During the hot summer months of 1838, relations between the Latter-day Saints and their northern Missouri neighbors continued to deteriorate rapidly. Elder Parley P. Pratt, who had arrived in Far West in May after returning from missionary service in the East, described the tense situation that existed by July 1838. He said, “War clouds began again to lower with dark and threatening aspect. Those who had combined against the laws in the adjoining counties, had long watched our increasing power and prosperity with jealousy, and with greedy and avaricious eyes. It was a common boast that, as soon as we had completed our extensive improvements, and made a plentiful crop, they would drive us from the State, and once more enrich themselves with the spoils.”

For these and other reasons, violence erupted that eventually resulted in the expulsion of the entire Church from the state of Missouri.

In 1831 a family named Peniston had become the first white settlers in what was to become Daviess County. The next year they built a mill on the Grand River to grind flour and meal for incoming settlers. They developed the village of Millport. When the county was created in 1836, there were still fewer than a hundred settlers. The town of Gallatin was platted to serve as the county seat, and as it grew, Millport, three miles to the east, declined. The Saints poured into Adam-ondi-Ahman, some four miles north of Gallatin, in the summer of 1838. They quickly began to outnumber the Gentiles in Daviess County.

Northwest Missouri

The year 1838 was an election year. The original settlers naturally wanted to elect a state legislator who was one of their own. William Peniston, a staunch foe of the Saints, was a candidate. He was afraid that with the rapid influx of Mormons, he would not win the election because most Church members supported John A. Williams. About two weeks before the election, Judge Joseph Morin of Millport advised two elders of the Church to go to the polls “prepared for an attack” by mobbers determined to prevent Mormons from voting. The election was to be held on Monday, 6 August, in Gallatin, which was at that time merely a straggling row of “ten houses, three of which were saloons.”

Hoping that the judge’s prediction would prove false, a number of Mormon men went unarmed to Gallatin to vote. At 11 a.m., William Peniston addressed the crowd of voters, hoping to excite them against the Mormons: “The Mormon leaders are a set of horse thieves, liars, counterfeiters, and you know they profess to heal the sick, and cast out devils, and you all know that is a lie.” Election days in the West were rarely orderly, but with Peniston’s inflammatory speech, and with some of the crowd filled with whiskey, a fight was inevitable. Dick Welding, the mob bully, punched one of the Saints and knocked him down. A fight ensued. Even though outnumbered, one of the Mormons, John L. Butler, grabbed an oak stake from a nearby woodpile and began to strike the Missourians with strength that surprised himself. The Missourians armed themselves with clapboards or anything that came to hand; during the brawl that followed, several persons on both sides were seriously hurt. Although few Mormons voted that day, Peniston still lost the election.

Distorted reports of the fight reached Church leaders in Far West the next morning. Hearing that two or three of the brethren had been killed, the First Presidency and about twenty others left immediately for Daviess Coun-

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2

Election Day Battle at Gallatin

On Wednesday, 8 August. They armed themselves for protection and were joined en route by Church members from Daviess, some of whom had been attacked by the election mob. They arrived that evening at Adam-ondi-Ahman and were relieved to learn that none of the Saints had been killed.

While in that vicinity the Prophet determined that it would be wise to ride around the region with some of the other brethren to determine political conditions and to calm fear that had arisen in the county. They visited several of the old settlers in the vicinity, including Adam Black, the justice of the peace and newly elected judge for Daviess County. Knowing that Black had participated in the anti-Mormon activities, they asked him if he would administer the law justly and if he would sign an agreement of peace. According to Joseph Smith, after Black signed an affidavit certifying that he would disassociate himself from the mob, the brethren returned to Adam-ondi-Ahman. The next day a council composed of prominent Mormons and non-Mormons "entered into a covenant of peace, to preserve each other's rights, and stand in each other's defense; that if men did wrong, neither party would uphold them or endeavor to screen them from justice, but deliver up all offenders to be dealt with according to law and justice."5

The goodwill lasted less than twenty-four hours. On 10 August, William Peniston swore out an affidavit in Richmond, Ray County, before the circuit judge, Austin A. King, stating that Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight had organized an army of five hundred men and had threatened death to "all the old settlers and citizens of Daviess county."6 Upon hearing this information, Joseph waited at home in Far West for further developments. When the sheriff learned that Joseph was willing to submit to arrest if he could be tried in Daviess County, he declined serving the writ and went to Richmond to consult with Judge King.

