realize something from him this quarter it would be a benefit to her Thomas S. Williams told me if he could he would purchase the negro and pay for him. A word from you on this subject would be received a favor[25]

Brigham Young wrote back: "Green Flake worked for me about a year, sometime ago & when he went into Cottonwood his health was quite feeble, & from all I learn he <is> still unable even to support himself & family entirely." He added, "[S]hould he regain his health, so as to <be> able to be of any benefit to sister Flake, I will inform you."[26] There is no way to confirm or disprove Young's claim about Flake's health. Whether or not Flake was ailing, Young sidestepped the issue of legal ownership and ensured Flake's freedom. Not long after Brigham Young refused to sell Flake to Williams, Agnes Flake died in San Bernardino. Maria Tanner Lyman took the orphaned children and Elizabeth into her home, and Elizabeth soon discovered she was free and began her own life.

In summary, Agnes Flake seems to have hired out Green Flake to Brigham Young for a year to help solve a problem involving the separation of enslaved families and the control of Flake's labor. Brigham Young then



Figure 6.1. Green Flake. *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 31, 1897.

freed Green Flake. William J. Flake reported more than forty years later that his mother donated Flake as tithing, but no known record confirms that Agnes understood tithing to be involved in the transaction, and the laws and customs of Southern slavery, the provisions of An Act in Relation to Service, the memories shared by Green Flake's family, and Amasa Lyman's letter contradict William Flake's childhood memory. Although Green Flake left no record of his understanding of the entire incident, his relationship with Brigham Young continued to be an important part of his family's heritage. Many years after both men died, a granddaughter recalled, "Green shed tears at the death of Brigham Young and helped dig his grave and was at the funeral of the beloved President."[27]