



The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War, 1857-1858

David L. Bigler, Will Bagley

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In 1857 President James Buchanan ordered U.S. troops to Utah to replace Brigham Young as governor and restore order in what the federal government viewed as a territory in rebellion. In this compelling narrative, award-winning authors David L. Bigler and Will Bagley use long-suppressed sources to show that—contrary to common perception—the Mormon rebellion was not the result of Buchanan's "blunder," nor was it a David-and-Goliath tale in which an abused religious minority heroically defied the imperial ambitions of an unjust and tyrannical government. They argue that Mormon leaders had their own far-reaching ambitions and fully intended to establish an independent nation—the Kingdom of God—in the West.

Long overshadowed by the Civil War, the tragic story of this conflict involved a tense and protracted clash pitting Brigham Young's Nauvoo Legion against Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston and the U.S. Army's Utah Expedition. In the end, the conflict between the two armies saw no pitched battles, but in the authors' view, Buchanan's decision to order troops to Utah, his so-called blunder, eventually proved decisive and beneficial for both Mormons and the American republic.

A rich exploration of events and forces that presaged the Civil War, *The Mormon Rebellion* broadens our understanding of both antebellum America and Utah's frontier theocracy and offers a challenging reinterpretation of a controversial chapter in Mormon annals.

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