



John Young



Joseph Young



Pincus Young



Brigham Young



Louisa Young

THE FAITHFUL YOUNG · FAMILY ·

THE PARENTS,
BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF BRIGHAM
BY LEONARD J. ARRINGTON & JOANN JOLLEY

Lydia Goldthwait Knight - husband Newel Knight
 Daughter *Lydia Knight - husband John R. Young - son of Lorenzo Dow Young*
 Daughter *Lydia Roseanna Young Stoworthy - husband Henry T. Stoworthy*
(Great Grandmother) Great Grandfather



Brigham Young — organizer, pioneer, inspired prophet of God. We revere him as an energetic, fearless man of action who helped establish the kingdom of God on earth and helped ensure its nonstop proliferation through the best and worst of times.

Yet Brigham Young's story is hardly one of auspicious beginnings or easy circumstances. And it is not the history of his life alone. Rather, his story commences with a family portrait. Father, mother, brothers, and sisters formed an intimate, cherished nucleus where Brigham was nourished in Christian principles and thereby prepared to embrace the restored gospel. All living members of his immediate family joined the Church, became stalwarts in the faith, and set spiritual precedents for future generations.

EARLY YEARS

Brigham Young was the third youngest of eleven children born to John and Abigail ("Nabby") Howe Young between 1786 and 1807. John, a veteran of three Revolutionary War campaigns under George Washington, married Nabby in 1785. The young couple settled on a farm in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. John, a "small, nimble, wiry man,"¹² toiled unceasingly to support his rapidly growing family. But he never lost sight of his moral and religious convictions. "He was very circumspect, exemplary and religious," wrote Brigham, "and was, from an early period of his life, a member of the Methodist Church."¹³

Nabby was one of the five popular Howe sisters of Shrewsbury, near Hopkinton — "pretty girls, vivacious, musical. . . . All were very devout and deeply concerned with Puritan religious life." Physically, Nabby was "a little above medium height. She had blue eyes, with yellowish brown hair, folded in natural waves and ringlets across her shapely brow." And the nineteen-year-old was "exceedingly methodical and orderly in her temperament."¹⁴

She had innate medical ability, as her son Phinehas testified:

"My earliest recollection of the scenes of life are relating to myself and my brother Joseph. A short time before I was two years old, he cut off my right hand, except a small portion of my little finger, with an ax, while we were at play. My mother doctored it and saved it."¹⁵

The first eight Young children were Nancy, born in 1786; Fanny (1787); Rhoda (1789); John, Jr. (1791); Nabby, her mother's namesake (1793); Susannah (1795); Joseph (1797); and Phinehas Howe (1799).

After sixteen years in Hopkinton (with a brief interlude in Platauva District, New York), John moved his family into a log cabin on the outskirts of Whitingham, Windham County, Vermont, in the bitter New England cold of January 1801. Here, five months later, Brigham was born on 1 June 1801. The family remained in Whitingham for about three years while John cleared timber to render the land suitable for farming.

Another promising land enterprise took the Youngs to Sherburn. Chenango County, New York, in 1804, where John "followed farming, clearing new land, and enduring many hardships, with his family, incidental to new settlements in a heavy timbered country as New York was in those days."¹⁶ Here the last two children were born, Louisa in 1804 and Lorenzo Dow in 1807.

Despite John's industry, Nabby's thrift, and occasional prospects for economic improvement, the Youngs never had material success. Sacrifice, illness, and poverty were constant, unremitting companions. Brigham reflected years later on the discrepancies between his father's dreams and the disheartening reality:

"My father was a poor, honest, hard-working man; and his mind seemingly stretched from east to west, from north to south; and to the day of his death he wanted to command worlds" (*Journal of Discourses*, 9:104).

