“OUR GOD, OUR RELIGION, AND FREEDOM, AND OUR PEACE”: JACKSON COUNTY RESIDENTS AND THE STRUGGLE OF SAINT EMIGRANTS TO GET ALONG (1831-1834)

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“OUR GOD, OUR RELIGION, AND FREEDOM, AND OUR PEACE”: JACKSON COUNTY RESIDENTS AND THE STRUGGLE OF SAINT EMIGRANTS TO GET ALONG (1831-1834)

A Thesis

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Abstract

of

“OUR GOD, OUR RELIGION, AND FREEDOM, AND OUR PEACE”: JACKSON COUNTY RESIDENTS AND THE STRUGGLE OF SAINT EMIGRANTS TO GET ALONG (1831-1834)

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Statement of Problem: This thesis aims to examine the reasons for the Saints’ settlement in and subsequent expulsion from Jackson County. It also presents the Saints’ attempts at reinstatement. Historians generally attribute the Saints’ religion as the cause of their expulsion. However, the Jackson Countians issued manifestos that suggest other possible reasons for their expulsion. Are the manifestos trustworthy? Could there be other reasons for the Saints’ expulsion, such as business competition and a lack of consumerism?

Sources of Data: Source dates range from 1821 to 2009. Secondary sources include doctoral and masters’ theses, encyclopedias, histories, and journal articles concerning Missouri and Mormonism. Primary sources include autobiographies, journals, Latter-day Saint documents, government documents, and newspapers.

Conclusions Reached: Both sides deserve blame for the expulsion. Cultural-religious, economic, and political issues all contributed to the ejection of the Saints from Jackson County. Relying on hearsay and popular perceptions of the Saints, the Jackson Countians justified their actions with bigoted and malicious remarks. Although not included in the manifestos, the efforts of the Saints to compete with local merchants likely exacerbated tensions between the new religious community and the established population. Furthermore, the Saints’ storehouse and their practice of the Law of Consecration did not increase the amount of money in circulation in Jackson County. The lack of a nearby bank probably discouraged consumerism among the Saints as well. Possibly, if the Jackson Countians had benefited from a constant money stream from the Saints, they would have displayed greater tolerance and less of an inclination to expel the newcomers.

_______________________________, Committee Chair

Professor Joseph A. Pitti, Ph.D.

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Date
DEDICATION

I would like to thank my parents, Craig and Margaret, who always encourage me to succeed, and show how proud they are of me. I am grateful for my companion, Chad, who got me thinking about Mormons. Moreover, I am appreciative of the special teachers that I have had throughout the course of my education. In particular, professors Castaneda and Pitti have provided helpful comments throughout this work.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Dedication .................................................................................................................. v

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY .............................................. 1

2. LAMANITE MISSIONAIRIES AND THE PEOPLE AND LAND OF JACKSON COUNTY ................................................... 7

3. THE SETTLEMENT OF THE SAINTS IN JACKSON COUNTY AND THE FIRST TROUBLES WITH THE OLD SETTLERS .............................. 18

4. THE SECRET CONSTITUTION AND THE JULY 20 MANIFESTO.............. 41

5. THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN THE SAINTS AND THE OLD SETTLERS ................................................................. 59

6. THE EXPULSION OF THE SAINTS AND THEIR ATTEMPTS TO RETURN ................................................................................. 71

7. SAINTS IN CLAY COUNTY ..................................................................... 97

8. CONCLUSION ......................................................................................... 102

Appendix A ........................................................................................................ 106

Appendix B ........................................................................................................ 107

Appendix C ........................................................................................................ 108

Appendix D ........................................................................................................ 109

Appendix E ........................................................................................................ 111

Appendix F ........................................................................................................ 114

Bibliography ....................................................................................................... 115
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

During the 1790s and early 1800s, the Second Great Awakening led many Americans to question their traditional Protestant beliefs. Revivals, such as those that took place in the Burned-Over District of western New York, gave rise to new denominations, including “The Church of Christ,” officially founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. in Fayette on April 6, 1830.¹ The Church’s official title changed to “The Church of the Latter Day Saints” in 1834, and then again in 1838 to “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”²