For about two weeks the tensions increased in Daviess and Carroll counties. Adam Black falsely claimed that 154 Mormons had threatened him with death unless he signed the agreement of peace. The Prophet responded that Black's statement "shows him in his true light—a detestable, unprincipled mobocrat and perjured man."7 Civil war appeared imminent as rumors and exaggerated stories circulated throughout Missouri and false reports of a Mormon uprising reached Governor Lilburn W. Boggs.8

The Stage Set for War

In September the Prophet reflected upon the deteriorating circumstances and outlined the Church's course of action. He made the following statement:
“There is great excitement at present among the Missourians, who are seeking if possible an occasion against us. They are continually chafing us, and provoking us to anger if possible, one sign of threatening after another, but we do not fear them, for the Lord God, the Eternal Father is our God, and Jesus … is our strength and confidence. …

“… Their father the devil, is hourly calling upon them to be up and doing, and they, like willing and obedient children, need not the second admonition; but in the name of Jesus Christ … we will endure it no longer, if the great God will arm us with courage, with strength and with power, to resist them in their persecutions. We will not act on the offensive, but always on the defensive.”

The next day Joseph Smith asked Major General David Atchison and Brigadier General Alexander Doniphan of the Missouri state militia for advice on how to end the hostilities in Daviess County. Both had been lawyers for the Saints during the Jackson County troubles in 1833–34 and continued friendly toward the Church. General Atchison promised he would “do all in his power to disperse the mob.” They advised the Prophet and Lyman Wight, who was also present, to volunteer to be tried in Daviess County. Accordingly a trial was held on 7 September just north of the county line at the home of a non-Mormon farmer. Wary of possible mob activity, Joseph Smith stationed a company of men at the county line “so as to be ready at a minute’s warning, if there should be any difficulty at the trial.”

No incriminating evidence against the two leaders was presented, but bowing to pressures, Judge King ordered them to stand trial before the circuit court and released them on five hundred dollars bond.

Unfortunately this did nothing to quell the mob spirit. Enemies of the Church, including many from other counties, prepared to attack Adam-ondi-Ahman. Lyman Wight held a colonel’s commission in the fifty-ninth regiment of the Missouri Regiment, which was directed by the state under General H. G. Parks. Lyman directed the arming of over 150 men, part of the state militia, to defend the town against the mobs. Both Mormons and mobbers sent scouts throughout the countryside, occasionally took prisoners, and generally insulted each other. Only the prudent actions of generals Atchison and Doniphan prevented violence.

Late in September, General Atchison wrote to the governor: “Things are not so bad in that county [Daviess] as represented by rumor, and, in fact, from affidavits I have no doubt your Excellency has been deceived by the exaggerated statements of designing or half crazy men. I have found there is no cause of alarm on account of the Mormons; they are not to be feared; they are very much alarmed.”

About this same time a committee of “old citizens” in Daviess County agreed to sell their property to the Saints. Joseph Smith immediately sent messengers to the East and South to try and raise the necessary funds, but the rapidly escalating conflict made this tentative agreement impossible to fulfill.

**Siege of DeWitt**

During these conflicts, equally ominous events occurred between the Saints and their neighbors in DeWitt, Carroll County. A few Mormons had been welcomed earlier when they began settling in DeWitt in June 1838, but by July it was obvious to the citizens of Carroll County that the Latter-day Saints would soon outnumber them. As in Jackson, Clay, and Daviess counties, the fear of losing political control motivated the “old settlers” to believe the false reports about the “deluded Mormons” and to develop a pretext for driving them out. Three separate meetings were held in July to unify the citizens to expel the Mormons.

When approached with the ultimatum telling them to leave, George M. Hinkle, leader of the Saints and a colonel in the Missouri state militia, defiantly declared that the Saints would defend their rights to remain in DeWitt. Conditions throughout September remained at a standoff. Violence was avoided partly because many Carroll militiamen were away fighting in Daviess County during September. Late in September, the Saints at DeWitt sent a letter to Governor Lilburn W. Boggs asking for assistance in defending themselves against “a lawless mob” from Carroll and other counties, but they received no response.

Meanwhile the non-Mormon forces in DeWitt continued to increase as troops from Ray, Howard, and Clay counties arrived almost daily. The Latter-day Saints also received reinforcements and began building barricades.