By the time baby Lorenzo Dow joined the family in 1807, two of his sisters had already married and left

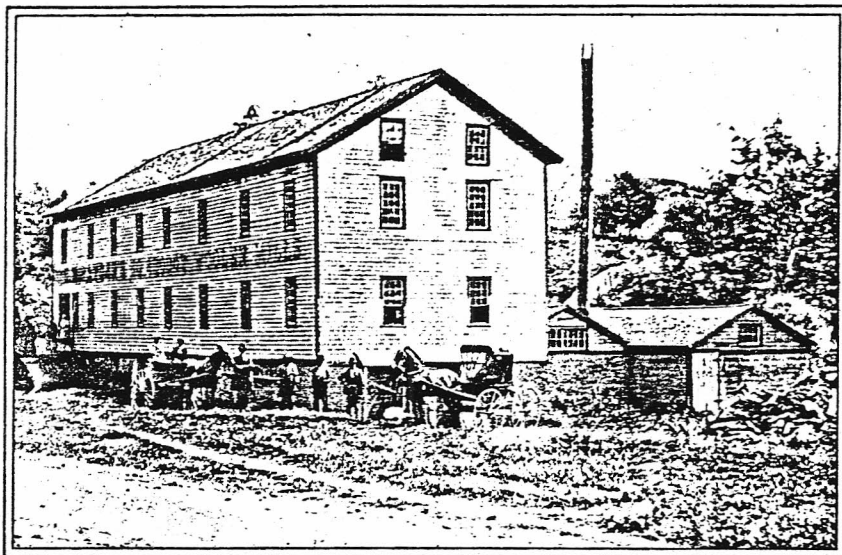
home. Nancy married Daniel Kent in 1803; the same year Fanny, then sixteen, married Robert Carr.

Joseph Young recalled that when baby Brigham was a few months old, "my father bought a cow . . . and it is worthy of note that the cow gave more milk than any one I have ever seen since that time. . . . The animal would suffer no one to come near her, except my sister Fanny, who with the infant Brigham in her arms performed this service of milking twice each day during the summer; this was in consequence of the sickness of my mother, and the child had to be nursed from the bottle, and no one could pacify him but my sister Fanny."¹⁷

Daughter Nabby, then fourteen, died of consumption (tuberculosis) in 1807. The illness had ravaged the frail constitution of her mother for several years and would ultimately prove fatal to her, also. It was a prolonged, agonizing death, common among frontier families of the day.

In 1813 two more of John and Nabby's children left the nest. In February Rhoda, then twenty-three, married John Pourtenous Greene; later that year John, Jr., married Theodocia Kimball. Susannah married James Little in 1814. By this time the family had moved again — to Cayuga County, New York.

When in June of 1815 Nabby Young finally lost the long and painful battle against consumption, five of her children — Joseph, Phinehas, Brigham, Louisa, and Lorenzo — ages just under eight to eighteen, were living at home. Fanny, separated from her unfaithful husband, had returned to the household during Nabby's final days, and for a while kept the family together. Within three years of Nabby's death, however, father and children had gone separate ways, though strong family ties still united them in many respects. Joseph had been apprenticed out to a brother-in-law, James Little (Susannah's husband), for miscellaneous "service"; Lorenzo lived for a while with a sister, Rhoda Greene, and later joined the Littles to learn gardening and tree raising.



HAYDEN'S MILL,
PORT BYRON, NEW YORK

In the early
years of his marriage
to Miriam Works,
Brigham Young worked
here, involved in
manufacturing paints.

Phinehas married Clarissa Hamilton at age nineteen in 1818. Father Young meanwhile moved to Tyrone, New York, and in 1817 married Hannah Brown, a widow with several children. She and John would have a son, Edward. Brigham, apprenticed to a carpenter in Auburn (near Tyrone), in a short time became an expert carpenter, painter, and glazier. Louisa probably lived with her father and stepmother until she married Joel Sanford in 1825.

THE YOUNGS AND THE GOSPEL

Religious commitment had always been a strong force in John Young's family. It is interesting to note that as the gospel restoration approached, a remarkable series of events began to transpire in the lives and hearts of the Youngs. John and Nabby Young's children had been taught principles of Christian living. Methodist circuit riders were welcomed with attentiveness and respect. Even such unorthodox preachers as Lorenzo Dow, after whom the youngest Young was named, evoked the interest of most of the family. Several Young brothers recorded early spiritual experiences.

