harsher legislation, they now faced the necessity of bending on less central matters in order to protect the core mission and essential ordinances of the Church. In these circumstances, Church President Wilford Woodruff fervently sought and received divine direction. Accordingly, he publicly announced in his 1890 Manifesto that he would no longer permit plural marriages in opposition to the laws of the United States, thus removing the main obstacle to Utah statehood and protecting the temples and other matters central to the faith.

Perhaps the most important remaining problem to be resolved before Utah could gain statehood was normalizing political affairs within the territory. Up to that time, non-LDS voters had mainly backed the so-called Liberal party, while Church members belonged to the People’s party, primarily associated in national affairs with the Democrats. LDS leaders recognized the necessity of convincing party members in Congress that Utah voters were not irrevocably aligned with the Democrats. It was time for Utah politics to mirror the federal, with the Democratic and Republican parties both being strong. This took place with impressive dispatch through determined efforts by John Henry Smith, an apostle, and others. At their urging, local LDS leaders—and in some cases entire congregations—were divided along national party lines.

However, as Republican party members became more convinced that admission of Utah as a state might give them two more U.S. senators in the closely balanced upper house, Democratic lawmakers became less committed to the cause of statehood, necessitating complex and intense behind-the-scenes lobbying efforts. The chief agents in these negotiations were Bishop Hiram B. Clawson and his relative Colonel Isaac Trumbo, a close friend of President Wilford Woodruff, whose effective lobbying with Republican lawmakers was of critical importance. Through a series of discussions and agreements, Trumbo and Clawson finally regained the cooperation of key Democratic leaders, partly by agreeing that actual admission of the state would not take place until 1896, after Democrats had an opportunity to complete their congressional agenda without the possible opposition of Republican senators from Utah.

The enabling act for admission was passed in July 1894, allowing a state constitutional convention to meet in early 1895. Once the constitution was approved by the U.S. Congress, it was submitted to Utah citizens for ratification at the same time that they elected their first state officers. Finally, on January 4, 1896, President Grover Cleveland proclaimed Utah a state, the forty-fifth, and the new government went into effect two days later.

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UTAH TERRITORY

The arrival of the Latter-day Saints in the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847 preceded by only a few months the transfer of the Utah area and much more of the American Southwest from Mexico to the United States. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed on February 2, 1848, making the transfer final. A petition requesting the United States to grant statehood to the Utah area was delivered in 1849, but statehood was not granted. Instead, Utah Territory was created as part of the national Compromise of 1850. The compromise

Celebrating Utah’s admission to the United States in 1896, the Salt Lake Temple is draped with a huge flag of the United States. Courtesy Special Collections Department, University of Utah Libraries.
admitted California into the Union as a free state and designated Utah and New Mexico as territories with the right to decide whether to permit slavery or not.

Beyond the complications of the slavery issue, the petition for statehood was weakened by several other factors. The first was the tremendous size of the proposed State of Deseret (see Deseret, State of) with boundaries extending into southern California. In addition, the small population of Deseret (less than 12,000 in 1850 excluding Native Americans) was far short of the 60,000 required for statehood by the Northwest Ordinance of 1785. And Anti-Mormon sentiment in Congress added further weight to these reasons for organizing Utah Territory rather than admitting Deseret into the Union as a state.

The act creating Utah Territory was signed by President Millard Fillmore on September 9, 1850. The boundaries of the territory were the forty-second parallel on the north, the thirty-seventh parallel on the south, the summits of the Rocky Mountains to the east, and the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the west. In 1861, Utah Territory was significantly reduced when Nevada was admitted to the Union (with a smaller population than Utah), the western slope of the Rockies became part of the Colorado Territory, and the northeastern corner of Utah Territory was included in Wyoming Territory.

The 1850 act provided for a territorial legislature and a delegate to Congress, and established the following major offices to carry out governmental activities: territorial governor, secretary of the territory, U.S. marshal, U.S. attorney, chief justice, associate justice, and superintendent of Indian affairs. The president of the United States filled these offices by appointment—a situation fraught with problems, for territorial residents were excluded from electing their own governing officials. Federal appointees were often considered incompetent and malicious.

The transition from an autonomous government under the direction of Church authorities to one administered under provisions of the territorial organic act was made easier by the appointment of Brigham Young as the first territorial governor and the superintendent of Indian affairs. Difficulties arose, however, as Brigham Young’s forceful methods and local popularity rankled non-
As second counselor to Brigham Young, Jedediah Morgan Grant (1816–1856) was one of the main figures in the Utah Reformation during the early years of the Utah Territory. At age eighteen he served in Zion’s Camp, and later he became Salt Lake City’s first mayor. The father of Heber J. Grant, he died at age forty.

Mormon carpetbag appointees—especially the chief justice and associate justices. For their part, some of these non-Mormon imports from the East acted in ways that offended local sensibilities.

Conflicts also developed between territorial judges and locally elected county officials—especially the probate judges, who, in Utah, had unusually broad jurisdiction. Elected by popular vote and often serving concurrently as local BISHOPS, the probate judges also served as chairmen of the county court, which included three other selectmen, and oversaw timber and water resources. In addition, they supervised the establishment of districts for roads, schools, voting, and other purposes; the levying of taxes; the construction of public buildings; the care of orphans, the insane, and stray animals; and the election or appointment of lesser officials. They also exercised original jurisdiction in both civil and criminal cases (see COURTS, ECCLESIASTICAL, NINETEENTH CENTURY).

In 1850 the territory consisted of only seven counties: Salt Lake, Davis, Weber, Tooele, Utah, Sanpete, and Iron. While these counties still existed in 1896, when statehood was granted, their size had been reduced. When Utah became a state, twenty-eight of the present twenty-nine counties were functioning.

The election of James Buchanan as U.S. president in 1856 and his decision to put down the alleged Mormon rebellion and appoint a new territorial governor in place of Brigham Young led to the UTAH EXPEDITION of 1857–1858. At its peaceful conclusion, federal troops established Camp Floyd, forty miles south of Salt Lake City, and Alfred Cumming became territorial governor. During the ensuing years, eleven individuals were appointed territorial governor, and five territorial secretaries served briefly as acting governor. Most of the appointed officials were sincere in their efforts, though a few appeared to be political scoundrels. All were challenged by the task of interpreting, administering, and enforcing federal laws that went against the beliefs and practices of Utah’s majority population (see ANTIPOLYGAMY LEGISLATION).

The fundamental conflict was resolved and the way to statehood opened when Church President Wilford Woodruff issued the 1890 MANIFESTO ending the practice of PLURAL MARRIAGE. In July 1894 U.S. President Grover Cleveland signed an enabling act to permit the people of Utah to prepare a state government. On January 4, 1896, President Cleveland proclaimed UTAH STATEHOOD, formally ending Utah’s territorial period.

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