Chapter 1

Solomon and Harriet Young and Their World
1841 - 1892

Introduction

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Solomon and Harriet Young and Their World
Part 1, Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter introduces Solomon and Harriet Young. It follows them from Kentucky to western Missouri during the height of America's westward expansion, and describes their life. The Missouri farming environment of the mid-1800s is overviewed, the Young's farm is described, and Solomon and Harriet's acquisition of land holdings is presented.

Solomon and Harriet Young Move West

In the winter of 1841, Solomon and Harriet Young packed their belongings, boarded a steamer named *Fanny Wheeling* in Louisville, Kentucky, and went to St. Louis, where they boarded a second vessel and headed up the muddy Missouri River. In December, they landed where the Missouri River meets the Kaw River and makes its big bend northward. The place was known as Westport Landing, the birthplace of Kansas City. The Youngs had both been born and raised in Shelby County, Kentucky. Solomon had been orphaned at a young age. He had an older brother, Michael Young, and two sisters.[1] Solomon had owned and farmed land in Shelby County. Harriet was orphaned as a youth and was cared for by her older brother, William. On January 9, 1838, when Solomon was twenty-three and Harriet was nineteen, they married. When they moved west in 1841, the couple brought along two children, Susan and Sara.[2]

The Youngs were after public land to preempt, and the law required the construction of a home and a prescribed period of residency on the land. They walked to the top of Dodson Hill at what is now 135th and Byars Road, Kansas City.[3] Solomon and Harriet assembled a few split rails, tossed some brush atop the assemblage to create a primitive shelter, and Solomon rode off to Clinton, Missouri, to file their eighty-acre claim and pay the requisite $150.[4] Harriet huddled against the winter cold in the shelter, watching hearth smoke rise from the 1,000 farms already established in Jackson County, warming the more than 6,230 county residents. Harriet gazed upon a rich, gently rolling land. A land where the growing season averaged 180 days, rainfall

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[1] John Meador, interview by Niel Johnson, July 1981, transcript of taped interview, 4. Harry S. Truman Library.
[2] Robert H. Ferrell, *Harry S. Truman: His Life on the Family Farm* (Worland, Wy:: High Plains Publishing Co., 1991), 64.
[3] Ibid., 6.
[4] Ibid., 68.

averaged over thirty inches per year, and within reach of the Missouri River down which farm products would one day flow.[5]

Westward Expansion

Harriet and Solomon were certainly not the only ones moving west. The 1840s was a time of rapid westward expansion of the United States. The Preemption Act of 1841 granted ownership rights to U. S. citizens and aliens alike who had established farms on unclaimed public lands. The act was one of many pieces of federal legislation that reflected a widely fluctuating governmental policy regarding public lands. As early as the end of the Revolutionary War, the federal government perceived western lands as a source of revenue. However, many of the Cessation Acts passed by individual states to transfer state lands to the federal government contained provisions protecting the rights of persons who had moved onto unclaimed public lands and established homes and farms. Then the pendulum swung the other way. In the early 1800s, the federal government enacted Anti-Intrusion Acts forbidding "squatting" on unclaimed public lands. On occasion, the federal government would send troops into areas north of the Ohio River in an attempt to remove squatters. The soldiers would evict the homesteaders and burn their houses and crops. When the soldiers left, the settlers would return to rebuild and replant.

With the addition of lands acquired by purchase and as a result of hostilities from France and Mexico, United States courts were suddenly inundated with conflicting land claims based upon grants from the previous sovereigns. For example, settlers along the southern Mississippi River to whom land rights had been granted by France wanted those rights protected by the United States after it became the sovereign as the result of the Louisiana Purchase. In an attempt to settle such disputes, the Preemption Act of 1841 was passed, which acknowledged land rights of those who had settled land, whether they were United States citizens or not. The act not only attempted to resolve the issue of land rights created under a former sovereign, but was also an attempt to resolve the issue of who owned public land upon which a person had built a home, planted a crop, and started a new life. The act provided that if a person had settled on unclaimed public land, made improvements, and continually resided there, title would vest in that person. Although a cut-off date was established by the act, after which mere entry upon the land, residence, and creation of improvements would not vest title in the squatter,

[5] U.S. Census Bureau, Federal Census, Missouri & Missouri Agriculture Production Schedule, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1900.

government land agents liberally constructed the legislation. Suddenly Kansas, Missouri, and lands to the west became irresistibly inviting to those who aspired to land ownership and its perceived financial independence.[6]

As a result, Jackson County continued to swell in population with those seeking lands promised by the federal government. Between 1840 and 1850, the population of the county almost doubled, reaching 11,031; it rose to 18,969 by 1860, 55,041 by 1870, and 283,527 by 1900.[7]

