children en route from Arkansas to California are murdered at Mountain Meadows in Southern Utah, in a massacre

		perpetrated by Mormon settlers; 16 surviving children are placed with Mormon families in the area.
September	14	Capt. Van Vliet begins his return to the army en route for Utah, accompanied by delegate John M. Bernhisel on his way to Washington, D.C.
September	15	Brigham Young puts Utah Territory under martial law, among other things forbidding the U.S. Army to enter the territory and requiring passes for strangers traveling through the territory.
September	19	<i>The Mormon</i> , a newspaper published in New York City and a chief eastern voice for the Mormon cause, ceases publication.
September	27	Indian Agent Garland Hurt, the last non-Mormon federal officer in Utah, flees Spanish Fork guided by a party of Utes; he arrives at the army encampment on 23 October and begins writing to eastern newspapers and government officials regarding conditions in Utah.
September	29	Nauvoo Legion Major General Daniel H. Wells establishes his headquarters in Echo Canyon, gathering intelligence, directing fortifications, and making preparations to engage the federal army.
October	4	Fort Bridger and Fort Supply are burned by Mormon troops to deny their resources to approaching federal troops.
October	5	In the most widely known episode of the Utah War, Lot Smith and his company capture and turn two government wagon trains filled with troop supplies.
October	16	Two Nauvoo Legion officers, Joseph Taylor and William R. Stowell, with incriminating documents, are captured by federal troops near Fort Bridger; Taylor later escapes.
November		Six horseman, familiarly called "the Aiken party," en route from California to the military camp, are arrested in northern Utah and briefly imprisoned as spies; four of them are escorted by Mormon guards back toward California, but are murdered between Nephi and Fillmore.
November	4	Col. Albert Sidney Johnston finally reaches the troops in Wyoming and takes command of the Expedition.
November	9	Thomas L. Kane meets with President Buchanan to discuss Utah affairs, including the possibility of Kane's going to Salt Lake City as a presidential envoy.
November	16	The army goes into winter quarters at Camp Scott, near Fort Bridger, rather than attempting to force their way into the Salt Lake Valley immediately.
November	21	Alfred Cumming crosses the Utah border (into present-day Wyoming) and officially assumes the office of governor.
November	27,	Captain Randolph Marcy, 5 th US Infantry, departs Camp Scott leading a re-supply expedition to New Mexico Territory. He returns in the spring with livestock accompanied by reinforcements, 200 mounted soldiers and infantry under Col. William Loring.

	December		A grand jury composed of civilian camp followers waiting out the winter with the army at Camp Scott indict Brigham Young and dozens of other Mormons for treason; a second treason indictment for generally the same defendants is handed down by a similar grand jury in April 1858.
	December	4	The Nauvoo Legion's Eastern Expedition return to their homes, except for a small contingent assigned to watch the army through the winter.
	December	5	Secretary of War John B. Floyd issues his annual report enumerating reasons for launching the Utah Expedition; by today's standards, the offenses he cites are as much religious as political, social or military.
	December	8	President Buchanan delivers his State of the Union address to Congress, making his first public statement on Utah affairs and his dispatch of troops months earlier.
	December	25	Thomas L. Kane meets again with President Buchanan to inform him of Kane's intention to go to Utah as a private (non-official) mediator.
1858	January	1	Department of War creates the Department of Utah by General Order #12.
	January	4	Thomas L. Kane departs Philadelphia for Salt Lake City on a mission to avert armed conflict between U.S. troops and the Nauvoo Legion.
	February	24	Thomas L. Kane arrives in Salt Lake City following an ocean voyage, the crossing of the isthmus of Panama, a further ocean voyage to San Francisco, and a difficult overland trip via San Bernardino along the southern route through Utah.
	February	25	The Mormon settlement at Fort Limhi is attacked by Bannock Indians at the instigation of B.F. Ficklin and others, resulting in two deaths and a number of injuries; the survivors begin the trek back to Salt Lake City and are attacked again.
	March	18	Large military supply wagon train departed Fort Leavenworth; F and K Companies of the 1 st US Cavalry accompany the train. Also, the first column of reinforcements under Major William Hoffman, leads E and H companies of his 6 th US Infantry. Later Companies B and C join the column.
	March	21	The residents of Salt Lake City and northern settlements make plans to evacuate southward and, if necessary, to burn the towns and city and deny their resources to the federal troops; this evacuation comes to be known as "The Move South."
	April	5	Gov. Alfred Cumming, accompanied by Col. Thomas L. Kane but with no other army escort, arrives in Salt Lake City to meet local officials.
	April	10	Col Johnston is promoted to "brevet" brigadier general.
	April	19	Gov. Cumming and Col. Kane examine the Utah Library, court records, and court seal, and issue a report contradicting previous claims that they had been destroyed.