The first week in October was a fearful one for the
Saints because fighting broke out between the two camps. John Murdock recorded: "We were continually employed day and night guarding [the Saints]. … One night … I traveled all night from one sentinel to another to keep them to their duty." The need for food and shelter became critical. The anti-Mormon forces considered this siege “a war of extermination.”

While exploring for a new settlement, the Prophet Joseph Smith was met by a harried emissary headed for Far West to inform the brethren of the situation in DeWitt. Disappointed, the Prophet said, “I had hoped that the good sense of the majority of the people, and their respect for the Constitution, would have put down any spirit of persecution which might have been manifested in that neighborhood.” Changing his plans, Joseph traveled secretly on back roads to avoid enemy guards and slipped into DeWitt, where he found a few defenders opposing the large mob. The Prophet found that the Saints were experiencing systematic starvation and grievous privations.

Church leaders decided to appeal once again to the governor for assistance. They obtained affidavits from sympathetic non-Mormons about the treatment of the Saints and their dangerous situation. On 9 October they received the governor’s reply that “the quarrel was between the Mormons and the mob, and that ‘we might fight it out.’” This blasted whatever hopes the Saints may have still entertained for executive relief.

Under these circumstances the earliest Mormon settlers of DeWitt urged their brethren to leave in peace. The Saints, Joseph Smith included, gathered up seventy wagons and sadly abandoned DeWitt on 11 October. “That evening a woman, of the name of Jensen, who had some short time before given birth to a child, died in consequence of the exposure occasioned by the operations of the mob, and having to move before her strength would properly admit of it. She was buried in the grove, without a coffin.” The mob “continually harassed and threatened” the traveling Saints, and several more of them died from “fatigue and privation.”

Growing Distress in Caldwell and Daviess Counties

Encouraged by their success against the Saints in DeWitt and emboldened by the noninterference of the governor, the anti-Mormon forces marched toward Daviess County to remove the Mormons from there. News that eight hundred men were advancing on Adam-ondi-Ahman and that a large force was being raised to move against Caldwell County alarmed Church leaders. General Doniphan, who was in Far West when the message was received, ordered Colonel Hinkle to muster a militia from among the local residents to protect the Saints. Since the anti-Mormons were technically also members of various other militia units, an ironic conflict of militia versus militia developed.

On the Sabbath the Prophet spoke to the Saints using as his text a saying from the Savior: “Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his brethren.” He concluded by asking volunteers to join him in the public square the next morning. A company of about one hundred men, authorized by General Doniphan as state militia from Caldwell County, left for Adam-ondi-Ahman on Monday.

Meanwhile the opposition was at work in Daviess County. Many houses were burned, and livestock was driven off. In addition, many of the scattered families were forced to flee to Adam-ondi-Ahman for safety and shelter amid a heavy snowstorm on 17 and 18 October. Joseph Smith remembered, “My feelings were such as I cannot describe when I saw them flock into the village, almost entirely destitute of clothes, and only escaping with their lives.”

General H. G. Parks, commanding officer of the Missouri militia in Daviess County, who witnessed these events, informed General David Atchison of the worsening situation. General Atchison, commander of the militia in northern Missouri, appealed to Governor Boggs, warning him that the Missourians intended to drive the Mormons from Daviess and Caldwell counties, and he strongly urged the governor to visit the scene of trouble. This was Atchison’s third futile appeal to the governor, but, as with others to follow, it was ignored. Governor Boggs never appeared willing to hear the Saints’ side of the story, even from trustworthy sources such as General Atchison, but instead he chose to believe inflammatory anti-Mormon reports.

As hostilities in Daviess County increased, General Parks authorized Lyman Wight, a colonel in the militia, to organize a force of Mormon men and use them to disperse all mobs found in Daviess County. General Parks addressed the assembled troops:
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“I have visited your place frequently, [and] find you to be an industrious and thriving people, willing to abide the laws of the land; and I deeply regret that you could not live in peace and enjoy the privileges of freedom.”

Guerrilla warfare raged between Mormon and anti-Mormon forces for two days as both sides plundered and burned. Members of the Church considered taking from the Gentiles to be a necessity laid upon them because their own goods had been stolen. A young Mormon militia officer, Benjamin F. Johnson, said, “We were being hemmed in on all sides by our enemies and were without food. All the grain, cattle, hogs, and supplies of every kind were left in the country, or so far from home they could not be obtained except with a strong guard. So our only possible chance was to go out in foraging companies and bring in whatever we could find, without regard to ownership.”

