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THE COVER: This period scene of old Ste. Genevieve, is reproduced from a diorama located in the Old Courthouse, Broadway and Market, St. Louis, Missouri. Created during a Public Works project in the 1940s, the diorama is part of the Louisiana Purchase Exhibit of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. The photograph of the diorama was furnished to the Society by John Frost McDonald of St. Louis.



*T.B.H. Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints*

## THE ARMY OF ISRAEL MARCHES INTO MISSOURI

BY WARREN A. JENNINGS\*

In early November, 1833, with the first onslaught of winter, the approximately 1,200 Mormon residents of Jackson County, Missouri, who had for the previous two years endeavored to create a religious community called Zion, were forcibly expelled from their homes by their neighbors. Most fled across the Missouri River into Clay County, where they took up what they hoped would be only a temporary abode. Initially the Mormon leaders, acting upon the advice of Governor Daniel Dunklin, attempted through legal process to secure reinstatement upon their lands. These efforts failed. Early in January, 1834, the church elders in Clay County decided that Joseph Smith, their Prophet, who lived in Kirtland, Ohio, should be personally apprised of the plight of

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his people in Missouri. Lyman Wight and Parley Pratt undertook to fulfill this mission on January 12 and reached their destination on Saturday, February 22.<sup>1</sup> The next day they preached to an overflow crowd at the local Methodist Church on the violence that had taken place in Missouri.

On Monday Smith called a meeting at his home of the High Council, a newly formed governing body of the Mormon Church, to hear more from Wight and Pratt. The latter asserted that the dispossessed church members in Clay County "had found so much favor in the eyes of the people that they could obtain food and raiment of them for their labor insomuch that they were comfortable." After considerable discussion about "when, how and by what means Zion was to be redeemed," Smith arose and said he was going to Missouri. He requested that the Council call for volunteers to go with him. Between thirty and forty men immediately expressed their willingness to accompany Smith. After some discussion about the route, it was determined unanimously that the party would go by land. "Joseph Smith, Jun., was nominated to be commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

This was the inception of "Zion's Camp," one of the most unusual and controversial chapters in Mormon annals. To this day the questions it raised are still being debated. Was it a military expedition? Was it a legal or extra-legal movement? What did it seek to accomplish? Or, for that matter, did it accomplish anything?

That same Monday a revelation came from the Prophet advising the Mormons as to the manner in which the Lord wished them to proceed.

I have decreed that your brethren, which have been scattered, shall return to the land of their inheritances and build up the waste places of Zion; for after much tribulation . . . cometh the blessing. . . . The redemption of Zion must needs come by power. . . . Say unto the strength of my house, my young men and the middle-aged, Gather yourselves together unto the land of Zion. . . . Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake; for whoso layeth down his life for my sake, shall find it again. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> "Lyman Wight's Journal," as quoted in Joseph Smith and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Lamoni, Iowa, 1897-1903), I, 401.

<sup>2</sup> The minutes of this council meeting are printed in B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints: Period I. History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, by Himself* (Salt Lake City, 1902-1912), II, 39.

[Obtain] companies to go up unto the land of Zion, by tens, or by twenties, or by fifties, or by an hundred, until [you] have obtained to the number of five hundred of the strength of my house.<sup>3</sup>

Eight men were called by name and commanded to journey among the branches of the church to recruit volunteers.

These eight men went in all directions from Kirtland to collect men, money, and supplies in order "to render all the assistance that [they] could to [their] afflicted brethren."<sup>4</sup> On February 26, Smith headed East with Pratt; two days later Sidney Rigdon and Wight followed. They traveled among the various congregations in New York and Pennsylvania, telling the members about the expedition and what they hoped its results would be. Smith, for example, preached at a special conference in Avon, New York, on March 17.

[He] stated that the object of the Conference was to obtain young men and middle aged to go and assist in the redemption of Zion, according to the commandment; and for the church to gather up their riches, and send them to purchase lands according to the commandment of the Lord; also to devise means, or obtain money for the relief of the brethren in Kirtland, say two thousand dollars, which sum would deliver the church in Kirtland from debt.<sup>5</sup>

An incentive held out to the recruits was disclosed in one of Smith's letters.

The fact is, unless we can obtain help, I myself cannot go to Zion, and if I do not go, it will be impossible to get my brethren in Kirtland, any of them, to go; and if we do not go, it is in vain for our eastern brethren to think of going up to better themselves by obtaining so goodly a land, (which now can be obtained for one dollar and a quarter per acre,) and stand against the wicked mob.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This revelation was not published in the 1835 or first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. See *The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1952), sec. 103 [hereafter cited as *LDS*], or *Book of Doctrine and Covenants* (Independence, Mo., 1950), sec. 100 [hereinafter cited as *RLDS*].

<sup>4</sup> Kimball's journal as recorded in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City, 1888), 53.

<sup>5</sup> "History of Joseph Smith," in Nauvoo, Illinois, *Times and Seasons*, November 15, 1845. This history, hereafter cited as "H. J. S.," was dictated by Joseph Smith and ran serially in the *Times and Seasons*.

<sup>6</sup> To Orson Hyde, April 7, 1834, *ibid.*, December 1, 1845.

Throughout March and into April the recruiting continued. On April 21, Wight and Hyrum Smith set out on a recruiting mission into Michigan and northern Illinois.

On April 24, the elders in Clay County informed the governor of Missouri that they had decided to organize into militia companies "according to law, and apply for public arms."<sup>7</sup> They stated that they had delayed doing so before because of fear that such action on their part would cause undue excitement. However, since their opponents were busy spreading "wicked reports," they "deemed it expedient to inform your Excellency that we have received communications from our friends in the East, informing us that a number of our brethren, perhaps two or three hundred, would remove to Jackson county in the course of the ensuing summer." The Governor was not to be alarmed: "Our object is purely to defend ourselves and possessions against another unparalleled attack from the mob." The elders did not know when their brethren would reach Missouri.

Whenever they do arrive, it would be the wish of our people in this county, to return to our homes, in company with our friends under guard, and when once in legal possession of our homes in Jackson county, we shall endeavor to take care of them, without further wearying the patience of our worthy Chief Magistrate. . . . Many of our brethren who are expected on, had made arrangements to emigrate to this State, before the outrages of the mob last fall.

Meanwhile the Jackson Countians were warned well in advance of the Mormon movement. P. M. Henderson, the postmaster at Chagrin, Ohio, wrote on April 29, to his counterpart in Independence "that the *Mormons* in this region are organizing an *army* . . . 'to restore Zion,' that is, to take *by force of arms* their former possessions in Jackson County."<sup>8</sup> Henderson predicted that they would go forth in small units so as not to create suspicion. "They are armed with every species of implements of destruction, from a scalping knife to a double-barrelled rifle." Furthermore, "it has been suggested to me (by a dissenter from their faith) but a few minutes since, that they have emissaries among the neighboring Indians, trying to provoke these ignorant people to join them (the *Mormons*) in this 'holy war.'"

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<sup>7</sup> Nauvoo *Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1846.

<sup>8</sup> Published in *Columbia Missouri Intelligencer*, June 7, 1834.