May		All settlements north of Utah County are evacuated, except for small details assigned to burn the improvements should the army force its way into the settlements.	
May	6	First of several columns of reinforcements begin their march to Utah; second column departed 16 May; next column left 20 May; the fourth group began 28 May, and the main column departed 31 May.	
May	13	Gov. Cumming returns to Camp Scott to make preparations for transferring his civilian headquarters to Salt Lake City.	
June	4	Col. Edwin Sumner departed Fort Riley with the 1 st US Cavalry to reinforce the Utah army.	
June	7	Former Kentucky Gov. L.W. Powell and Texas Maj. Ben McCulloch, dispatched as peace commissioners to investigate conditions in Utah and end hostilities, arrive in Salt Lake City. The 6 th column of reinforcements left Fort Leavenworth for Utah.	
June	11	The peace commissioners meet with Brigham Young and other local officials in Salt Lake City.	
June	13	Final column of reinforcements under Major William Emory, C, E and I companies of the 1 st Cavalry depart Fort Leavenworth; accompanying this column is brigade commander Gen. William S. Harney and quartermaster Capt. Winfield S. Hancock.	
June	15	The peace commissioners speak to an audience of about 4,000 citizens in Provo, explaining conditions leading to an end to hostilities.	
June	19	Col. Thomas L. Kane arrives in Washington, D.C., and reports to President Buchanan.	
June	26	Brevet Brigadier General Albert Sidney Johnston with his troops passes peacefully through Salt Lake City and camps west of the Jordan River; within a few days they march forty miles south to Cedar Valley, establishing Camp Floyd on the west side of Utah Lake.	
July	1	Mormon leaders return to Salt Lake City; they are followed over the next several weeks by most of those who had evacuated southward.	
July	3	The peace commissioners depart Salt Lake City to return to the east.	
October	12	Salt Lake City Policeman William Cooke is shot by McDonald; he dies on October 18. This is generally seen as the beginning of a period of civil unrest as camp followers, discharged army teamsters, and others without ties to the local community begin to disrupt the pattern of life in Utah.	
November	4	John Cradlebaugh arrives in Salt Lake City as Utah's new associate justice.	
1859	March	8	Judge Cradlebaugh, charging the (Mormon) grand jury at Provo, accuses them of dereliction of duty and with being "dupes of a corrupt theocracy"; he calls on a detachment of the army to occupy Provo, provoking near-panic among citizens who protest the control of the civilian court by military force.

	March	27	Gov. Cumming issues a proclamation protesting the military control of Provo; he orders the Nauvoo Legion to prepare to resist should the military not withdraw.
	April	4	U.S. troops leave Provo and return to Camp Scott, over the protest of Judge Cradlebaugh.
	May	10	Johnston promises the protection of a military escort to anyone wishing to leave Utah; soon after, a formal escort accompanies one train of emigrants to California, and other companies heading east are less formally escorted by returning army detachments.
	August	1	William Henry Hooper is elected as Utah's delegate to Congress, in place of John M. Bernhisel.
	August	11	U.S. Army Sgt. Ralph Pike is shot and killed by an "unknown assailant," widely believed to be Howard O. Spencer, a young Mormon whom Pike had brutally assaulted in March; the assassination provokes retaliation by a few U.S. soldiers who burn haystacks and shoot into houses in Provo, without wounding anyone.
1860	March	1	Albert Sidney Johnston leaves Camp Floyd to return to Washington, D.C., and is succeeded in command by Col. Philip St. George Cooke.
	April	7	The first "Pony Express" arrives in Salt Lake City from the west, followed two days later by the first "Pony Express" from the east.
	May		Many of the troops stationed at Camp Floyd are ordered to proceed to Arizona and New Mexico.
	October	4	Judge John F. Kinney returns to Utah, having been appointed as chief justice.
1861	February	6	The name of Camp Floyd is changed to Camp Crittenden, as John B. Floyd for whom the camp had been named, had declared his loyalty to the Confederate States.
	March	2	President Buchanan approves a bill to remove the western half of the state of Utah to create the state of Nevada; Nevada is formally created on October 31.
	May	17	Gov. Alfred Cumming leaves Utah, before the expiration of his term, to return to his native Georgia.
	July		The remaining soldiers at Camp Crittenden are ordered to return to the eastern States for Civil War duty; before they leave, vast amounts of government stores at the camp are sold for pennies on the dollar, enormously benefitting Utah's economy.
	October	18	The overland telegraph is completed to Salt Lake City, with Brigham Young sending the first message, confirming that Utah had not seceded from the Union.
	December	7	John W. Dawson arrives in Salt Lake to assume the duties of governor. He leaves Utah on December 31 following indecent proposals to a Utah woman; he is attacked and mutilated on the road in retaliation, it is widely believed. Frank Fuller, territorial secretary, assumes the duties of governor.