Brigham later recalled his brother Joseph's religious commitment: "In early life he became attached to reli-

gion, and was very moral and devoted. . . . He was a Methodist preacher for many years."⁸ Joseph, Brigham noted, was also the most serious-minded of men: "My brother Joseph once said to me (and we were both Methodists at the time), 'Brother Brigham, there is not a Bible Christian in the world; what will become of the people?' For many years no person saw a smile on his [Joseph's] countenance, in consequence of the burden of the Lord being upon him, and realizing that the inhabitants of the earth had all gone out of the way and had turned every man to his own views" (*Journal of Discourses*, 12:95).

And Brigham placed considerable stock in his brother's spirituality: "I knew that he was solemn and praying all the time. I had more confidence in his judgment and discretion, and in the manifestations of God to him, than I had in myself" (*Journal of Discourses*, 8:37).

John, six years older than Joseph, joined the Methodist Church when he was fourteen or fifteen. For several years he was "devotedly attached to that religion."⁹

Phinehas, 2½ years Brigham's senior, was likewise reared in the Methodist faith, but struggled for many years to find spiritual identity. Shortly after his marriage in 1818 he tried to "get religion" but found no satisfaction. For the next few years

he wavered between religious and worldly values:

"I sought for riches, but in vain; there was something that always kept telling me that happiness originated in higher pursuits, and in the fall of 1823, a few months previous to my twenty-fourth birthday, I again commenced seeking the Lord with greater energy and a more fixed determination than at any former period of my life.

"I forsook all my former associates, and commenced praying and fasting and watching every weakness of my nature, and the more I prayed, the more I saw my weakness and felt my dependence upon God." He joined the Methodist Reformed Church, received "license to speak in public," and "prayed continually to God to make me holy and give me power to do good."

Once when Phinehas visited a young woman dying of consumption, he was prompted to "lay hands on the sufferer and rebuke the disease." He did so, and the woman was healed. He wrote, "I had never seen anything of the kind in my life, but had always believed the people were living far beneath their privileges."¹⁰

It was perhaps the youngest son, Lorenzo, who saw earliest that he and members of his immediate family would play a significant part in the unfolding drama of God's latter-day kingdom. In 1816, barely nine

years old, he had a startlingly prophetic dream: "I thought I stood in an open space or ground and saw a good, well defined road leading, at an angle of forty-five degrees, into the air as far as I could see. I heard a noise similar to that of a carriage in rapid motion, at what seemed the upper end of the road. In a moment it came into sight, drawn by a pair of beautiful white horses. The carriage and harness appeared brilliant with gold, and the horses traveled with the speed of the wind. It was manifested to me that the Savior was in the carriage, and that it was driven by his servant. It stopped near me and the Savior inquired 'Where is your brother Brigham?' After answering his question he inquired about my other brothers, and concerning my father. His queries being answered satisfactorily, he stated that he wanted us all, but especially my brother Brigham. The team then [turned] about and returned the way it came. . . . Subsequent events proved that it foreshadowed our future. It was evidently fulfilled when my father and all of his family entered into the new and everlasting Covenant."

Lorenzo further recalled that his mother, "a praying, fervent woman" and an invalid until she died when he was seven, "frequently called me to her bedside and counseled me to be a good man that the Lord might bless my life." He added, "On one occasion she told me that if I would not neglect to pray to my Heavenly Father, he would send a guardian angel to protect me in the dangers to which I might be exposed."¹¹

His mother's admonition and promise sustained Lorenzo through a lifelong series of illnesses and accidents. Lorenzo was convinced that "the guardian angel, promised him by his mother, watched over his spiritual as well as temporal welfare."