On Thursday, May 1, about twenty men in an advance guard of Zion's camp left Kirtland with four wagons. They went to New Portage, Ohio, where they waited with a branch of the church for the remainder of the party. The Prophet and his unit, consisting of about 100 members, finally departed on Monday, May 5. The Painesville, Ohio, *Telegraph* of May 9, 1834, reported:

This expedition has been a long time in active preparation. . . . Like Peter the Hermit, in the days of the crusades, they have made every effort to stir up the holy zeal of the "warriors, my young men, and that are of middle age also," to the combat. . . . For several months past they have been collecting munitions of war for the crusade. Dirks, knives, swords, pistols, guns, powder-horns, &c. &c. have been in good demand in this vicinity. Some have equipped themselves with four or five pistols. The prophet, it is said, has a sword over *four feet* long. . . . The day before leaving head-quarters, the prophet harangued his troops in person, informing them that he was ready for martyrdom in attestation of his pretensions.<sup>9</sup>

Only Oliver Cowdery, editor of the church newspaper, Sidney Rigdon, "and a few aged workmen who were engaged on the temple" were left behind in Kirtland.<sup>10</sup>

Why had the Mormons embarked upon this expedition? They later claimed that Governor Dunklin had appeared willing to guard them as they returned to their lands, whenever they were ready to go. As a result they were advised by some of the influential men in Clay County "to have enough of their brethren emigrate to that county, to enable them to maintain their rights, should the mob attempt to trample upon them again."<sup>11</sup> They were to "then get the Governor to set them back upon their lands." Pratt later affirmed that the camp was "for the purpose of carrying some supplies to the afflicted and persecuted Saints in Missouri, and to reinforce and strengthen them; and, if possible, to influence the Governor of the State to call out sufficient addi-

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<sup>9</sup> Reprinted in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historical Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York, 1958), 85-86.

<sup>10</sup> Whitney, *Life of Kimball*, 54.

<sup>11</sup> Nauvoo *Times and Seasons*, February, 1840. The Prophet's brother wrote, "In the Spring of 1834, hearing from the Saints in Missouri, who had been driven from Jackson county, that if they would procure force enough to keep themselves in possession, the Governor would reinstate them in their lands in Jackson county, a company was formed to go to their assistance. I was among the number," William Smith, *William Smith on Mormonism* (Lamoni, Iowa, 1883), 23-24.

tional force to cooperate in restoring them to their rights.”<sup>12</sup> Heber C. Kimball, who kept a journal of the trip, alleged the motive was “to render all the assistance that we could to our afflicted brethren.”<sup>13</sup>

Smith’s contingent arrived at New Portage on May 6. The Prophet paused long enough the next day to perfect the organization of the camp. His army now consisted of about 150 members, who were divided into companies of twelve men with a captain over each. Every man was assigned specific duties, in addition to the general tasks that all had to perform. Each company had two cooks, two to tend fires, two to set up and strike tents, two to care for the horses, two to obtain water, and a runner. Men were also designated to visit farms and villages to obtain provisions. All the members cast their money into a general fund. “Some of the brethren had considerable, and others had little or none, yet all became equal.”<sup>14</sup>

On May 8, the march for Missouri was resumed. Day by day the party moved forward. Kimball noted: “Our living generally was very good, being able to buy bread from the bakers or inhabitants on the way through the settled part of the country.”<sup>15</sup> Usually they subsisted on Johnny cake and corn dodger. At night before retiring the whole company were united in prayers at the sound of a trumpet. When the bugle blared in the morning, prayers were again offered. Sentinels were detailed to stand guard each night to watch the animals and to see that none of the threats of molestation were carried out by the irate inhabitants of the country through which the army was passing.

The camp marched through Mansfield, Ohio, on May 10, and the next day it was joined by a party of members from northern Vermont. They traversed the Sandusky plains and passed through some Indian settlements. Crossing the Miami River at Dayton on the 17th, they entered Indiana and covered forty miles that day. On May 21, they hiked through Indianapolis and on the 25th, a Sunday, they arrived at the Illinois line. Sundays were usually devoted to rest and preaching, but this one was spent in “washing and baking to prepare for our journey.”<sup>16</sup> Smith alleged

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<sup>12</sup> Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (Salt Lake City, 1950), 114.

<sup>13</sup> Whitney, *Life of Kimball*, 53.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.





**HYRUM SMITH**

fishing. When all were safely over, they camped about a mile from the town of Louisiana, in a beautiful oak grove, immediately on the bank of the river. On June 6, the march was resumed, and the following day they camped near the Salt River on a farm owned by a Mormon, James Allred. The men pitched their tents "in a piece of woods by a beautiful spring of water, and prepared for a Sabbath."<sup>18</sup> The *Salt River Journal* informed its readers:

[The camp] was composed chiefly of young and middle-aged men, who had the general appearance of possessing considerable personal strength and activity. They were, with a few exceptions, well provided with firearms and accouterments of war. . . . They avowed their intention of acting entirely upon the defensive; but expressed a firm resolution of claiming the rights of their society at all hazards.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1846.

<sup>18</sup> Whitney, *Life of Kimball*, 63.

<sup>19</sup> As quoted in Heman C. Smith, ed., "Current Reports and Opinions of Early Days," *Journal of History*, VIII (October, 1915), 488.

that "angels went before us, and the faith of our little band was unwavering; . . . we know that angels were our companions, for we saw them."<sup>17</sup>

On May 27, they came to the Okaw, a fork of the Kaskaskia River. Two canoes were lashed together to make a ferry. The baggage was unloaded from the wagons and ferried across, while the wagons and horses were floated over. Trees were felled across the stream to serve as foot bridges for the men. On June 4, Zion's Camp reached the Mississippi River. The party was two days in crossing since there was only one ferry and the river was a mile and a half wide. While waiting their turn, the men spent their time in hunting and

**PARLEY P. PRATT**



After the preaching service on Sunday, Hyrum Smith and Wight came into camp with the party of recruits they had raised.

One of those in this latest band to join the camp was thirteen-year-old Lyman Littlefield, who had lived at Pontiac, Michigan.<sup>20</sup> Years later he recalled that in the spring Hyrum Smith and Wight had visited the Pontiac Branch on a special mission. Some eighteen of the brethren volunteered to go west, among whom were Lyman's father and brother. That many had joined the camp for the purpose of emigrating to Missouri is indicated by the number of wives and children it contained. From Pontiac three women had set out with their husbands. Wight's party had traveled across a large portion of Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois before reaching Quincy, where they were ferried across the Mississippi. During the entire journey the men were forced to walk since the wagons were filled with provisions, clothing and bedding. This made the loads so heavy that even the women had to hike a large portion of the way—"where the roads were in condition to admit of their doing so."<sup>21</sup> Littlefield remembered: "Our coming had been looked for and now that the junction had been formed, the main and active motive was to prepare for an advance as soon as possible."<sup>22</sup>

The camp, however, remained at the Allred settlement for several more days in order to rest and recuperate. Clothes were washed; the wagons were checked and repaired. Zion's Camp now consisted of 205 men, mostly priesthood members, and twenty-five wagons, each with two or more horses.<sup>23</sup> There were also ten women and several children. The entire force was now reorganized according to the pattern adopted at New Portage. Wight, a veteran of the War of 1812, was chosen general of the camp. Smith, as commander-in-chief, was provided with a life guard of twenty select men. On June 11, Wight marched his troops on to the prairie, inspected their firelocks, and instructed them in firing by platoons. He then drilled them for half the day.

In the meantime their brethren in Clay County had exerted themselves to the fullest extent in preparing for the arrival of the camp. In May, according to Smith, they "established an armory,

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<sup>20</sup> Littlefield's accounts are found in Lyman O. Littlefield, *Reminiscences of Latter-Day Saints* (Logan, Utah, 1888), and N. B. Lundwall, *The Fate of the Persecutors of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, 1952).