On August 8, 1844, Solomon filed his deed to 160 acres of land in the southern part of Jackson County that the Youngs had purchased from Stephen Abston. On December 12, Solomon filed his petition to perfect title to his original eighty-acre claim with the government land office in Clinton. Even though they owned land near what would become Grandview, in 1852, their residence was still on the 160-acre farm called Parrish Place, near what is now the corner of Thirty-sixth and Prospect streets in Kansas City.[8] By December 26 of 1860, Solomon and Harriet had made nineteen government land acquisitions by preemption, purchase, or land warrant, totaling 1,928.88 acres, at a cost of $1,194.80, plus whatever they paid for the warrants.[9]

The Farming World of Solomon and Harriet Young

As Harriet and Solomon were steadily increasing their land holdings in western Missouri, the world of agriculture was undergoing radical transformation. Between 1830 and 1860, farming in the United States evolved from a subsistence activity designed to support farmer and family to a commercial enterprise providing cash income.[10] Improved farm tools, the enlargement of market areas as the result of enhanced transportation, and

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[6] Under the survey system established by the Land Ordinance of 1785, the western lands of the United States were divided into townships of 640 acres each. Townships were further divided into thirty-six sections. Each section was one-square mile. The northern and southern boundaries of Townships were established by base lines extending east and west; the eastern and western boundaries of townships were established by meridians that extended north and south. Reference base lines and meridians (called principal meridians) were identified and used to describe the location of a particular township. For example, the location of any particular township was described as being so far west of an identified principal meridian, and so far north of an identified base line.
[7] U.S. Census Bureau, Federal Census, Missouri & Missouri Agriculture Production Schedule, 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1900.
[8] Richard S. Kirkendall, "Harry S. Truman: A Missouri Farmer in the Golden Age," *Agricultural History* 48: 4 (1974), 467-83.
[9] Ibid., 467-83.
[10] F. B. Mumford, "A Century of Missouri Agriculture," *Missouri Historical Review* XV (October 1920-July 1921), 284.

increased demands from the West resulted in money-making opportunities for the Midwest farmer. In 1850, Missouri had 9,732,600 acres in farms, and by 1860 the acreage increased to 19,984,810 — a 106 percent increase. The jump in acreage was not the result of an increase in individual farm size, but of an increased number of farms. The average (mean) Missouri farm of 1850 included 178 acres; the average Missouri farm of 1860, totaling 215 acres, wasn't much larger.[11] By comparison, Harriet and Solomon Young were working 1,929 acres in Jackson County by 1860, either in cultivation or as pasture for livestock.[12]

Although the average farm of 1860 wasn't much larger than the 1850 farm, its value during that decade doubled from $1,161 in 1850 to $2,485 in 1860. In 1860, Missouri farms produced four million bushes of wheat, seventy-three million bushes of corn, and four million bushes of oats, quantities that more than doubled the total production of 1850.[13] Impressive farm production increases were also enjoyed throughout the United States during this period. Wheat production increased more than fifty percent nationwide, corn production increased more than seventy percent, and oat production increased a nearly twenty percent.[14]

This increase in crop production was in large part the result of the mechanization of farming. For example, generations of farmers had separated wheat from stalk and chaff by flailing it with sticks. In 1788, Baron Pollnitz brought a Scottish automatic threshing machine to New York that allowed two persons to perform the same task, producing seventy bushels of wheat a day. The first United States patent for a threshing machine was issued to Samuel Mulliken of Philadelphia on March 11, 1791. In 1852 the New York Agricultural Society, in trials conducted at Geneva, proved that it took fifteen men to cradle and bind fifteen acres of wheat by hand, whereas nine men could accomplish the same task using an automatic reaper. By the time the International Agricultural Exposition was held in Paris in 1855, American technology had moved into the lead. The American Pitts thresher threshed seventeen bushels per hour, the English machine threshed nine, and the French a mere 5.75.[15]