Throughout Lorenzo's strivings for spiritual enlightenment, "a spirit worked with him to do all the good he could but not to join any religious [denomination], and at this time it prevailed against all temptation. . . . I think at the time . . . I had as

much of the spirit of the Lord with me as I could well enjoy in my ignorance of the Gospel in its purity. I was full of the testimony of the truth as I understood it." "¹²

In the years following Nabby's death and John's remarriage, John and his new family moved to Mendon, Monroe County, New York. Nearly all of Father Young's children, with their growing families, gathered to Mendon and nearby villages within several years. Most would soon hear and accept the restored gospel.

Phinehas, who moved to Mendon in spring 1828, described the religious activity of the area: "About this time my father, brother Lorenzo and others of my father's family, moved into the town. We immediately opened a house for preaching, and commenced teaching the people according to the light we had; a reformation commenced, and we soon had a good society organized, and the Lord blessed our labors. . . ."

"Thus things moved on until the spring of 1830, and I might say until 1832; there was little or no change in the progress of the reformation; notwithstanding, I, as an individual, felt that we had arrived at the zenith of our enjoyment in the course we were pursuing."¹³

Meanwhile, April 1830 brought the formal organization of the restored Church of Jesus Christ—and the Prophet had lost little time in commencing missionary efforts. Samuel H. Smith was on the road by June, preaching and selling copies of the Book of Mormon.

On the second day of his journey, Smith called at the home of John P. and Rhoda Young Greene. Greene, a Methodist minister, expressed no interest in the book but in kindness took a few copies to sell them on an upcoming preaching tour. Samuel Smith left, promising to return in two weeks. Later, "more out of curiosity than desire, both Mr. Greene and his wife read the book and were deeply impressed. Samuel sold a copy to Phinehas Howe Young, and this copy was read by his brother Brigham Young. The copy left with John P. Greene and the one sold to Phinehas

Howe Young brought the first direct information of the restoration of the gospel to the Young family."

Phinehas, who apparently received a Book of Mormon from Samuel Smith a short time later, was impressed neither with the missionary nor the publication. Samuel declared that he knew the book "to be a revelation from God, translated by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, and that my brother Joseph Smith, Jun., is a Prophet, Seer and Revelator." Phinehas recorded that "this language seemed to me very strange, and, I thought, rather ridiculous, still I said but little more to him, as I thought he must be deceived, and that the book was a production got up to lead the people astray; however, I thought it my duty to read it, as I had promised, and search out the errors, and as a teacher in Israel, expose such errors and save the people from the delusion." His suspicions were soon overturned.

"I commenced and read every word in the book in the same week," he recorded. "The week following I did the same, but to my surprise, I could not find the errors that I anticipated, but felt a conviction that the book was true."

". . . My father then took the book home with him, and read it through. I asked him his opinion of it. He said it was the greatest work and the clearest of error he had ever seen, the Bible not excepted."

"I then lent the book to my sister, Fanny Murray. She read it and declared it a revelation. Many others did the same."

Believing in this new "Golden Bible" but still firm in Methodism, Phinehas left New York on a preaching mission with his brother Joseph in late August. Calling on an "old acquaintance by the name of Solomon Chamberlain" along the way, they heard an impromptu sermon on Mormonism. "He told us there was a Church organized, and ten or more were baptized, and everyone must believe the Book of Mormon or be lost. This was the first I had heard of the necessity of another church," wrote Phinehas, "or of the importance of re-baptism; but after

hearing the old gentleman's arguments. . . . I began to inquire seriously into the matter, and soon became convinced that such an order of things was necessary for the salvation of the world."

Able to think of "but little except the Book of Mormon and what I had heard of Mormonism," Phinehas found his own preaching ineffective and determined to return to his home. "I still continued to preach," he wrote, "trying to tie Mormonism to Methodistism [sic], for more than a year, when I found they had no connection and could not be united, and that I must leave the one and cleave to the other.

"About this time my brother Brigham came to see me, and very soon told me that he was convinced that there was something to Mormonism. I told him I had long been satisfied of that."