<sup>21</sup> Lundwall, *Fate of Persecutors*, 281.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>23</sup> The names of all those who were a part of the camp may be found in "Members of Zion's Camp," *Historical Record*, VIII (August, 1889), 940.

where they commenced manufacturing swords, dirks, pistols, stocking rifles, and repairing arms in general for their own defense against mob violence; many arms were purchased.”<sup>24</sup> On June 1, John Whitmer, then a resident of Clay County, recorded:

The Saints here are preparing with all possible speed to arm themselves and otherwise prepare to go to Jackson co. when the camp arrives; for we have had some hints from Joseph the Seer that this will be our privilege; so we were in hopes that the long wished for day will soon arrive, and Zion be redeemed to the Joy and satisfaction of the poor suffering saints.<sup>25</sup>

John Corrill, a Mormon elder, wrote that the Mormons in Clay County “generally thought that the Governor, on a petition to that effect, would reinstate those that had been driven out from their lands, (for they had not sold them) and then their brethren that came up in the camp would enable them to keep possession of their lands.”<sup>26</sup>

Relying upon this belief, the elders notified Dunklin on June 5:

We think the time is just at hand when our Society will be glad to avail themselves of the protection of a military guard, that they may return to Jackson county. We do not know the precise day, but Mr. [Amos] Rees gives his opinion that there would be no impropriety in petitioning your excellency for an order of the commanding officer to be sent by return mail that we might have it in our hands to present when our people are ready to start. If this should meet your approbation and the order sent by return of mail, we think it would be of *great convenience* to our society.<sup>27</sup>

On June 11 the *Upper Missouri Enquirer*, published in Liberty, observed:

For the last six or eight weeks, the Mormons have been actively engaged in making preparations to return to Jackson county “the land of promise,” by providing themselves with the implements of war, such as guns, pistols, swords, &c. and we are informed . . . they intend to call upon the Governor to reinstate them upon their lands in Jackson, and then, if molested, they are deter-

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<sup>24</sup> “H. J. S.,” *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1846.

<sup>25</sup> “John Whitmer’s Manuscript History,” 66, in the office of the historian of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence.

<sup>26</sup> John Corrill, *Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* (St. Louis, 1839), 21.

<sup>27</sup> As quoted in “H. J. S.,” *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1846.



*Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints*  
**Burning Mormon Houses**

mined to protect themselves, sword in hand. We are told they are able to muster 700 strong.<sup>28</sup>

There was also a great amount of frenzied activity on the part of the citizens of Jackson County. They were tense with expectation. They knew the Mormons were in constant contact with the Governor, and they were kept informed of the daily progress of Zion's Camp. However, they had one consolation—several of the surrounding counties had pledged their support in case of conflict.

During the last week in April an alarm spread through the county that the Mormons were preparing to cross the Missouri. Between 400 and 500 men turned out to repulse the invasion.<sup>29</sup> They mustered near James McGee's place on the Big Blue River, but no Mormons came. It was rumored that Mormon spies had come to the river's edge; but when they saw the large number of citizens, the Mormons decided not to make a landing. "The scene closed by burning [the Mormons'] houses, or many of them."<sup>30</sup> William Wine Phelps, another Mormon elder residing in Clay

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<sup>28</sup> As quoted in Washington, D. C., *National Intelligencer*, July 2, 1834.

<sup>29</sup> Colonel Prentiss Ingraham, ed., *Seventy Years on the Frontier: Alexander Majors' Memoirs of a Lifetime on the Border* (Chicago, 1893), 52. Hereafter cited as *Majors' Memoirs*.

<sup>30</sup> William W. Phelps to the brethren, May 1, 1834, Kirtland, Ohio, *Evening and Morning Star*, May, 1834. Hereafter cited as *Kirtland Star*.

County, wrote that 170 structures owned by the Mormons in Jackson County were consumed and that all persons who would not promise to take up arms against the Mormons were forced to leave the county. From this time forward, the Jackson Countians began to slip over the Missouri, commando style, to harass those Mormons settled near the river.<sup>31</sup> Several houses were broken into and searched for weapons while the Mormon men were absent. Some firearms were found and confiscated. Thomas Pitcher recalled, "the whole county was organized under Col. Sam Owens."<sup>32</sup>

Among those present in Independence during this crisis was Dr. John K. Townsend, a well-known Philadelphia physician and naturalist, who was preparing for a tour into Indian territory to the west. He arrived in Jackson County on March 14, and was there for several weeks. He wrote:

Reports have been circulated that the Mormons are preparing to attack the town, and put the inhabitants to the sword, and they have therefore stationed sentries along the river for several miles, to prevent the landing of the enemy. The troops parade and study military tactics every day, and seem determined to repel, with spirit, the threatened invasion.<sup>33</sup>

The doctor was not too happy about the situation. He found the training and marching a source of irritation since "the miserable little skeleton of a saddler who is engaged to work for our party, has neglected his business, and must go soldiering in stead."<sup>34</sup> He added: "We were put to great inconvenience waiting for our saddles."

Not content with keeping their own citizens inflamed, the leaders in Jackson County made efforts to arouse the ire of the inhabitants in the surrounding counties. Men were sent into Clay County to obtain signatures on anti-Mormon petitions which demanded that the hated sect move on. They had little success. Whitmer reported that Samuel Campbell was directed "to harangue the people of Clay county on the subject of Mobocracy." He "succeeded in embittering the minds of some . . . but obtained only about 20 signers in Clay co."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Interview of Thomas Pitcher in *Kansas City Journal*, June 17, 1881.

<sup>33</sup> John K. Townsend, *Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River* (Philadelphia, 1839) in Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (Cleveland, 1904-1907), XXI, 140.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> "Whitmer's History," 66.

As late as June 14, Corrill could write: "The leaders of the mob are yet striving to keep up the same spirit of opposition, by instilling falsehoods into the minds of the people."

They tell them that the "Mormons" are coming upon them, *mob like*, to kill their women and children. They raised an alarm a few days ago in which the whole county of Jackson was in an uproar; men riding in different directions and proclaiming, "the Mormons are coming,—they are now crossing the river—they are coming to kill, destroy, &c." Some women and children left their houses, and fled to the woods, and elsewhere, while the men, 2 or 300, gathered together to oppose the "Mormons," as they supposed in their return. They repaired to the different ferries, on the river, to guard them, and I have been credibly informed, that they have since continued to guard the river at the different crossing places.<sup>36</sup>

Runners were then dispatched into neighboring counties asking for assistance. Fortunately there was no basis for these reports. Corrill claimed that the Mormons had neither intention nor need of returning at night time. "We shall . . . return under the protection of the Governor, as he has promised us." Corrill further noted: "As nearly as I can learn the number that is determined to stand and oppose our return, even unto bloodshed, is about 150 or 200 in that county."

Zion's Camp left the Salt River on June 12, and traveled fourteen miles, camping that night on the prairie. The next few days they moved rapidly forward. While at the Allred settlement, Smith had sent Orson Hyde and Pratt to Jefferson City "to request of His Excellency, Governor Daniel Dunklin, a sufficient military force, with orders to reinstate the exiles, and protect them in the possession of their homes in Jackson County."<sup>37</sup> Pratt asserted in his *Autobiography* that they had an interview with the Governor "who readily acknowledged the justice of the demand, but frankly told us he dare not attempt the execution of the laws in that respect, for fear of deluging [*sic*] the whole country in civil war." Dunklin "advised us to relinquish our rights, for the sake of peace, and to sell our lands from which we had been driven." The elders, according to Pratt, replied "that we would hold no terms with land pirates and murderers." Furthermore, "if we could not be permitted to live on lands which we had purchased, . . . our lands

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<sup>36</sup> Kirtland *Star*, June, 1834.

<sup>37</sup> Pratt, *Autobiography*, 115.

would, at least, make a good burying ground, on which to lay our bones.”

Three days later, Hyde and Pratt rejoined the camp. The Prophet and several others retired to a solitary grove to learn the verdict of the Governor. It was, of course, adverse, and Pratt had to inform Smith “that Governor Dunklin refused to fulfill his promise to reinstate the brethren on their lands . . . on the ground of impracticability.”<sup>38</sup> This discouraged the leaders of the camp immensely, and Smith “called on the God of fathers to witness the justice of our cause and the sincerity of our vows, which we engaged to fulfill, whether in this life or in the life to come.”<sup>39</sup>

Why had the Governor retreated from an earlier promise to return the Mormons to their Jackson County homes? It was due in part, no doubt, to the adamant attitude of the citizens of Jackson County and the support they were receiving from the surrounding areas. But, a more cogent consideration was that a compromise appeared to be in the making.

