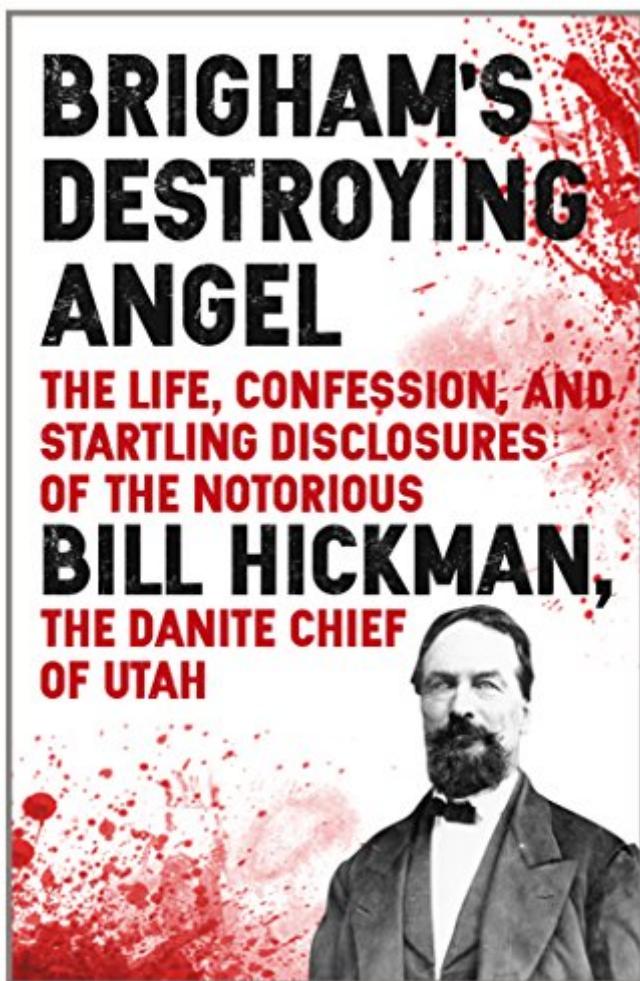


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# **Brigham's Destroying Angel: Being The Life, Confession, And Startling Disclosures Of The Notorious Bill Hickman, The Danite Chief Of Utah**



## **Synopsis**

William Adams Hickman accused the nineteenth century Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of some extraordinary crimes: theft, property appropriations, extortion, and even murders ordered by Brigham Young. Wild Bill Hickman's memoir caused huge controversy in the Mormon Church upon its release in 1872 and the accusations had a great effect on the church's reputation. Hickman's memoir chronicles his life as a significant member of the church and his position as Brigham Young's underling. Hickman does not shy away from sharing the plethora of crimes he committed but he controversially claims that they were ordered by Young. J. H. Beadle, the editor of this account, examines the history of the Mormon church and the reasons behind the church's lack of action over Hickman's brutal crimes. He also questions how Hickman remained in positions of power despite knowledge of his murderous ways being publicly known. Hickman's account sheds light on these issues as well as providing a unique insight into the mind of an infamous murderer and is an important addition to the history of the nineteenth century Mormon church. William Adams "Wild Bill" Hickman was an American frontiersman. He also served as a representative to the Utah Territorial Legislature. Hickman was baptized into Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1839 by John D. Lee. He later served as a personal bodyguard for Joseph Smith, Jr. and Brigham Young. Hickman was reputedly a member of the Danites. He died in Wyoming in 1883.

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Brigham's Destroying Angel" by Bill Hickman is an autobiography of member of the Mormon Danite group. Written in 1870, this book chronicles a dark period in Mormon history after the death of founder Joseph Smith in 1844. Brigham Young seized control of the church and began the massive migration to Utah. Bill Hickman was essentially a hit man under the personal direction of Brigham Young. He and a group of Mormon vigilantes (the Danites) would intimidate, beat up, or murder people that had drawn Young's ire. Many of these people were "apostates", either non practicing Mormons or break away sects challenging Young's authority. During this time Bill Hickman was a practicing Mormon in good standing and had ten wives. For anybody that thinks this report is a spiteful diatribe against the LDS church I would invite them to check Wikipedia entries "Danites" or "Joseph Smith".

.Liked it because it was his own journal; therefore written in his own words.

The book gets 5 stars for content and 3 for form. The insights this book gives into the 19th century Mormon empire and how it was maintained are priceless. A reader comes away with a rare understanding of how Brigham Young used the pulpit and the Danites to control his people, the Mormon pioneers. It is not as thorough as the view presented in John D. Lee's writings, but it corroborates the ugly scenes that Lee presents. At the outset the editor states that he had intended to rewrite Hickman's story, but re-thought it and decided to leave the text with all of the punctuation, vernacular and style of Hickman's own writing. There value in this is that we get a direct window into Hickman's soul, but some of the clarity is lost because modern readers cannot understand the full meaning of 19th century Mormon terms and euphemisms. In spite of giving it only 4 stars, I HIGHLY recommend this book to the honest student of 19th century Mormon history.

Great read while working in Utah. I read this with some reserve, as this was written while Mr Hickman was a guest of the federal authorities. It's not as damning as some might portray it, or as

innocent as Mr Hickman would lead you to believe. I've been fortunate enough to visit many of the places that are mentioned in the book. Reading this allowed me to get a feel for how things were over 100 years ago. I'm not LDS, but I respect their beliefs. Could this all be true? Maybe, but more likely it's mostly true based on how he perceived the events. Read this for a feel of the old west and a portrait of a man's life in those days. Take the rest with a grain of salt (Great Salt Lake & Utah Lake)

Hickman's memoirs, written while he was awaiting hanging, were initially dismissed as simply being anti-Mormon propaganda, but they do have some value and one needs to consider a number of things before rejecting them. First, the claims that Hickman makes about Brigham Young are consistent with the claims made by Fanny Stenhouse, John D. Lee, and even Young's ex wife, Ann Eliza Young (among many, many others). All of these people knew Young personally and called him a liar, a cheapskate, a swindler, and a murderer. It is also noteworthy that, when you consider the circumstances of the writing of this book, it didn't make sense at the time of its creation for Hickman to confess to a series of assassinations. If you want a taste of authentic gunslinger stories told in first person by a real historical character, read this book. If you want to see a side of frontier Utah not taught in LDS Sunday school, read this book. If you want to know a bit about the man many people consider to have been the second prophet of modern days, read this book. However, the next time you look at the Mormon temple in Salt Lake City, consider the fact that some of it was paid for with money taken off of the bodies of men killed by Wild Bill Hickman.

The editor's comments are worthless, and clearly biased. However this volume has merit as original source material. It is hard to judge Bill Hickman's memoirs. At the time he wrote it he was bitter against Brigham and had an ax to grind. There is so much in the telling that might be completely different with a single word here, or something omitted there. Nevertheless, the volume is of interest and should be read by LDS scholars.

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