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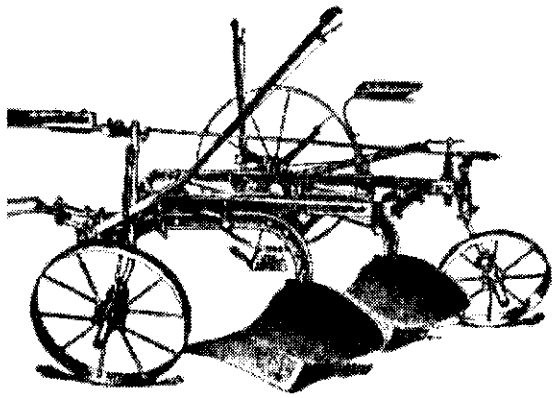
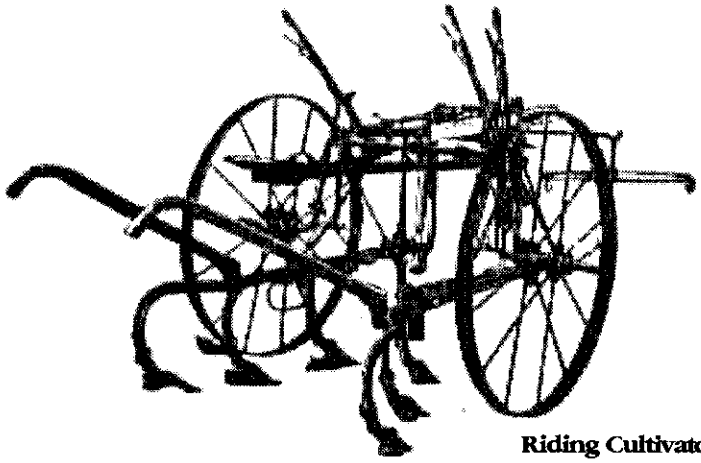
[11] Ibid., 277-97.
[12] Jill York O'Bright, "Cultivating the Land, Cultivating the Man: The Young-Truman Farm," *Jackson County Historical Society* 15 (Fall 1984).
[13] Mumford, "A Century of Missouri Agriculture," 43.
[14] Donald B. Dodd, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1993).
[15] Graeme R. Quick and Wesley F. Buchel, *The Grain Harvester* (N.p.: American Society of Agricultural Engineers, 1978), 72.

There is other evidence of the increasing mechanization of farming after 1830. Ploughs, once universally made by local blacksmiths, were being made, marketed, and sold by centrally located manufacturers by 1850. In 1845, Henry Bear, who lived eight miles south of Boonville, announced he would be manufacturing the McCormick Reaper, which was guaranteed to cut fifteen acres of hay per day. The reapers sold for $100 cash, or $106 on a four-month contract.



Four-horse Gang Plow



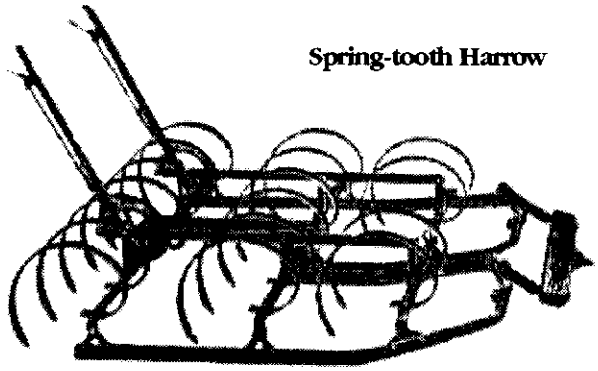
Riding Cultivator

The May 13, 1854, *Boonville Observer* carried an extensive advertisement for farm machinery, placed by Alfred Lee and Company's Great Western Agricultural Warehouse and Seed Store of St. Louis. They advertised steel plows, seed sowers and drills, harrows, cultivators, horse hay rakes, McCormick's reaping and mowing machines, Emery's Patent Horse Power Thresher, fan

mills, and corn shellers. In 1855, William M. Plant and Company of St. Louis advertised Ketchum Improved Mowers, Reads Improved Reapers, Atkins Self-Raking Reapers, and Emery's Two-Horse Powers with thresher and separator attachments.[16]

A quick review of United States patents related to farming filed between 1790 (when the first United States patent law was enacted) and November of 1899 provides a glimpse into the mechanization of American agriculture. During that year, patents were filed for 701 vegetable cutters and crushers, 822 fertilizers, 5,319 thrashers, 5,801 harrows and diggers, 9,156 seeders and planters, 12,519 harvesters, and 12,652 plows. In addition, 1,102 patents were issued related to the care of livestock and 4,632 related to dairy farms. [17]

This new technology pushed farming into an entirely new era. On pre-mechanized Missouri farms of the 1820s and 1830s, farmers fenced their fields with brush, broke the soil with wooden moldboard plows, and used farm animals to pull brush across the newly plowed fields to smooth it for sowing. Harrows had yet to be invented. Only enough wheat was raised to supply the farmer's family, and some of what was grown was parched to be used as a substitute for coffee. Flour bread was served only on Sundays or upon the arrival of special guests. In September, the farmer would hoist a two-bushel wheat sack on his shoulder and start walking between his guide stakes, broadcasting wheat seed. He would cross-sow to insure an even stand of wheat. The mature wheat would be cut with a scythe. After being left to dry, the cut wheat would be gathered in



Spring-tooth Harrow

[16] George F. Lemmer, "Farm Machinery in Ante-Bellum Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 40 (July 1946), 49.