On June 6, Dunklin sent a letter to Colonel John Thornton, “one of the wealthiest men in Clay County.”<sup>40</sup> The Governor expressed his appreciation to the latter for an earlier communication “on the subject of Mormon difficulties.” Dunklin continued, “I should be gratified indeed if the parties could compromise on the terms you suggest, or, indeed, upon any other terms satisfactory to themselves.” He felt, however, that he could not as chief executive officer of the State “take upon myself the task of effecting a compromise between the parties. Uncommitted, as I am, to either party, I shall feel no embarrassment in doing my duty; though it may be done with extreme regret.” The Governor added:

A more clear, and indisputable right does not exist than that of the Mormon people . . . to return and live on their lands, and if they cannot be persuaded as a matter of policy, to give up that right, or to qualify it, my course, as the chief executive officer of the state, is a plain

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<sup>38</sup> Roberts, *History of Joseph Smith*, II, 94. Cf., “Parley P. Pratt and Orson Hyde . . . brought the intelligence that the Governor would execute the law, whatever it might be,” “Lyman Wight’s Journal,” *History of the Church*, I, 472-473.

<sup>39</sup> Pratt, *Autobiography*, 116.

<sup>40</sup> Peter H. Burnett, *Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer* (New York, 1880), 50. This letter was first published in the *Liberty Upper Missouri Enquirer*, June 25, 1834. It was widely reprinted: Baltimore, Maryland, *Niles’ Weekly Register*, July 26, 1834; Kirtland *Star*, July, 1834; and *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1846.

one. . . . We cannot interdict any people who have a political franchise in the United States from emigrating to this state, nor from choosing what part of the state they will settle in. . . . It is their constitutional right to arm themselves. Indeed, our militia law makes it the duty of every man, not exempted by law, . . . to arm himself with a musket, rifle, or some firelock, with a certain quantity of ammunition. . . . I am fully persuaded that the eccentricity of the religious opinions and practices of the Mormons, is at the bottom of the outrage committed against them. They have their right constitutionally guaranteed to them and it is indefeasible, to believe and worship Jo Smith as a man, an angel, or even as the only true and living God, and to call their habitation Zion, the Holy Land, or even Heaven itself. Indeed, there is nothing so absurd or ridiculous, that they have not a right to adopt as their religion, so that in its exercise, they do not interfere with the rights of others.

Dunklin requested Thornton to make every exertion to effect a compromise and proposed several alternatives. If none of these options should be acceptable, "then the simple question of legal right would have to settle it."

The Governor noted further that he had heard both sides were arming with cannon. This, he wrote, was illegal since cannons were not necessary for self defense. Also, he had been warned that assistance was expected by the Jackson Countians from the adjoining regions. He regretted this extremely since militia companies did not have the right to go into other counties without orders from the commander-in-chief. This law applied to the Mormons as well. "Men must not 'levy war' in taking possession of their rights, any more than others should in opposing them in taking possession."

Dunklin also wrote to the leaders in Jackson County of his hope for a compromise. He suggested that an offer be made to buy out the Mormons and pay for the injuries that had been inflicted upon their society.<sup>41</sup> The Governor promised that should compromise fail, he would restore only those who owned land in the county. Acting on the Governor's request, the citizens met and elected ten delegates, giving them full powers, to meet with the Mormons to work out an agreement.

On June 10, Circuit Judge John F. Ryland of Lexington wrote

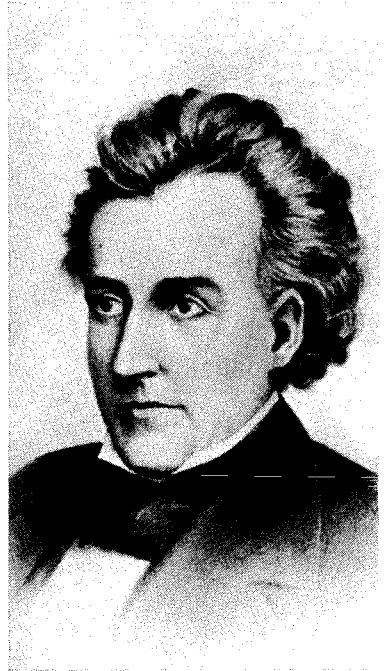
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<sup>41</sup> Liberty *Upper Missouri Enquirer*, June 11, 1834, as quoted in Washington *National Intelligencer*, July 2, 1834.



to Elder Algernon Gilbert that he had called a meeting for June 16 at Liberty, to explain his and the Governor's opinion of the situation.<sup>42</sup> "I much fear and dread the consequences that are yet to ensue, unless I should succeed in my wishes to restore peace." The judge expected "a deputation of some of the most respectable citizens of Jackson county will meet with me." Within four days Gilbert replied that a conference of the Mormon society in Clay County had met that day to discuss his letter.<sup>43</sup> It had been resolved to be present with as many members as possible. However, Gilbert forewarned the judge that his people were fearful that it might be proposed that they sell their lands. "We have thought it expedient to give reasonable notice that no such proposition could possibly be acceded to by our society; . . . 'home is home' and . . . we want possession of our homes." In an accompanying letter to the Mormons' attorneys, Alexander Doniphan and David Rice Atchison, Gilbert wrote that to sell their land "would be like selling our children into slavery."<sup>44</sup>

On Monday, June 16, hundreds of people poured into Liberty. It was later reported that nearly 1,000 persons gathered at the courthouse, filling the seats, standing in the aisles, and overflowing into the courthouse yard.<sup>45</sup> A considerable number of Mormons were in attendance, including those elders who had been designated to represent the society. The committee of ten from Jackson County under the leadership of Samuel C. Owens was also present. Judge Ryland had come from Lexington to observe but not to preside at the proceedings. He addressed the assembly, however, "in an impressive and forcible manner, relative to the importance



Strauss Portrait

DANIEL DUNKLIN

<sup>42</sup> Printed in "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1846.

<sup>43</sup> Printed in *ibid.*, January 15, 1846.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Walter B. Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1921), II, 106.

and urgent necessity of bringing their difficulties to an honorable adjustment." He vividly pictured the consequences if an amicable solution could not be found.

He informed the committees of the respective parties that it was not his province, as a high judicial officer to dictate to them the terms upon which they should settle this subject; nevertheless, as a man who felt deeply interested for his country and its laws, . . . he advised them the necessity of regarding the laws of the land. [He] addressed the Mormons, warning them against the danger of suffering themselves to be led by pretenders to the high prerogatives of the prophets of God, to certain destruction. . . . He supposed that the Mormons might cross the river and defeat the citizens of Jackson in battle—that it would only be the means of involving them in greater difficulties—that hundreds would rush from adjoining counties to revenge the blood of their neighbors, and they must be expelled in turn.<sup>46</sup>

After Ryland's speech, the meeting was formally organized with a group of Clay Countians to act as mediators. It was soon evident that much bitter feeling existed against the Mormons. Years later Joseph Thorp recalled that a good many speeches were made "and our friends from Jackson were very rabid."<sup>47</sup> The Reverend Riley, a Baptist minister, stated that the Mormons had lived long enough in Clay County "and must clear out or be cleared out."<sup>48</sup> Owens, as head of his delegation, "spoke with force and energy, and in a way to arouse the passions rather than allay them, although it had been decided by all that inflammatory speeches should not be made."<sup>49</sup> The chairman of the meeting, Judge Joel T. Turnham, pleaded: "Let us be republicans, let us honor our country and not disgrace it like Jackson county."<sup>50</sup> The tirades continued, however, until Doniphan "arose and began to shove up his sleeves (his manner when a little warmed up) and commenced his remarks in a rather excited tone. . . . He advo-

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<sup>46</sup> Columbia *Missouri Intelligencer*, June 28, 1834, as quoted in Smith, "Current Reports," 489-490.

<sup>47</sup> Judge Joseph Thorp, *Early Days in the West: Along the Missouri One Hundred Years Ago* (Liberty, Mo., 1924), 78.