Brigham was soon on his way to Canada "to tell the good tidings to our brother Joseph, who was there preaching Methodistism, and to try to get him to come home with him."¹⁴ By the end of April 1832 some of Mormonism's most devoted followers had been baptized: Father Young and his wife Hannah; Brigham and Miriam Young; Phinehas H. and Clarissa Young; Joseph Young; Lorenzo D. and Persis Young; John P. and Rhoda Young Greene; and Fanny Young Murray. The remaining members of the Young family were not far behind. Susannah, widowed in 1822 and married to William Stilson in 1829, was baptized in June 1832; Louisa, married to Joel Sanford, also came into the fold that year. Nancy Young Kent and her husband, Daniel, joined the Church in 1833 in Tyrone, New York. And John, Jr., was baptized, after a thorough investigation of the Church and its tenets, in October of 1833.

John Young lived to partake of both the joys and sufferings of the Lord's elect. He moved with his family to Kirtland in the fall of 1833. The next year he was ordained a patriarch by President Joseph Smith. Little is recorded of his persecutions, but the Prophet Joseph Smith record-

ed John Young's October 1839 death by reflecting the difficulties of his final years: "He was . . . a firm believer in the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ; and fell asleep under the influence of that faith that buoyed up his soul, in the pangs of death, to a glorious hope of immortality; fully testifying to all, that the religion he enjoyed in life was able to support him in death. He was driven from Missouri with the Saints in the latter part of the last year. He died a martyr to the religion of Jesus, for his death was caused by his sufferings in the cruel persecution" (*History of the Church*, 4:14-15).

Three of Brigham's five living sisters—Nancy, Fanny, and Susannah—crossed the plains and lived to see the desert begin to blossom under the direction of their younger brother Brigham. Rhoda, weakened by inflammatory rheumatism and the hardships of fleeing mobs in Ohio and Missouri, died in Commerce, Illinois, in 1840 at age fifty-one. She had borne seven children to her husband, John P. Greene, "to whom," recorded Brigham, "she was truly a helpmate through all the varied travels of life."¹⁵

Louisa apparently went with her husband, Joel Sanford, and their four children to Missouri in 1833 and died in Independence that year at the age of twenty-nine.

Nancy Young Kent, widowed in 1853, lived for a while with two of her children in Wisconsin. Franklin W. Young recorded that in 1857, "in company with her nephew, Wm. G. Young, she went with ox teams to Utah, where she lived in her bro. Brigham Young's Lion House until the 22 Sept. 1860 when she died at the good old age of 74 years, honored and beloved by all who knew her."¹⁶

Susannah had borne eight children, been twice widowed, and "suffered many of the persecutions of the Church" by the time she crossed the plains in 1849. Sadly, she had little strength left to see her through the continuing hardships of life in Salt Lake City's infancy; she died there in the spring of 1852 at age fifty-seven.

Fanny Young Murray left Nauvoo, Illinois, apparently alone,

journeying with a pioneer company to Salt Lake City sometime between 1847 and 1849. Fanny was seventy-two when she died in 1859.

All four of Brigham's brothers remained faithful and filled leadership positions in the councils of the Church—Joseph as a president of the original quorum of seventies; John, Jr., as stake patriarch; Phinehas as bishop and counselor in a stake presidency; Lorenzo as bishop and director of home missionaries (missionaries who labored in Utah and its environs). Each served several missions for the Church; each endured untold persecutions from mobs and politicians; each followed his prophet-brother across the country to settle in the Rocky Mountains.

Most of the brothers married several times; from the marriages of them and of their sisters came dozens of children—including many faithful Saints who would build and strengthen the Church for generations. Though it would be virtually impossible to catalogue the descendants of each of these noble Saints, it is important to acknowledge their vital contributions to the establishment and growth of the Church.

The Young brothers witnessed some of the most dramatic historical events of the nineteenth century. Joseph, newly married, was called with Brigham in 1834 to march with Zion's Camp. He walked the thousand miles to Missouri and another thousand home again to Kirtland. He later commented, "I never went through a more severe trial of my faith."¹⁷

Joseph also was an eyewitness to the Haun's Mill massacre in October 1838. He and his family were miraculously spared. His description of that dreadful event was subsequently published in the *Millennial Star* (see vol. 16, p. 508).