[17] *Agricultural Yearbook, 1899*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Secretary of Agriculture: Government Printing Office), 1900. NOTE: The 1899 *Yearbook*, is a 880-page document containing a wealth of articles dealing with the history of American agriculture from colonial days to the date of publication, which was late 1899. The articles were written by various experts within the Department of Agriculture.

bundles with a hand rake and tied with a band of straw. Threshing was done entirely by hand.[18]

In 1867, after having lived in Missouri for twenty-six years, Solomon and Harriet Young bought 398 acres of farmland just north of Grandview from Thomas A. Smart. Title to the 398 acres was taken in Harriet's name, as was the practice in Missouri as well as other states having dower rights.[19] Here they would build a home.[20] Solomon would retire from the transcontinental freighting business, and farm some of the almost 2,000 acres the couple had accumulated in western Missouri. Solomon was over fifty years old; Harriet was forty-nine. They had seven children by this time, aged twenty-eight, twenty-six, twenty-four, twenty-one, seventeen, fifteen, and thirteen. Three of the five daughters were married: Susan, twenty-eight; Sarah, twenty-four; and Laura, seventeen. The two remaining daughters, Martha Ellen, fifteen, and Ada, thirteen, were still with their parents. Son William, twenty-six was a veteran of the Civil War. The other son, Harrison, was twenty-one and single. He would remain single his entire life and continue a life-long association with the farm.[21]:

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[18] Asbury Good-Knight, "Wheat Raising in Pioneer Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review*, 4 (July, 1922), 502-505.

[19]Dower granted the wife certain legal rights upon the death of her husband intestate. She was entitled to a life estate in one-third of her deceased husband's real property if he died without a valid will. That meant that she had full ownership of that one-third during the rest of her life. She could do anything any owner could do, including selling it. However, upon her death, all rights in the land reverted to the husband's heirs. For example, if the widow sold her rights to the land, upon her death the land would revert to her husband's heirs. All she owned, and therefore all she could convey, was rights in the land during her life. Even if a man left a will, the validity of the will could be challenged for numerous reasons, as would later happen in Harriet Young's estate. Such challenges can last for years and become so expensive that the very land being fought over becomes overburdened with mortgages, and is eventually lost. To avoid these and similar problems, families would simply record the portion of their land upon which their house was built in the wife's name.

[20] Note: According to Mary Jane Truman, the granddaughter of Solomon and Harriet, there was already a partially-completed house on this property which had been started before the Civil War. Mary Jane reported that Solomon and Harriet finished that house. Mary Jane Truman, interview by Jerald L. Hill and William D. Stilley, 2 January 1976, transcript of taped interview, Harry S. Truman Library.

[21] Some years later, Harrison's husbandry skills would be called into question. The local newspaper ran a story in its October 28, 1898, issue dealing with an apparent local epidemic killing cattle. "Harrison Young," the newspaper reported, "speaking of the cause of the death of so many cattle in this vicinity recently, says: there wasn't anything the matter with the cattle – not anything at all, that they merely got lonesome and died." *Belton Herald*, 28 October 1898. Eighteen years later, the same newspaper would publish Harrison's obituary: Harrison Young was 70. He never married. He was the second son of Solomon Young, early settler in south Jackson county. With his father he often crossed the plains in his youth. Everybody knew Harrison Young and everybody liked him. He died at the home of his sister, Mrs. Martha Truman, on the old farm near Grandview, which had been his home from early youth. A number of people from Belton attended the funeral,

The late 1860s was the time of Jesse James, a time of lingering social trauma caused by the Civil War, and a time of accelerated westward expansion. By 1868, emigrants arriving in western Missouri were told that no lands were left in either Missouri or Kansas that could be preempted.[22] By 1870, Missouri was the fifth most populated state in the United States.[23] Solomon and Harriet's move to Missouri could not have been better timed. They moved west in the midst of the American surge of westward expansion. By the time the supply of available inexpensive land had been exhausted by settlement or low-cost purchase, the Youngs were well established on their farm near Grandview.

Solomon Young

Some of the money the Youngs used to acquire their land came with them from Kentucky, but much of it they earned by operating a transcontinental freight business between western Missouri and Utah, Colorado, and California. Starting in 1854, when he was thirty-one, Solomon made repeated trips west to the Rocky Mountains and the Far West. Between 1846 and 1857 and again between 1864 and 1870, Solomon transported cattle, wagons, and other goods west for sale to settlers and the United States Army.