<sup>48</sup> Stevens, *Centennial History*, II, 106.

<sup>49</sup> Thorp, *Early Days*, 78.

<sup>50</sup> Stevens, *Centennial History*, II, 106. "Judge Turnham was not a judge, but had been in public life a good deal, and was a man of most excellent sense, very just, fearless, firm, and unflinching in the discharge of his duties," Burnett, *An Old Pioneer*, 55.

cated the right of citizen and individual responsibility, and was opposed to Judge Lynch and mob violence.”<sup>51</sup> This changed the tone of the meeting.

The Jackson County committee presented its propositions in a signed statement.<sup>52</sup> They proposed that the citizens “buy all the land that the said Mormons owned in the county of Jackson; and also, all the improvements which the said Mormons had on any of the public lands in said county of Jackson, as they existed before the first disturbances between the people of Jackson and the Mormons, and for such as they have made since.” The value of the land and improvements would be ascertained by “disinterested arbitrators,” to be chosen by both parties. Twelve Mormons would be permitted to accompany the arbitrators to show them their land and improvements. Their safety would be guaranteed. After the value of the land and improvements had been determined “the people of Jackson will pay the valuation, WITH ONE HUNDRED PER CEN. ADDED THEREON, to the Mormons, within thirty days thereafter.” It was stipulated that “while the arbitrators are investigating and deciding upon the matters referred to them, the Mormons are not to attempt to enter Jackson county.” As an alternative the commissioners from Jackson offered to sell the lands and improvements of the citizens to the Mormons on the same terms and in the same manner.

Were the Jackson Countians acting in good faith or were they merely stalling in the face of the threat posed by Zion’s Camp? The *Upper Missouri Enquirer* (June 18, 1834) noted:

We have very little idea that the Mormons will accede to the propositions made by the citizens. We are told that such a hope is hardly entertained by any of the Jackson committee; and we have no doubt but the citizens of Jackson are determined to dispute every inch of ground. The chairman of the committee declared in the courthouse, in the presence of five or eight hundred persons, appealing to high heaven for the truth of his assertion, that they would dispute every inch of ground, burn every blade of

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<sup>51</sup> Thorp, *Early Days*, 78.

<sup>52</sup> Printed in *Liberty Upper Missouri Enquirer*, June 18, 1834; reprinted in *Washington National Intelligencer*, July 9, 1834; *Baltimore Niles’ Weekly Register*, July 12, 1834; and *Kirtland Star*, July, 1834.

grass, and suffer their bones to bleach on their hills, rather than the Mormons should return to Jackson County.<sup>53</sup>

Undoubtedly the committee knew that the Mormons would never agree to sell their lands.

It was now late in an afternoon heavily charged with tension. Suddenly a fracas erupted outside the courthouse, and the cry was heard that a man had been stabbed. Everyone rushed out expecting to find a fight between the Mormons and their antagonists. It was soon discovered, however, that a blacksmith named Calbert had "dirk'd" an old enemy named Wales, inflicting a dangerous wound.<sup>54</sup> This broke up the meeting since "the people became so much excited, that it was thought most prudent to adjourn."<sup>55</sup> Before the elders withdrew, however, they promised to reply to the proposals made to them. They pledged, in the meantime, that the army under Smith would not invade Jackson County. That same evening they composed a letter to the committee from Jackson and had it delivered.<sup>56</sup> The elders noted: "As we are informed that a large number of our people are on their way, removing to Jackson county, we agree to use our influence immediately to prevent the said company from entering into Jackson county, until you shall receive an answer to the propositions aforementioned." Meanwhile, the Jackson County delegation had started home—Smith later claimed "to raise an army sufficient to meet me, before I could get into Clay County."<sup>57</sup>

After dark, seven citizens from Jackson County (most of whom were members of the committee) were left in Clay County. They reached William Everett's ferry around 9:00 o'clock, in a hurry to get back across the Missouri River. The night was clear and the moon shone brightly.<sup>58</sup> It was suggested that the party

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<sup>53</sup> As reprinted in Smith, "Current Reports," 490. "The mob of Jackson co. proposed to sell to us, or buy our possessions in a manner that they knew that we could not comply with if we were ever so willing, which served to blind the mind of those who had heretofore said nothing, but now advised us to comply because they thought we had better have something than nothing for our possessions," "Whitmer's History," 66.

<sup>54</sup> "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1846.

<sup>55</sup> *Liberty Upper Missouri Enquirer*, June 18, 1834, as reprinted in Smith, "Current Reports," 490.

<sup>56</sup> Printed in *ibid.* Reprinted in *Baltimore Niles' Weekly Register*, July 12, 1834; and "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1846.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Owens to editor of *Liberty Upper Missouri Enquirer*, June 17, 1834, as quoted in *Washington National Intelligencer*, July 9, 1834. See also *Baltimore Niles' Weekly Register*, July 12, 1834.

with its horses might be too much for the ferry to carry in one trip, "but they feared to leave any on [the Clay side], lest the Mormons might come upon them before the boat could return for them."<sup>59</sup> Besides, Everett assured the party that there was no danger. Owens wrote later that "the boat appeared to be in as good order as we ever saw it—the false floor was tight and good."<sup>60</sup> When the ferry was about 200 yards from shore, "in an instant, as it were, the boat filled with water."<sup>61</sup> Owens noted that it apparently did not strike anything; "our impressions at that time were, and still are, that something had been done to the boat to sink her, as it was known that the committee from this county would cross at that point."<sup>62</sup>

Several of the men aboard could not swim, and they grabbed the tails of the horses. In this manner they reached the south shore safely. Owens floated down the river four miles before reaching an island. Smith wrote that he "swam off naked about day light, borrowed a mantle to hide his shame, and slipped home rather shy of the vengeance of God."<sup>63</sup> Five men drowned: James Campbell, David Lynch, William Everett, and two of his employees—Jefferson Cary and a Mr. Bradbury. Everett's body was later found lodged on a rock heap. Campbell's became entangled in a pile of driftwood where, Smith alleged with some satisfaction, "the Eagles, Buzzards, Ravens, Crows, and wild animals ate his flesh from his bones . . . and left him a horrible example of God's vengeance."<sup>64</sup>

Alexander Majors, a Jackson Countian, remembered: "This occurrence put the quietus on any further attempt to settle for the damages done the Mormons when driven from the county, for it caused in the whole population the most intense feelings against them."<sup>65</sup> It was broadcast that the Mormons had bribed one of the ferrymen—Bradbury, who was not around to deny it—to bore large holes through the gunwales of the flatboat. If so, he failed to provide adequately for his own escape. It is significant that the boat was never examined for sabotage.<sup>66</sup> Even

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<sup>59</sup> Thorp, *Early Days*, 80.

<sup>60</sup> *Washington National Intelligencer*, July 9, 1834.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

