

The following is an excerpt from a speech
“The Early Years of Brigham Young”
by Brigham Young descendent S. Dilworth Young
October 11, 1973

<https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/s-dilworth-young/early-years-brigham-young/>

“... Then John Young took his four boys down to Tyrone and again started to clear land.

“That particular winter was bad, and they found themselves in early March—still hard winter in that country—without food. John sent his two older boys, Phineas and Joseph, to find work anywhere which they might exchange for food, corn, or whatever, and kept Brigham and Lorenzo Dow—Brigham fourteen, Lorenzo Dow about ten—there in the cabin with him. John Young had tapped the maple trees on his farm and boiled down the sap and made a quantity of maple sugar. As they finally came to the end of their food supply, he told Brigham he was going to take the sugar over to Painted Post, on the border of Pennsylvania, and sell the sugar in exchange for food. He said, ‘Now you stay here, Briggy, and tomorrow morning get out and work all day clearing the brush and chopping what you can. And Lorenzo, you pile the brush. It’ll take me all night and tomorrow to get there and back, but I’ll be back the next day.’

So early that next morning, strapping on his snowshoes and leaving half a pound or so of sugar for the boys to eat as best they could, he left those two small boys and, donning his pack, snowshoed off through the timber to go to Painted Post.

“They worked all that day, as they had promised they would, and about four o’clock they started for the house. As they were walking along they heard a robin sing, one of the early harbingers of spring. They stopped and finally located the robin on a bush some fifty or sixty yards away. Brigham said to Lorenzo, ‘Now you watch. I’ll run around and get the gun and we’ll have some supper.’ So he circled around and got to the cabin and got the gun out and ran back. (The gun, of course, was an old revolutionary muzzle-loading musket, which you fire by putting some powder in a little pan called the frizzen, cocking the gun, and then firing it. The hammer, which has a flint attached to it, strikes a piece of steel, causing a spark to drop into the powder. The powder ignites and runs down a hole in the gun where the main charge is, and the gun fires.) The gun barrel had a half-inch bore. Now you wonder what a half inch is—about the size of my finger. The bullet was about that size too. The gun must have weighed fifteen pounds, but Brigham

managed to aim it. Whether he propped it up I don't know, but he aimed it and pulled the trigger and shot the bird's head off. They ran over and got the bird, skinned it and cleaned it, went to the cabin, and put the bird in a kettle on the fireplace with a little water and began to stew it. They upended the flour barrel and beat on the bottom, catching what they could in the pan, and managed to get half a cup of flour. They thickened the stew with that and had bird stew and sugar for supper. The next night, of course, John got home, bringing some corn meal and pork, and they were able to survive.

“About a year later, Brigham asked his father if he might go out and earn his living and learn how to be a carpenter, and his father gave him permission. ...”