Solomon Young
Courtesy of Harry S. Truman Library

In the spring of 1854, Solomon headed west driving fifteen hundred head of cattle destined for California. He lost a third of them on the way, and stayed in California until 1857 rebuilding his herd. He would typically leave Missouri in May and return the following spring. The August 9, 1860, issue of the Salt Lake City newspaper, *The Desert News*, reported Solomon arriving in the area driving 130 yoke of oxen and forty wagons. The article described Solomon's method of moving his wagons. He hitched

which took place Tuesday at Forest Hill cemetery, Kansas City. *Belton Herald*, 10 August 1916.

[22] Jonathan Daniels, *The Man of Independence* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1950), 53.

[23] U.S. Census Bureau, Federal Census, Missouri & Missouri Agriculture Production Schedule, 1850, 1860, 1870.

six or eight yoke of oxen to a lead wagon, and to the rear of the lead wagon he chained a second wagon. The oxen team would be pulling two wagons. The article reported that when Solomon arrived with his train of goods, the army (which Solomon understood was to buy them) refused to accept the goods. Solomon Young then met with Brigham Young (no relation), and the two arranged the sale of Solomon's goods to Salt Lake City inhabitants. They removed the goods from Solomon's wagons, set them up in stalls along the street in downtown Salt Lake City, and retailed them to the residents.

By 1860, freight hauling west had become big business. California miners, Mormons, army post personnel, and assorted other western settlers increased their orders exponentially for goods from Missouri and states to its east, south, and north. One of the largest freighting companies, Russell, Majors and Waddell, operated 6,250 wagons and approximately 75,000 oxen. The company sold out to Ben Holladay in 1862, who sold the business to Wells and Fargo in 1866. In 1865 the Quartermaster General of the United States reported that between Denver and Fort Leavenworth, one was never out of sight of wagon trains of either emigrants or merchants. [24]

Harriet Louisa Gregg Young

Harriet Young
Courtesy of Harry S. Truman Library

Little has been written and little is known about the nineteen-year-old redhead who married Solomon Young on January 9, 1838. There can be no doubt that she was a strong, resourceful person. Were she otherwise, she and the eight children she raised would simply not have survived. During those years when Solomon was commuting between California and Missouri, Harriet presided over the family interests at home, serving as farmer, protector, and single parent. Harriet must have been an impressively strong person, for during some of the time Solomon was gone, the Civil War raged and western Missouri was the epicenter of

[24] Fred A. Shannon, *The Farmer's Last Frontier* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1945) 31.

tremendous social upheaval. Quantrill, the Confederate guerilla, was conducting raids in Jackson County, and Kansas "Red Legs"[25] were raiding western Missouri.

The western counties of Missouri became violent even before the civil war. Conflict over the fate of Kansas — free state or slave state — became violent and spilled into those western counties of Missouri bordering Kansas. The hostile feelings engendered by that conflict were blown into a full-scale conflagration by winds of the Civil War. With the advent of open hostilities between seceding states and the union, Kansas "Jayhawkers" and Missouri "Bush Whackers" were suddenly able to justify conduct that had been simply criminal.

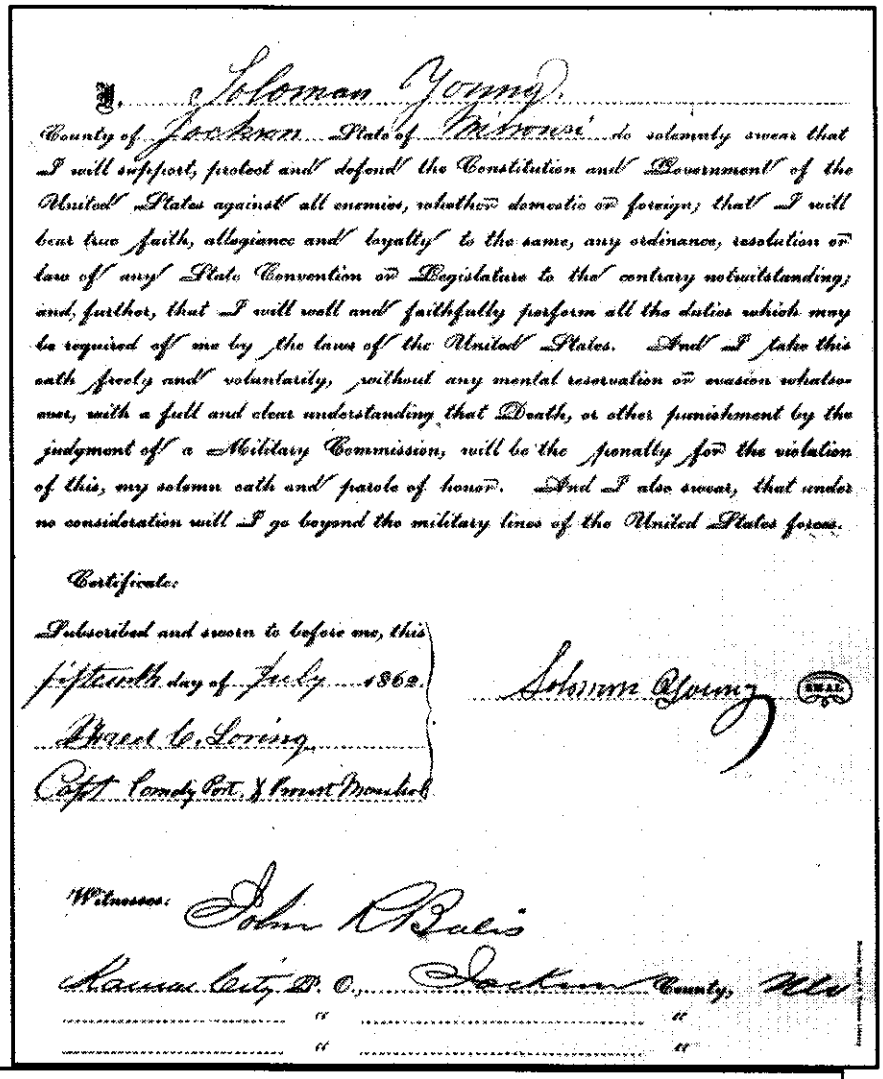
In early August of 1863, Quantrill sacked and destroyed the city of Lawrence, Kansas, precipitating retaliatory acts by Kansas irregulars into western Missouri. As recorded in 1877 by historian J. W. Slavens:

> This act of wanton destruction increased and intensified the bitterness of the Kansas people, and the worst passions were let loose, reprisals were made, and the whole aspect of the war in the counties lining Missouri and Kansas was being changed from a "war for the Union" or "Secession" to one of border extermination.[26]

On August 25, 1863, General Ewing of the Union forces issued his infamous Order Number 11 that directed all persons living beyond one mile of a military reservation in Jackson, Cass and Bates counties (except those north of Brush Creek and west of the Big Blue) leave their homes within fifteen days. All grain and hay was to be removed to the nearest military post by September 9. Grain and hay remaining in the designated area after September 9 was to be destroyed. As recorded by Slavens in his 1877 history:

> Many of the people could not be brought to believe that this sweeping order would be enforced, but it was most fully and rigidly carried out, and the most relentless and inhuman spirit of the war was let loose on both sides, one for the enforcement of a military order, the other for revenge and resistance to its effects. It is useless to attempt to describe the scenes that followed. It is enough to say that the monuments of wars" devastation may be

[25] Some reports indicate that the "Red Legs" were not military units, but rather gangs of civilians who crossed the Kansas-Missouri border to harass, rob, and intimidate civilians in western Missouri.
[26] J. W. Slavens, *History of Jackson County* (Philadelphia: Brink, McDonough & Co., 1877), 41.



I, Soloman Young,
County of Jackson State of Missouri do solemnly swear that I will support, protect and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign; that I will bear true faith, allegiance and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution or law of any State Convention or Legislature to the contrary notwithstanding; and, further, that I will well and faithfully perform all the duties which may be required of me by the laws of the United States. And I take this oath freely and voluntarily, without any mental reservation or evasion whatsoever, with a full and clear understanding that Death, or other punishment by the judgment of a Military Commission, will be the penalty for the violation of this, my solemn oath and parole of honor. And I also swear, that under no consideration will I go beyond the military lines of the United States forces.

Certificate:

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this fifteenth day of July 1862.
Ward C. Loring
Capt. Comdg Post & Provst Marshal

Solomon Young (SEAL)

Witnesses: John R Balis
Kansas City P. O., Jackson County, Mo
" "
" "

Oath of Loyalty to the federal government by Solomon Young
Courtesy of Harry S. Truman Library.

seen to this day in many places in the county, in the desolate walls and chimneys of what were once the stately mansions and comfortable homes of a prosperous people. The breath of war like the simoon swept over the country, leaving a wide waste of desolation and death which the blessing of peace and the hand of industry has not yet entirely effaced. Many acts of great wrong and injustice were doubtless perpetrated on both sides. Houses were

> burnt and men murdered or driven from their homes on the charge of feeding or harboring "Bushwhackers" or "Jayhawkers," when it was more frequently the act of coercion than choice. Lawless bands of armed men, in the name of one party or the other satiated their diabolical hatred and inordinate cupidity by robbing, plundering and depopulating with fire and sword.[27]

The emotional trauma of the Civil War was visited on the Young family in a more immediate and intimate way as well. William Young, Solomon's son, fought for the South; on July 15, 1862, Solomon Young swore allegiance to the Union.[28]

Harriet Young's courage, strength, and wisdom were clearly demonstrated when a group of Union soldiers under the command of James H. Lane arrived at the Young farm in May of 1861 when Solomon was absent.[29] Harriet fed them biscuits as they slaughtered and butchered the family hogs, taking the hindquarters and leaving the rest of the almost 400 carcasses lying in the pen.[30] By calm determination borne of her wisdom and courage, Harriet protected her family and the family farm.