This matter was magnified by the non-Mormons in the court proceedings that followed the Mormon War. For their part, the anti-Mormons often set fire to their own haystacks and property and then blamed it on the Saints. Rumors soon spread to the rest of Missouri that the Mormons were either stealing or destroying all the property of their neighbors.

In Far West the Saints were warned that two notorious anti-Mormons, Cornelius Gilliam and Samuel Bogart, officers in the militia, were planning assaults on the Caldwell County settlements. Meetings were held where the Saints covenanted to defend themselves and not desert the cause. Residents of the outlying settlements were instructed to gather to Far West, and the city hastened its preparations for defense.

Tragically, two members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Thomas B. Marsh and Orson Hyde, deserted the cause of the Church on 18 October and joined with the enemy at Richmond. Marsh swore out an affidavit, which was also mostly endorsed by Hyde, stating that “the Prophet inculcates the notion, and it is believed by every true Mormon, that Smith's prophecies are superior to the laws of the land. I have heard the Prophet say that he would yet tread down his enemies, and walk over their dead bodies; and if he was not let alone, he would be a second Mohammed to this generation.”

This statement further justified the actions of the anti-Mormons in their own minds. Regarding this treachery, Joseph Smith remarked that Thomas B. Marsh “had been lifted up in pride by his exaltation to office and the revelations of heaven concerning him, until he was ready to be overthrown by the first adverse wind that should cross his track, and now he has fallen, lied and sworn falsely, and is ready to take the lives of his best friends. Let all men take warning by him, and learn that he who exalteth himself, God will abase.”

Thomas Marsh was excommunicated 17 March 1839, while Orson Hyde was relieved of his duties in the Council of the Twelve. On 4 May 1839 Orson Hyde was officially suspended from exercising the functions of his office until he met with the general conference of the Church and explained his actions. On 27 June, after repenting and confessing his error, he was restored to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. After years of misery, Brother Marsh returned to the Church in 1857.

Battle of Crooked River

A turning point in the “Mormon War” in Missouri was the Battle of Crooked River, which took place at dawn on Thursday, 25 October 1838. A principal cause of this tragedy was the provocative actions of Captain Samuel Bogart from Jackson County, an enemy of the Saints. For days Bogart ranged the line between Caldwell and Ray counties, allegedly trying to prevent a Mormon attack. But instead of merely conducting their assigned patrols, Bogart’s men twice entered Caldwell County and attacked the homes of the Saints, ordering the members to leave the state and taking three Mormon men prisoners. “On hearing the report, Judge Elias Higbee, the first judge of the county, ordered Lieutenant Colonel Hinkle, the highest officer in command in Far West, to send out a company to disperse the mob and retake their prisoners, whom, it was reported, they intended to murder that night.”

Members of the militia had been waiting several days for a call to arms. When the drums beat at midnight calling them to the public square, seventy-five men were mobilized into two companies commanded by David W. Patten and Charles C. Rich. As dawn approached they arrived at a ford on the banks of the Crooked River, twenty miles from Far West. Patten’s patrol approached the crossing, unaware of Bogart’s con-
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The Battle of Crooked River
by C. C. A. Christensen

closed position along the banks of the river. Suddenly one of Bogart’s guards opened fire. Elder Patten ordered a charge, but silhouetted by the dawn, his men made good targets. In the quick, hard-fought skirmish, several men on each side were wounded. One of the wounded was Elder Patten of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. The Prophet reported, “Brother Gideon Carter was shot in the head, and left dead on the ground so defaced that the brethren did not know him.”

The brethren freed the three prisoners, one of them was also wounded, drove the enemy across the river, and then turned to care for their wounded. Elder Patten was carried to the home of Stephen Winchester near Far West, where he died several hours later. He thus became the first martyred Apostle in this dispensation. His faith in the restored gospel was such that he had once expressed to the Prophet Joseph Smith the desire to die the death of a martyr.

“The Prophet, greatly moved, expressed extreme sorrow, ‘for,’ said he to David, ‘when a man of your faith asks the Lord for anything, he generally gets it.’”