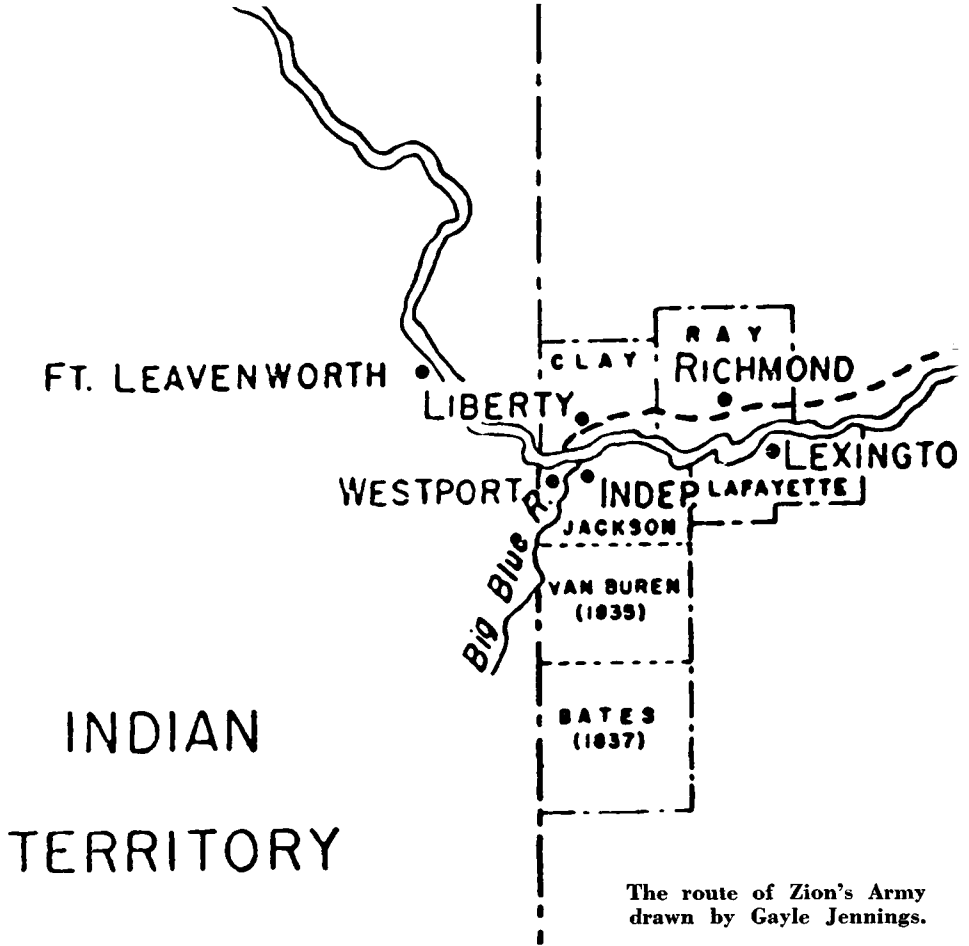
<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1846.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Ingraham, *Majors' Memoirs*, 54.

<sup>66</sup> William L. Webb, *Centennial History of Independence, Missouri* (Independence, 1927), 85.



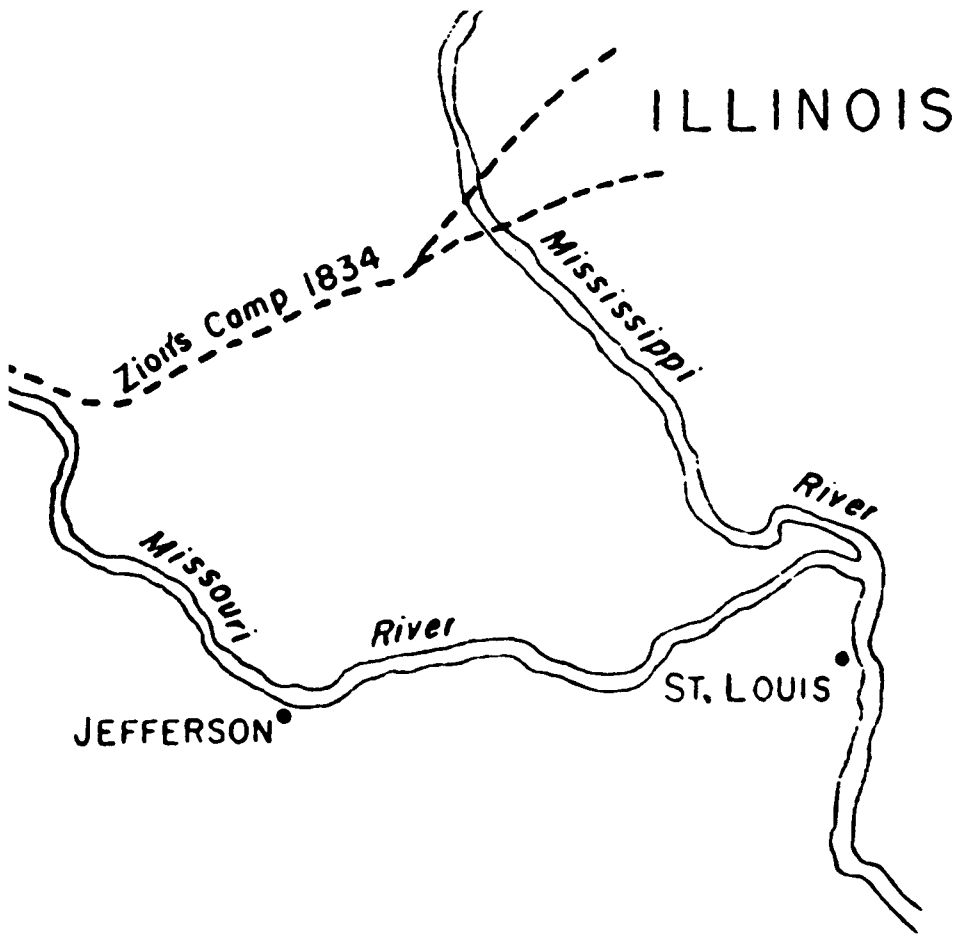
Josiah Gregg, a bitter opponent of the Mormons, admitted: "It was owing perhaps to the craziness of the boat, yet some persons suspected the Mormons of having scuttled it by secretly boring auger-holes in the bottom."<sup>67</sup> However, "the most reasonable idea was that the boat did not generally carry such heavy loads, hence the timbers had become dry and corking loose, and when the water pressed against it gave away and the boat filled."<sup>68</sup> Smith felt differently. He maintained that "the angel of God saw fit to sink the boat."<sup>69</sup>

Zion's Camp was now rapidly nearing its destination. Edward Partridge, the first Mormon bishop and leader of the Mormons in Clay County, came out from Liberty to meet his brethren, and sometime around the 16th, he made contact while they were

<sup>67</sup> Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies* (Norman, Okla., 1954), 220-221.

<sup>68</sup> *History of Jackson County, Missouri* (Kansas City, 1881), 263.

<sup>69</sup> "H. J. S." *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1846.



camped in the woods on the banks of the Wakenda River. The bishop informed the leaders of “the hostile feelings that existed in Missouri in all quarters.”<sup>70</sup> On Wednesday, June 18, the men of the camp pitched their tents a mile east of Richmond. Kimball wrote:

“On Thursday, the 19th, we arose as soon as it was light and passed through the town before inhabitants were up. As Luke Johnson and others were passing through before the teams came along, Brother Luke observed a black woman in a gentleman’s garden near the road. She beckoned to him and said, “come here massa.” She was evidently much agitated in her feelings. He went up to the fence and she said to him, “there is a company of men

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<sup>70</sup> “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1846.

lying in wait here who are calculating to kill you this morning as you pass through."<sup>71</sup>

The party hastened on but was delayed by several minor accidents to the wagons.

Was there anything to this alarm, or was it just the Mormons' imagination? On June 20, a young resident of Lexington wrote his father in Macon County, Kentucky.<sup>72</sup> He reported that a large reinforcement of Mormons had arrived and that they now had 800 to 1,000 men—"all well armed, with guns, tomahawks, knives, and from two to four braces of pistols each." He continued:

They went through the county on the North of the river, yesterday. We understood that the people of that county intended to stop them, we raised about forty men, but could not overtake them (the Mormons,) as they raised a dog trot, and kept it up most of the day. Next Monday is supposed to be the day they intend crossing the river, to take Jackson county. The whole county is in an uproar. Volunteers are preparing to go to the scene of action. Should they cross the river, there will be a battle, and probably much blood shed. Among others, I shall start on Saturday next.