The Young Farm in Grandview

By 1867, when Solomon retired from freighting and Harriet acquired the 398 acres just north of Grandview, the couple had personal property valued at $70,000 and owned almost 5,000 acres of land.[31] The Youngs raised corn and livestock. The land was gently rolling with an elevation ranging

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[27] Ibid., 41.

[28] Affidavit of Solomon Young, July 15, 1862, Harry S. Truman Library.

[29] There appears to be some confusion regarding what the Union forces took and when they took it. According to a petition filed by Harriet Young in the Court of Claims, the following was confiscated by Union troops from the farm:

Taken by General Lane in May, 1861: fifteen mules and thirteen horses.

Taken by General Sturgess in September, 1861: 150 head of cattle.

Taken by Colonel Burris in September, 1862: sixty-five tons of hay; 500 bushels of corn; forty-four head of hogs; one horse; one lot of beds and bedding; one horse, bridle, and saddle.

Taken by Colonel Burris in October, 1862: 1,200 pounds of bacon; one house used for guardhouse; 30,000 rails; and seven wagons.

Taken by Captain Axaline in September, 1864: 13,000 rails; 1,000 bushels of corn; and 6,000 rations.

The Court of Claims concluded that these items had been taken from the Young farm by Union troops and that the Youngs had received no payment for them. The Court also concluded that the Youngs had been loyal to the Union throughout the war. *Harriet L. Young, administratix de bonis non of Solomon Young, deceased, v. The United States.*, Congressional, No 7843.

[30] Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Dear Bess: The Letters from Harry to Bess Truman, 1910-1959* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 82.

[31] Kirkendall, *Harry S. Truman: A Missouri Farmer*, 94.

from 920 to 1060 feet above mean sea level. The soil was dark brown and very fertile. When the Youngs bought the land, there was a "brush-roofed log pen" cabin there.[32]

The Solomon Young Barn
Photo courtesy of Harry S. Truman Library

Twenty feet in front of the existing cabin on a high ridge between the Big and Little Blue rivers, Solomon and Harriet Young built their home.[33] They dug a twenty-inch wide by twenty-inch deep trench for footings, and filled it with small limestone rubble they gathered from nearby talus slopes. On top of this footing they laid a foundation of coursed stone masonry using a lime-based bonding mortar.[34] The house they built (at the site of the present

[32] Ibid., 49.
[33] Although some have identified this structure which appears in some historical photographs as a "utility barn," artifacts discovered during the archaeological exploration by Robert Bray strongly point to the building having been a dwelling. Artifacts were predominately domestic and included ceramic shards with embossed floral patterns; heavy ironstone rims from a serving platter; pieces of a stoneware jug or crock; pieces of light green window pane; and pieces of white bone china. The artifacts also indicate that this structure probably remained standing until the end of the nineteenth century. The archaeological evidence also indicates that it did not burn. It was also not permitted to disintegrate in place. It was probably torn down.
[34] Robert T. Bray, *Archaeological Survey and Testing at the Truman Farm Home and Grounds, Grandview, Missouri* (Kansas City, Mo.: N.p., n.p., 1983).

Truman farmhouse) here was a fine, two-story home with a deck atop a front portico. From this deck, a person could gaze west through the grove of maple trees toward the main farm entrance a quarter mile away.[35]

The house was frame construction and forty-three feet wide. It had a cellar and a central fireplace. Years later, President Harry S Truman would reminisce about the colonial style house with green shutters. Inside was a center hall that opened onto large rooms on each side. There were two bedrooms upstairs. The house stretched back on the east side to a large dining room, and behind that was the kitchen. Beneath the kitchen was a cellar. Porches stretched along the north and south sides. The west, or front, porch of the house was decked with one-by-three, tongue-and-grove white pine. At least one window on the north side of the house had light green glass. Door fittings were made of iron and brass.[36]

Guests visiting Solomon and Harriet Young turned east off the public wagon road onto the Young's front drive. Heading east toward the large, two-story home, they passed through a grove of maple trees that stretched from the main entrance all the way to the front yard of the house.[37] Solomon Young planted this grove, in the fall of 1868, with his daughter, Martha Ellen, future mother of President Harry S Truman.