At his funeral in Far West two days after the battle, Joseph Smith eulogized him:

“There lies a man that has done just as he said he would—he has laid down his life for his friends.”

Patrick O’Bannion also later died from his wounds. James Hendricks, another of the critically injured, was temporarily paralyzed from his waist down and had to be carried about on a stretcher. The entire responsibility for his family fell to his wife, Drusilla, who endured the additional dangers in Missouri and the arduous trek to Illinois with strength of character and deep faith.
Exaggerated accounts of the battle soon reached Governor Boggs in Jefferson City. One rumor was that Bogart's entire force was massacred or imprisoned and that the Mormons intended to sack and burn Richmond. These reports provided Boggs with the excuse he needed to order an all-out war against the Saints.

**Extermination Order and Haun's Mill Massacre**

Northern Missouri was in an uproar the last week of October as “mobs were heard of in every direction.” The mobs burned houses and crops, rustled cattle, detained prisoners, and threatened the Saints with death. General Atchison again urged Governor Boggs to come to the area. But instead, on 27 October, he ordered his militia to war. Relying solely upon the false reports of a Mormon insurrection, Boggs asserted that the Saints had defied the laws and initiated hostilities. Therefore, he wrote, “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good. Their outrages are beyond all description.” By this time public opinion was so strong against the Saints that even those who knew the truth would not side openly with them. Governor Boggs’s “extermination order” was an outgrowth and expression of the popular will.

General Atchison was in charge of the state troops but was dismissed by the governor prior to the surrender of Far West. The command was given to General John B. Clark. General Clark did not arrive at Far West until a few days after the surrender. General Samuel D. Lucas, a long-time anti-Mormon from Jackson County, was left in temporary command of the militia that was rapidly gathering from all sides to encircle Far West. By 31 October over two thousand men surrounded Far West, and most of them were determined to fulfill the governor’s order.

It was at Haun’s Mill that violence again erupted. This small settlement twelve miles east of Far West was founded by Jacob Haun, a convert from Green Bay, Wisconsin. He had moved to Shoal Creek in 1835, hoping to avoid the persecutions his fellow Saints were experiencing elsewhere in Missouri. Haun’s Mill consisted of a mill, a blacksmith shop, a few houses, and a population of about twenty to thirty families at the mill itself and one hundred families in the greater neighborhood. On 30 October nine wagons with immigrants from Kirtland had arrived at the site. They had decided to rest a few days before traveling to Far West.

Immediately after the battle of Crooked River, the Prophet Joseph Smith advised all Saints in outlying ar-
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eas to move to Far West or Adam-ondi-Ahman. Unwill-
ing to abandon his property, Jacob Haun disregarded
the Prophet's counsel and instructed the small com-
munity to remain. This unwise decision proved fatal.
Haun's group planned to use the blacksmith shop as a
fort in the event of an enemy attack. Guards were posted
to protect the mill and the settlement.

On Sunday, 28 October, Colonel Thomas Jennings
of the Livingston County militia sent one of his men
to the settlement to conclude a peace treaty. Both sides
pledged not to attack each other. The non-Mormons,
however, did not disband as promised. On Monday a
group of Missourians in Livingston County decided to
attack Haun's Mill, probably intending to carry out the
governor's order. On Tuesday afternoon, 30 October,
approximately 240 men approached Haun's Mill. Joseph
Young, Sr., a member of the Seven Presidents of Seventy
and a recent arrival at Haun's Mill, described the late
afternoon setting: "The banks of Shoal creek on either
side teemed with children sporting and playing, while
their mothers were engaged in domestic employments,
and their fathers employed in guarding the mills and
other property, while others were engaged in gathering
in their crops for their winter consumption. The weath-
er was very pleasant, the sun shone clear, all was tran-
quill, and no one expressed any apprehension of the aw-
ful crisis that was near us—even at our doors."32

At about 4:00 p.m. the mob approached Haun's Mill.
The women and children fled into the woods, while the
men sought protection in the blacksmith shop. Da-
vid Evans, the military leader of the Saints, swung his
hat and cried for peace. The sound of a hundred rifles

Haun's Mill
by C. C. A. Christensen
Museum of Church History and Art

[Image of painting showing a busy scene at a settlement with a milling operation in the background]

[Image of painting showing a busy scene at a settlement with a milling operation in the background]
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answered him, most of them aimed at the blacksmith shop. The mobbers shot mercilessly at everyone in sight, including women, elderly men, and children. Amanda Smith seized her two little girls and ran with Mary Stedwell across the millpond on a walkway. Amanda recalled, “Yet though we were women, with tender children, in flight for our lives, the demons poured volley after volley to kill us.”