On the afternoon of the 19th, around 4:00 o'clock, Zion's camp came to a halt just east of the Clay County line, between two of the seven branches of the Fishing River. This stream coursed southward into the Missouri, and near its mouth was a "magnificent forest, the trees of which were so lofty that . . . guns were unable to reach the birds perched on the upper branches."<sup>73</sup> While the Mormons were making preparations for the night, five men rode into camp and stated that sixty men were coming from Richmond, and even more from Clay County, to attack them. The weather was pleasantly warm, and the river was in good condition for fording, not over ankle deep. Soon after the Missourians departed; and while the men were eating, a small black cloud was detected rising in the west. Rapidly the sky became overcast "with densely dark and angry clouds" of a frightful aspect.<sup>74</sup> Smith asserted that at this time about 200 men from Jackson County were crossing the Missouri at Williams' ferry "to be ready to meet the

<sup>71</sup> Whitney, *Life of Kimball*, 65-66.

<sup>72</sup> This letter was published in the Maysville, Kentucky, *Eagle* and reprinted in Washington *National Intelligencer*, July 23, 1834.

<sup>73</sup> Maximilian, Prince of Wied, *Travels in the Interior of North America* (London, 1843), in Thwaites, *Western Travels*, XXIV, 122.

<sup>74</sup> Lundwall, *Fate of Persecutors*, 287.



Richmond mob near Fishing River Ford.”<sup>75</sup> But, purportedly, after the first load of forty men had been conveyed across and the ferry was going back for another group, it was met by a squall and had great difficulty in reaching the south shore.

The storm was tremendous. Fierce winds, driving rain, and heavy hail combined into a tornadic fury. Sheet and forked lightning kept the night afire while the loud crash of thunder shook the earth and made it tremble. The hail cut down the crops and vegetation while the world was awash in an avalanche of rain. The Mormons were in a critical predicament when their wagons and tents failed to provide protection. Some sought shelter in an abandoned Baptist meeting-house whose logs were in a decayed condition. The tempest raged throughout the night. In the morning it was disclosed that the Fishing River had risen about forty feet and had overflowed the bottoms for several miles. Lyman Littlefield recalled:

At length the terrible night was passed and a glorious morning's sun chased away the darkness and revealed for our inspection the fragmentary condition of the woods and fields. A visible change had been wrought by the warring elements. The work of havoc and devastation met the eye in every direction. Trees were uprooted and limbs hurled in great quantities to the earth. But the brightness of the new-born day and reviving warmth of the June sun reassured all nature.<sup>76</sup>

The Mormons then, as their descendants do now, looked upon this as another instance of divine intervention. John Whitmer wrote:

The camp now arrives at Fishing River, where the enemy desired to head them being led by Priests &c. But God interposed and sent a storm of Thunder lightning and rain at an astonishing rate. Which stopped our enemies in consequence of the flood of water which swelled the River and made it impassable.<sup>77</sup>

Smith asserted in his history that the violence of the tempest took the fight out of the forces that were converging upon Zion's Camp. According to the Prophet, it struck his opponents harder than it did his own troops. “Their ammunition was soaked, and the forty in Clay county were extremely anxious in the morning, to return

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<sup>75</sup> “H. J. S.,” *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1846.

<sup>76</sup> Lundwall, *Fate of Persecutors*, 288.

<sup>77</sup> “Whitmer's History,” 66.

to Jackson, . . . fully satisfied, as were those survivors of the company who were drowned, that when Jehovah fights, they would rather be absent."<sup>78</sup> Little hail purportedly fell on Zion's Camp, but the enemy lost horses, had rifles broken, and men injured. "It seemed as if the mandate of vengeance had gone forth from the God of battles, to protect his servants from the destruction of their enemies."<sup>79</sup>

The next day Zion's Camp could not cross the ford because of high water, and the men were marched five miles to a new camp site. This was on a farm which belonged to John Cooper, a Mormon. While there they were visited by several Mormon elders from Clay County who informed them "of the fixed determination of [their] enemies to drive or exterminate them from that county."<sup>80</sup>

On Saturday the elders in Clay County wrote their reply to the propositions of the committee of ten from Jackson County "that they cannot be acceded to."<sup>81</sup> However, they could assure the committee that the Mormons had no intentions of invading Jackson County. On Sunday Cornelius Gilliam, sheriff of Clay County, rode into camp for a consultation with the Mormon leaders. Smith proudly marched his army into a nearby grove and formed them into a circle around Gilliam. The Sheriff explained to the company the "manners, customs and disposition of the people," and how they could best secure their favor and protection. The Mormon leaders then wrote a statement of their purposes for public distribution which the Sheriff promised to disseminate. On July 2 Gilliam sent this with a letter stating his own views to the *Upper Missouri Enquirer*.

The Mormon declaration avowed:

The reports of our intentions are various, and have gone abroad in a light calculated to arouse the feelings of almost every man.—For instance, one report is, that we intend to demolish the printing office in Liberty; another report is, that we intend crossing the Missouri River on Sunday next, and falling upon women and children, and slaying them. . . . It is not our intention to commit hostilities against any man or set of men. It is not our intention to injure any man's person or property, except in defend-

<sup>78</sup> "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1846.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Whitney, *Life of Kimball*, 67.

<sup>81</sup> Published in *Kirtland Star*, July, 1834.

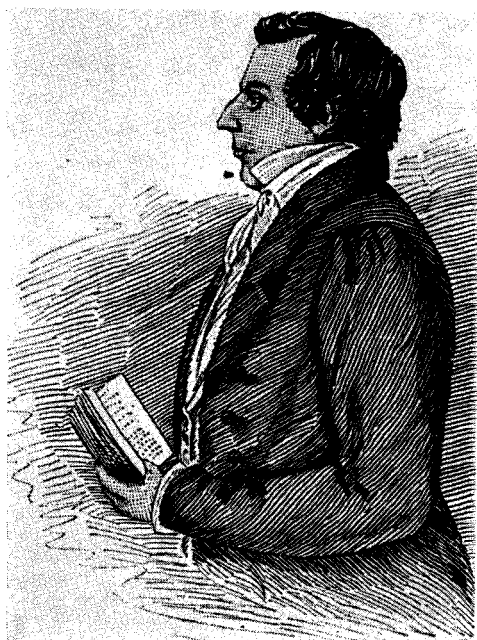
ing ourselves. . . . It is our intention to go back upon our lands in Jackson county, by order of the Executive of the State, if possible.<sup>82</sup>

Then they proposed that twelve disinterested men, six to be chosen by each group, determine the value of the possessions of those citizens who felt they could not live with the Mormons in Jackson County. "They shall have their money in one year; and none of the Mormons shall enter that county to reside until the money is paid." The amount of damages sustained by the Mormons during the earlier riots against them and

their expulsion were also to be fixed by the same twelve men. This would be applied against the purchase price of the citizen's land.

After Gilliam had ridden off, Smith issued one of his most quoted revelations, since known among Mormons as the "Fishing River Revelation."<sup>83</sup> The Lord forthwith expressed his dissatisfaction: "Were it not for the transgressions of my people . . . they might have been redeemed even now; but, behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I require at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them." The various church branches were rebuked for not having given liberally of their substance and for not having sent enough men up to Zion. Thus, the necessary strength had not gone forth in the camp. Those who had volunteered, however, were to be blessed and were to receive an "endowment." "A commandment I give unto you, that as many as have come up hither, that can stay in the region round about, let them stay." Even those who could not remain were to tarry for a short period.

The disciples were admonished to find favor in the eyes of the people "until the army of Israel becomes very great; and . . . my servant . . . shall have time to gather up the strength of my



*Kennedy, Early Days of Mormonism*

**JOSEPH SMITH**

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*; and *Washington National Intelligencer*, July 23, 1834.

<sup>83</sup> *LDS*, sec. 105; and *RLDS*, sec. 103.

house." Meanwhile, they were to purchase all the lands that could be acquired in Jackson County and in the surrounding counties. After these had been bought, "I will hold the armies of Israel guiltless in taking possession of their own lands."

But firstly, let my army become very great, and let it be sanctified before me, that it may become fair as the sun, and clear as the moon, and that her banners may be terrible unto all nations; that the kingdoms of this world may be constrained to acknowledge that the Kingdom of Zion is in very deed the kingdom of our God and his Christ; therefore, let us become subject unto her laws.