Lorenzo and his second wife, Harriet Page Wheeler, were numbered among the first small company of pioneers, led by Brigham Young, to enter the Salt Lake Valley in July of 1847. They were parents of the first pioneer male child born in the valley—Lorenzo Dow Young,

THE YOUNG BROTHERS

John and Abigail
Howe Young
had five sons.
They were,
from left to right,
Lorenzo, Brigham,
Phinehas, Joseph,
and John.



born 20 September 1847. "He was a bright little fellow," wrote his uncle, "and gave great promise of life and growth, but was overtaken by that most certain of all things—death, March 22nd 1848."¹⁸ The elder Lorenzo's long life was filled with devoted service to family, church, and community.

Phinehas, too, was a vanguard pioneer, although before his group reached the valley he and three other men volunteered to turn back and serve as guides for groups starting the trek. The first of these groups was presided over by his brother John. After Phinehas made three such excursions he finally settled permanently in Salt Lake City, where he erected a two-story adobe home and planted one of the first orchards in the valley. He became active in politics, grew award-winning strawberries, and instigated a tree-planting effort which eventually yielded Salt Lake City's Liberty Park. The brothers enjoyed each other's company in Salt Lake City. Joseph and Lorenzo lived near Brigham and often joined his family for evening singing and prayers.

Most of the Young family continued strong in their faith. In 1857 Brigham noted, "My father and step-mother embraced the plan of salvation as revealed through Joseph the Prophet; and four of my brothers, five sisters, and their children and

their children's children, almost without exception, are in this Church" (*Journal of Discourses*, 4:281).

Nearly forty years later, Lorenzo, at eighty-three the only surviving child of John Young, recorded: "My father, my step-mother, Hannah Brown, my four brothers and five sisters, with their wives and husbands, were all members of the Church, carried out their professions and lived like true Saints, with the exception of two brothers-in-law. Of a family of twenty three, twenty one of them, if I pass away in the faith, will have lived and died Latter Day Saints."

He then reflected, "There is so much that is near and dear to me the other side of the veil, that hides the immortal from our vision, that I feel almost impatient to burst the bands and be free."¹⁹ Five years later, in 1895, he did "burst the bands" of mortality. The last of the Young children had come home. □

Notes

1. We appreciate the research on Brigham Young's early life done by Richard F. Palmer of Cayuga, New York. The following references have been particularly helpful: Rebecca Cornwall and Richard F. Palmer, "The Religious and Family Background of Brigham Young," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 18 (Spring 1978): 286-310; and S. Dilworth Young, "Here Is Brigham . . .": *Brigham Young—the Years to 1844* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1964).

2. Journal of Franklin Wheeler Young, holograph, Church Historical Department, p. 5.
3. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, Elden Jay Watson, ed., Church Hist. Dept., p. iv.
4. Susa Young Gates, "Mothers of the Latter-day Prophets," *Juvenile Instructor*, Jan. 1924, pp. 4-5.
5. Miriam Maxfield, "A Compiled History of Phinehas Howe Young," typescript, Church Hist. Dept. p. 1.
6. Journal of Franklin Wheeler Young, p. 5.
7. Journal of Franklin Wheeler Young, pp. 13-14.
8. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, p. xi.
9. Journal of Franklin Wheeler Young, p. 10.
10. Maxfield, pp. 1-2.
11. James A. Little, "Biography of Lorenzo Dow Young," typescript, Church Hist. Dept. pp. 1-2.
12. Little, p. 7.
13. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, p. xvii.
14. Maxfield, pp. 3-6.
15. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, p. viii.
16. Journal of Franklin Wheeler Young, p. 7.
17. Remarks at a Zion's Camp reunion, reported in *Deseret News*, 12 Oct. 1865.
18. Journal of Franklin Wheeler Young, p. 57.
19. Little, p. 209.

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