The rabble entered the blacksmith shop and found ten-year-old Sardius Smith, son of Amanda Smith, hiding under the blacksmith's bellows. One ruffian put the muzzle of his gun against the boy’s skull and blew off the upper part of his head. The man later explained, “Nits will make lice, and if he had lived he would have become a Mormon.” Alma Smith, Sardius’s seven-year-old brother, witnessed the murder of his father and brother and was himself shot in the hip. He was not discovered by the mob and was later miraculously healed through prayer and faith. Thomas McBride was hacked to death with a corn knife. Although a few men along with women and children escaped across the river into the hills, at least seventeen people were killed, and about thirteen were wounded. Jacob Haun was among the wounded, but he recovered. Years later the Prophet remarked, “At Haun’s Mill the brethren went contrary to my counsel; if they had not, their lives would have been spared.”

The survivors hid throughout the evening and night, fearing another attack. The next day a few able-bodied men buried the dead in a dry hole that had been dug for a well. Joseph Young had become so closely attached to young Sardius Smith during their trip from Kirtland that he broke down and could not lower the boy’s body into the common grave. Amanda and her eldest son buried Sardius the following day.

The devastated survivors left Missouri during the winter and following spring along with other Church members. The mob continued to persecute some of the widows before they left, but the Lord helped them. Amanda Smith remembered the reassurance she received from the Lord as she crept into a cornfield to pray aloud.

“It was as the temple of the Lord to me at that moment. I prayed aloud and most fervently.

“When I emerged from the corn a voice spoke to me. It was a voice as plain as I ever heard one. It was no silent, strong impression of the spirit, but a voice, repeating a verse of the Saints’ hymn:

‘That soul who on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!’

“From that moment I had no more fear. I felt that nothing could hurt me.”
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Siege of Far West

Meanwhile the anti-Mormon militia forces continued to gather around Far West in preparation for an attack. The militia of Far West barricaded the city with wagons and timber, but by Wednesday, 31 October, the anti-Mormon forces outnumbered those of the Saints by five to one. Neither side was eager to begin the battle, and the day was spent in a standoff, with each side trying to decide what to do. In the evening General Lucas sent a flag of truce, which was met by Colonel Hinkle, the leading officer for the Saints. Colonel Hinkle secretly agreed to Lucas’s demands that certain leaders surrender for trial and punishment, Mormon property be confiscated to pay for damages, and the balance of the Saints surrender their arms and leave the state.

Missouri State Militia at Far West

Returning to Far West, Hinkle convinced Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Parley P. Pratt, and George W. Robinson that Lucas wanted to talk to them in a peace conference. The brethren were shocked when Hinkle turned them over to Lucas as prisoners. Parley P. Pratt described this tragic scene:

“The haughty general [Lucas] rode up, and, without speaking to us, instantly ordered his guard to surround us. They did so very abruptly, and we were marched into camp surrounded by thousands of savage looking beings, many of whom were dressed and painted like Indian warriors. These all set up a constant yell, like so many bloodhounds let loose upon their prey, as if they had achieved one of the most miraculous victories that

Cold Missouri Night

by Joseph F. Brickey

Following his arrest at Far West, October 31, 1838, Joseph Smith and other brethren were forced to lie on the ground in a cold rain and listen to a “constant tirade of mockery” and vulgarity from the guards.
ever graced the annals of the world.” 38

The shrieking continued throughout the night, terrorizing the citizens of Far West, who feared that their Prophet may have already been murdered. Most Saints spent the night in prayer. In the enemy camp the brethren were forced to lie on the ground in a cold rain and listen to a “constant tirade of mockery” and vulgarity from their guards. “They blasphemed God; mocked Jesus Christ; swore the most dreadful oaths; taunted brother Joseph and others; demanded miracles; wanted signs, such as: ‘Come, Mr. Smith, show us an angel.’ ‘Give us one of your revelations.’ ‘Show us a miracle.’ ” 39