The leading elders of the church were instructed to return to Kirtland to receive their endowments in the temple then under construction.

On Monday (June 23) the march toward Liberty was resumed. The camp took a circuitous route around the head of Fishing River to avoid the deep water. When they arrived within a few miles of town, they were met by Doniphan, Atchison, and several other gentlemen who warned them not to go into Liberty "as the feelings of the people were so much enraged."<sup>84</sup> They were advised to revert to legal process as the means of obtaining their objectives. Smith then wheeled his troops to the left, and crossing a prairie and some woodlands the men arrived at Gilbert's residence. The army encamped on the banks of Rush Creek, a small stream west of town.

That night it happened—the cholera burst forth among the troops. The possibility of such an outbreak must have occurred to the leaders even before they left Kirtland, for cholera was rampant throughout the West. It had appeared in Missouri in 1832—in Palmyra 105 people died from it within two weeks—and continued its virulence in epidemics in 1833 and 1834. During the night of the storm, Joseph Hancock had been struck down by the disease—the first attacked. On June 22 Ezra Thayer and Thomas Hayes were stricken, and thereafter other cases began to appear in the camp. Smith later asserted that on June 22 he called the men together and told them "that in consequence of the disobedience of some who had been unwilling to listen to my words, but had rebelled, God had decreed that sickness should come upon

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<sup>84</sup> "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1846.

them, and that they shou'd die like sheep with the rot, that I was sorry but could not help it."<sup>85</sup>

On the night of June 24 cholera was manifest "in the most terrible form."<sup>86</sup> Elder John Carter was the first fatality in the camp; he died on the afternoon of the 25th. Seth Hitchcock expired about thirty minutes later. Since coffins could not be obtained, nor lumber to make them, the bodies were rolled in blankets, placed on a horse sled, and taken to a small stream which emptied into Rush Creek. They were interred in the bank of the stream, "buried at night by torch light so as to keep the fact of the presence of cholera from the knowledge of the inhabitants, and thus prevent, if possible, unnecessary excitement and trouble."<sup>87</sup>

The next to die was Eber Wilcox, who passed away even while prayers were being offered that the disease might be halted. He was buried by a party which included Brigham Young. The cholera continued to rage for four days. In all, sixty-eight of Zion's Camp were stricken and thirteen died. Among these was one woman, Betsy Parrish. Several other Mormons who were not a part of the camp also died of the scourge, including Gilbert.<sup>88</sup>

Early on the morning of the 25th, the camp was broken into small bands and dispersed among the various Mormon settlements "to allay excitement in the county."<sup>89</sup> The Mormons had definitely determined not to fight. It was just as well. The combination of the ferry accident and the arrival of Zion's Camp had incensed the Jackson Countians even more than before if possible. They firmly committed themselves to making no arrangement with the Mormons. The situation had become stalemate and would remain so.

The nation had watched the entire episode with fascination. Stories were printed in newspapers that a great battle had taken place and that Smith had been killed. On July 23 the *National Intelligencer* printed a letter from Lexington, Missouri, which was dated June 28. The writer declared that "Smith, *their prophet* had

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Littlefield, *Reminiscences*, 30. The Mormons were not able to keep the outbreak a secret. The *Liberty Upper Missouri Enquirer* soon reported that cholera existed "to an alarming degree among the Mormons who recently emigrated to that country." *Washington National Intelligencer*, July 31, 1834.

<sup>88</sup> *Kirtland Star*, August, 1834.

<sup>89</sup> Elders to Dunklin, June 26, 1834, "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1846.

promised to raise all that should be *slain* in fighting the Lord's battles." He further alleged:

[The Mormons] had collected in Clay county, and built a number of boats, to cross their forces over. . . . Jackson county could raise about 900 men, and 400 went from Lafayette; about 300 more would have marched in a day or two, if they had been required. . . . I know we had neither law nor gospel on our side, but self-preservation urged us to pursue that course.

The last days of the month Smith spent with friends in the western part of Clay County. He visited and counseled. Abigail Leonard remembered: "The prophet advised us to scatter out over the county, and not congregate too much together, so that the people who would have no cause for alarm."<sup>90</sup> On June 30, Smith authorized Lyman Wight "to give a discharge to every man of the Camp who had proved himself faithful, certifying that fact and giving him leave to return home."<sup>91</sup> The money in the paymaster's possession was divided equally among the men, each receiving \$1.16.<sup>92</sup> That same day several turned back for Kirtland. Those returning drifted back in small parties. A newspaper in Richmond, Indiana, observed that they looked "indeed like the remnant of a scattered army; their persons and equipage denote hard service, and make quite a contrast to their outward bound appearance."<sup>93</sup>

A number of the participants stayed in Missouri. Among these was Lyman Littlefield, whose father rented a farm west of Liberty. At this time the *Upper Missouri Enquirer* reported: "Many of them have returned to the east, and the rest are scattered about throughout the country, and are actively engaged in assisting the citizens in saving their crops of wheat, &c."<sup>94</sup> On July 9, Joseph and Hyrum Smith and several others started in a wagon for Kirtland, where they arrived on August 1.

Had the whole expedition been a fiasco? Certainly it had rendered some aid to those in Clay County and indicated to them that the church was still concerned about their welfare. It also did much to heal an earlier breach between the elders in Zion and the leaders in Kirtland. In addition it gave Smith an oppor-

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<sup>90</sup> Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York, 1877), 168.

<sup>91</sup> "H. J. S.," *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1846.

<sup>92</sup> Smith and Smith, *History of the Church*, I, 486.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in *Washington National Intelligencer*, August 9, 1834.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Mulder and Mortensen, *Among the Mormons*, 86.

tunity to observe a number of new men, including Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff, future presidents of the church which established itself in Utah. When the first Quorum of Twelve Apostles was being chosen in February, 1835, Smith stipulated that only members of Zion's Camp would be considered. Young used his position in that body to assume leadership in 1844 after Smith's assassination. Woodruff, who as President in 1890 was to issue the manifesto abolishing polygamy, stated in a sermon in 1869:

We accomplished a great deal, though apostates and unbelievers many times asked the question, "What have you done?" We gained an experience that we never could have gained in any other way. . . . Had I not gone up with Zion's Camp I should not have been here today, and I presume that would have been the case with many others in this Territory.<sup>95</sup>

All this may have been true, but Zion's Camp left a legacy of ill-will. Many Missourians, who otherwise had been friendly to the Mormons, were antagonized by the intrusion of a large force of armed men from outside the state.<sup>96</sup> The expedition seemed to give credence to the allegation by the Jackson Countians that the Mormons contemplated utilizing military force to gain possession of land upon which to build their religious community of Zion. This legacy would pay bitter dividends in the winter of 1838-1839 when the State of Missouri would emulate Jackson County and drive the Mormons beyond her borders.

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<sup>95</sup> *Journal of Discourses*, (Liverpool, England, 1854-1886), December 12, 1869.

<sup>96</sup> "The marching of so large a body of armed men into the state, had caused much excitement among the people," *Baltimore Niles' Weekly Register*, July 26, 1834.

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### **To Dye Yarn Green**

Diary of Sarah Ann Dupuy. State Historical Society Collections.

Take one ounce of best Spanish Indigo, finely powdered and half a pound of oil of vitriol put them in a Bottle and let them stand in the Sun a week Shake it often but do not cork it tight lest it should Burst the Bottle take four pounds of Black oak bark and the same of hickory bark shave them fine and soak them until wet through then Boil them in ten gallons of water till all the color is extracted when take out the chips and put in a pound of alum Shake the bottle of Indigo and Vitriol and pour it in let them Boil together a few minutes and put in the yarn turn it over several times and let it boil half an hour and wash it well in strong Soap Suds through two waters to keep from becoming tender. This will color ten pounds of yarn. You may have a fine blue by omitting the bark.