A local cemetery occupied a plot adjacent to the Young Farm entrance.[38] Next to the cemetery was the Blue Ridge Baptist Church, which had been built in 1848. The church was damaged during the Civil War and rebuilt in 1867. In 1891, the congregation picked it up and moved it into Grandview. A very young Harry S Truman was perched atop a fence rail with his Uncle Harrison and watched it go.

Immediately south of their new house, the Youngs dug a thirty-foot well, twenty-four inches in diameter. They lined it with rough-hewn limestone slabs and blocks. East south east of the house, they built a sixty-by-fifty-foot barn, a massive barn for the day.[39] Much of the timber for the barn was obtained from Hickman's Mill. Edwin A. Hickman had built the gristmill in 1850. It was vandalized in 1858, during the pre-Civil War unrest, after which Hickman prospected for a time in Colorado. He returned to enlist in the Confederate army and lost his right arm in the battle of Shiloh. After the war he returned to Jackson county and worked from 1868 to 1877 as Jackson County

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[35] Ferrell, ed., *Dear Bess*, 21.
[36] Bray, *Archaeological Survey*, 6.
[37] Ferrell, *Harry S. Truman: His Life on the Family Farm*, 74.
[38] Ibid., 81.
[39] Bray, *Archaeological Survey and Testing*, 9.

surveyor. In 1872 he published a book entitled *Arithmetical Geometry*.[40]

One can catch a glimpse of the Young's farm operation by examining Solomon Young's probate records. When he died in 1892 at the age of seventy-seven, his estate, for probate purposes, was valued at $5,616.80.[41] A close study of the probate records provides a clear picture of what Young raised and how and where he raised it prior to his death.

The records show what the Young family raised. The probate inventory lists:

sixty tons of hay;
749 bushels of corn in the barn;
545 bushels of wheat in the barn;
eighteen bushels of Timothy seek;
720 bushels of oats;
2,400 bushels of corn in the crib;
seventy-eight steers; four cows;
ten two-year-olds;
thirteen one-year-olds; and
one bull.

The records also show how the Youngs raised it. Solomon's estate included:

one Deering mower;
one harrow;
one breaking plow;
one Falor wagon;
one sixteen-inch iron beam plow;
one revolving hay rake;
four breaking plows;
one double shovel plow;
a sixteen-inch wood beam plot;
one Toungeliss cultivator;
one three-section harrow;
one corn sheller;
one cultivator;
one corn planter and checker;
a six-foot cut mower;
one spring tooth hay rake;
one mower and reaper combined; and
one spring wagon;

And, the probate records show where they raised it:

1,360 acres of land in Jackson County, and

[40] *Ruskin/Hickman Mills Times*, 11 September 1997.
[41] Inventory of the Estate of Solomon Young, Deceased, Jackson County Court records, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Mo.

160 acres in Saline County, Missouri (about seventy-five miles east of Jackson County).

In October of 1894, the house that Solomon and Harriet built burned to the ground. On the night the house burned, Harrison, Mrs. John Bartleson (a daughter of Solomon and Harriet), two of Mrs. Bartleson's daughters, and Harriet were at home. Nothing was saved from the house except some bedding. Reports indicate that there was no insurance on the house.[42] One month after the house burned, Harrison was rebuilding with the assistance of L. J. Willis and E. P. Dunsmoor. By the first week of December, they had completed the initial construction, and the David Sheets family moved in as renters. On December 28, 1894, T. M. Donaldson of Belton painted the new farmhouse.[43] It is possible that the new house referred to in the local newspaper is not the house that now stands. The time spent by Harrison and his two associates was extraordinarily brief for building a house as large as the one that stands today. In addition, the same newspaper in 1895 reported that Harrison was building another dwelling on his farm.[44] It is perhaps more probable that the existing house was constructed in two stages: the portion that includes the kitchen was built first, and the front two-story portion with the north-south gable housing the sitting room, the parlor and two bedrooms was built later.[45]

Before Solomon's death, the Youngs constructed outbuildings, including a barn of hickory boards; they tilled the rich soil with mule-power; and they raised seven children, one of whom was destined to become the mother of a President of the United States. She was Martha Ellen Young, the seventh child of Solomon and Harriet. She was born on November 25, 1852, in Jackson County, Missouri, and matured under the tutelage of two strong, vibrant, independent parents. On December 28, 1881, when she married John Anderson Truman, Martha Ellen was twenty-nine years old

[42] *Belton Herald*, 26 October 1894.
[43] Ibid., 16 November, 1894; 23 November 1894; 7 December 1894; 28 December 1894.
[44] Ibid., 25 October 1895.
[45] Mary Jane Truman. Notes from a telephone conversation with Milton F. Perry, July 29, 1974, Harry S. Truman Library.