In a secret and illegal court-martial held during the night, the prisoners were sentenced to be executed the next morning on the public square in Far West. When General Alexander Doniphan received the order from General Lucas, he was indignant at the brutality and injustice of the affair and replied, “It is cold-blooded murder. I will not obey your order. My brigade shall march for Liberty tomorrow morning, at 8 o’clock; and if you execute these men, I will hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God.” 40 Intimidated by Doniphan’s courageous response, Lucas lost his nerve. The prayers of the Saints were answered. 41

The same night word reached Far West that the enemy intended to arrest the remaining participants of the Battle of Crooked River. So before dawn about twenty brethren slipped out of Far West and headed northeast toward Iowa territory. Hyrum Smith and Amasa Lyman were not so fortunate. They were arrested and joined the other prisoners.

On the morning of 1 November, as George Hinkle marched the Mormon troops out of Far West, the Missouri militia entered the city. While searching for arms they vandalized the town, plundered valuable possessions, raped some of the women, and forced the leading elders at bayonet point to sign promises to pay the expenses of the militia. 42 Many prominent men were arrested and taken as prisoners to Richmond. The rest of the Saints were told to leave the state.

Plans were made to take the Church leaders to Independence for public display and trial. Thinking they might yet be executed, Joseph Smith and his fellow prisoners begged to see their families one last time, and they returned to Far West on 2 November. Joseph found his wife and children in tears because they thought he had been shot. “When I entered my house, they clung to my garments, their eyes streaming with tears, while mingled emotions of joy and sorrow were manifested in their countenances,” he wrote. He was denied the privilege of a few private moments with them, but Emma wept and his children clung to him until “they were thrust from me by the swords of the guards.” 43 The other prisoners suffered similarly as they bade farewell to their loved ones.

Lucy Smith, Joseph and Hyrum’s mother, hurried to the wagon where they were kept under guard and was barely able to touch their outstretched hands before the wagon departed. After several hours of grief, she was comforted by the Spirit and blessed with the gift of prophecy: “Let your heart be comforted concerning your children, they shall not be harmed by their enemies.” 44 A similar revelation came to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The next morning as the prisoners began their march, Joseph spoke to his companions in a low, but hopeful tone. “Be of good cheer, brethren; the word of the Lord came to me last night that our lives should be given us, and that whatever we may suffer during this captivity, not one of our lives should be taken.” 45

Meanwhile, General John B. Clark, the governor’s designated commanding officer for the Mormon War, arrived in Far West. He ordered everyone to stay in
the city, and the starving Saints were forced to live on parched corn. On 6 November he addressed the suffering citizens and indicated that he would not force them out of the state in the depths of winter. He said, “for this lenity you are indebted to my clemency. I do not say that you shall go now, but you must not think of staying here another season, or of putting in crops. … As for your leaders, do not once think—do not imagine for a moment—do not let it enter your mind that they will be delivered, or that you will see their faces again, for their fate is fixed—their die is cast—their doom is sealed.” 46

Another contingent of militia surrounded the Saints who had fled to Adam-ondi-Ahman for safety. After a three-day board of inquiry, all Mormons were ordered out of Daviess County, but permission was granted for them to go to Far West until spring.

While preparing for their exodus, the Saints again sought relief from the Missouri legislature. Although their grievances were clearly defined and considerable sympathy was shown by many members of the legislature and newspapers in Missouri, an official investigation was never launched. Instead, the legislature appropriated a meager two thousand dollars for the relief of the citizens of Caldwell County.

In Prison Bonds

Joseph Smith and a few other prisoners were taken to Independence and placed on public display. They were then transferred to Richmond, where they were chained together under guard in an old vacant house for over two weeks. In mid-November a thirteen-day trial began, presided over by circuit judge Austin A. King. The evidence was stacked against the Church leaders. Sampson Avard, the first witness, hypocritically accused the Prophet of responsibility for the wrongs of the Danites; other witnesses were equally bitter. When the prisoners submitted a list of defense witnesses, the witnesses were systematically jailed or driven from the county. Alexander Doniphan, counsel for the Saints, said that “if a cohort of angels were to come down, and declare we were innocent, it would all be the same; for he (King) had determined from the beginning to cast us into prison.”47

For two horrible weeks, the prisoners were abused by the guards. One November night the brethren listened for several hours to “obscene jests, the horrid oaths, the dreadful blasphemies and filthy language” as the guards rehearsed the atrocities they had inflicted on the Saints. Parley P. Pratt lay next to the Prophet and listened until he could “scarcely refrain from rising … and rebuking the guards.” Suddenly Joseph Smith rose to his feet shacklel and unarmed and spoke in a “voice of thunder”: “SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and bear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!”

