

SUNDAY, DECEMBER
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Correcting a description of history

A Dec. 10 story in *The Salt Lake Tribune* describing connections between the LDS Church's "cotton mission" in southern Utah and the Southern Confederacy misidentified a leading settler who admitted mistreating African-Americans when he supervised slaves in Mississippi.

An autobiography by George Armstrong Hicks, a pioneer near St. George during the Civil War, describes how one of his ward's ecclesiastical leaders boasted during work parties of whipping slave men and raping women. That passage references Albert Washington Collins, not Washington City bishop Robert Dockery Covington, as *The Tribune* reported.

The wording of Hicks' account is not clear, but the autobiography's introduction identifies the abuser as Collins. It was published last year under the title *Playing with Shadows: Voices of Dissent in the Mormon West*, edited by Will Bagley, Polly Aird and Jeffrey Nichols.

Covington and Collins, who married into each other's families, owned plantations near Summerville, Miss., before they converted to the LDS Church and migrated west. Covington descendants acknowledge Covington owned slaves, but they say their family-written histories report he treated them well and freed them before he left.

Collins, who died in 1873, served as one of Washington County's first sheriffs, serving from 1859 to 1863.

CORRECTION

Dec. 10 » A story in *The Salt Lake Tribune* describing connections between the LDS Church's "cotton mission" in southern Utah and the Southern Confederacy erroneously stated that Washington City LDS bishop Robert Dockery Covington admitted to whipping slave men and raping women. The historical source material for the story instead identified Albert Washington Collins as the settler who made the statements. Covington's descendants acknowledge he owned slaves, but say their family-written histories report he treated them well and freed them before he immigrated west from Mississippi.

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