“He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty. Chained and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.”48

At the end of the trial, Judge King bound Joseph Smith and five others over for further prosecution and ordered them placed in Liberty Jail in Clay County. Parley P. Pratt and several others were to remain confined in Richmond, and most of the other prisoners were released.
In reality the two-story, twenty-two-foot square stone jail in Liberty was a dungeon. Small, barred windows opened into the upper level, and there was little heat. A hole in the floor was the only access to the lower level, where a man could not stand upright. For four winter months the Prophet and his companions suffered from cold, filthy conditions, smoke inhalation, loneliness, and filthy food. Perhaps worst of all, they were unable to accompany the faithful Saints, who were being driven from the state. Yet these were months of special significance to Joseph Smith and the Church. In the Prophet’s absence, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and John Taylor demonstrated superior leadership ability and commitment. In his despair, Joseph Smith received priceless spiritual instructions from the Lord.

Because of the things revealed there, Liberty Jail could be called a temple-prison.

Public opinion in Missouri was turning against Governor Boggs and the mob as Joseph Smith and his colleagues languished in jail waiting for state officials to determine what to do with them. Toward the end of March 1839, the Prophet wrote a long letter to the Church, parts of which now appear as sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants. After reviewing the wrongs perpetrated upon the Saints, the Prophet had appealed to the Lord:49

“Oh God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?”

“How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the
wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear
be penetrated with their cries?

“Yea, O Lord, how long shall they suffer these wrongs
and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be
softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with
compassion toward them?” (D&C 121:1–3).

The Prophet then inserted the Lord’s response to his
plea:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and
thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt
thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

“Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail
thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands” (D&C
121:7–9).

By April the prisoners in Liberty were sent to Daviess
County for trial. A grand jury brought in a bill against
them for “murder, treason, burglary, arson, larceny,
thief, and stealing.”50 A change of venue was obtained,
but while en route to Boone County for trial, the pris-
oners were allowed by the sheriff and other guards to
escape to Illinois because some officials had concluded
that the prisoners could not be successfully prosecuted.
Later in the summer Parley P. Pratt and Morris Phelps
also escaped from a jail in Columbia, Boone County,
and made their way to Nauvoo. King Follett, a fellow
prisoner, was recaptured but finally released in October
1839, being the last of the Saints held in bond.

Liberty Jail in Liberty, Missouri. The outside dimensions of the building are 22 1/2 feet long, 22 feet wide,
and 12 feet high to the square. The building was used as a prison until 1856, when it was considered unsafe.
Missouri Persecutions and Expulsion

For the fifth time in less than ten years many of the Latter-day Saints had left their homes and began anew to build a place of refuge. Though the last several months were marred by financial disaster, bitter persecution, apostasy, and expulsion from Missouri, most Church members did not lose sight of their divine destiny.51 As Joseph said in his letter to the Saints: “As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints” (D&C 121:33).

Endnotes
2. See History of the Church, 3:56.
4. In History of the Church, 3:57.
5. History of the Church, 3:60.
11. History of the Church, 3:73.
12. In History of the Church, 3:85.
21. Lyman Wight, in History of the Church, 3:443–44.
25. See History of the Church, 3:345.
27. History of the Church, 3:171.
29. In History of the Church, 3:176.
32. In History of the Church, 3:184.
33. Andrew Jenson, The Historical Record, July 1886, p. 84.
35. See History of the Church, 3:326.
36. History of the Church, 5:137.
37. In Jenson, Historical Record, July 1886, p. 87.
41. Previous four paragraphs derived from Allen and Leonard, Story of the Latter-day Saints, p. 128.
42. See History of the Church, 3:192.
43. History of the Church, 3:193.
46. In History of the Church, 3:203.
47. History of the Church, 3:213; previous two paragraphs derived from Allen and Leonard, Story of the Latter-day Saints, p. 130.
49. Previous three paragraphs derived from Allen and Leonard, Story of the Latter-day Saints, pp. 130, 132.
50. In History of the Church, 3:315.