The Saints claimed to have received a revelation to return to the primitive Christian Church and its practices. Their faith incensed their neighbors, who viewed it as no longer applicable to modern times. Moreover, the Saints agitated others by insisting that like the Jews, they held the position of God’s chosen people. Consequently, the new sect would migrate out of New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois to escape their neighbors. However, this simplistic explanation does not appear to hold up in reference to the Saints’ expulsion from Jackson County, Missouri. The old settlers (non-Saints and those who settled before the Saints) issued manifestos explaining their reasons for wanting to expel the Saints. Nevertheless, one may question whether the manifestos are inclusive and valid. Is it possible that several interrelated factors including cultural-

¹ Joseph Smith, Jr. is hereafter referred to as Joseph Smith.

religious, economic, and political dimensions played a role? Of all the places the Saints left, Jackson County proved unique because they perceived it as having extraordinary religious significance, so they tried every means to stay there.  

Only a few scholarly works cover the incident in Jackson County in depth. Among these are Warren Abner Jennings dissertation in 1962, “Zion is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County Missouri;” Julius Caesar Billeter’s, The Temple of Promise, Jackson County, Missouri (1946); Joseph Arch Geddes’, The United Order Among the Mormons, Missouri Phase: An Unfinished Experiment (1924); and Brigham Henry Roberts’, The Missouri Persecutions (1900). Jennings provides some of the most current historical research on this topic. He is also one of the most prolific authors covering it, having written articles in publications like BYU Studies, Missouri Historical Review, and the Utah Historical Quarterly. Most works, mention the Jackson County expulsion in brief as part of the overall narrative of Missouri and its counties, the 1838 Mormon War in Missouri, or within the discussion of the general history of the Church (Mormonism).

Published historical accounts on the Saints’ expulsion from Jackson County can

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3 Early in the Church’s development, the term “Mormon” had derogatory connotations, so I use the term “Saint.” A copy of “The Secret Constitution” and the July 20, 1833 manifesto is in the appendix.

be classified as either early (prior to World War II) or modern (after World War II), with either a Saint or non-Saint author.\textsuperscript{5} Church members predominately examine the subject. However, the Church has invited non-members to write about this topic. One may be able to tell the affiliation of an author through a work’s characteristics, interpretation of events (or lack thereof), or historical methodology. As one might expect from non-academic historians, early studies were often emotional, partisan, and devoid of empirical evidence.

Early Saint authors going back to 1834 typically used Saint-created sources and quoted from them extensively.\textsuperscript{6} They presented the old settlers as responsible for the Saints’ persecution and expulsion, but generally failed to mention any specific causes for the social conflict.\textsuperscript{7} Saint authors, for instance, neglected to mention the competing economic interests that aligned themselves against the Saints. Instead, they portrayed the Saints as peaceful, law-abiding citizens who resorted to violence in order to defend

\textsuperscript{5} The first Church recorder was John Whitmer from 1831, then Oliver Cowdery in 1835. Not until the late 1800s did professional, academically trained historians begin to address the history of the Saints. Later, academic journals and professional societies emerged to foster Saint history. Hubert Howe Bancroft and Alfred Bates, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft. History of Utah 1540-1886, Volume 26 (San Francisco, California: The History Company, Publishers, 1889), 83.

\textsuperscript{6} Even though the Saints used Church sources, they managed to garner a variety of primary material from documents, such as the minutes of Church meetings, diaries, and interviews.

\textsuperscript{7} Social conflict is “a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflict parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals.” Lewis A. Coser quoted in Joseph S. Himes, Conflict and Conflict Management (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 13. Brigham Henry Roberts was unique in that he sought to be historically accurate, while trying to avoid heretical judgments that might undermine his faith. In wanting to consider all sides of an issue, he saw the Missouri persecutions as stemming partly from the untactful behavior of some Saints. Roberts conceded that the Saints’ claim of exclusive divine authority might have angered the old settlers and aroused them to violent conflict. Indeed, some Saints made boastful declarations that they would acquire the land of Missouri from God. Another early historian, T.B.H. Stenhouse also perceived the Missouri conflict during the late 1830s as two-sided, with both the old settlers and Saints sharing the blame.
themselves against the severe religious intolerance of the old settlers. The Saints’ failure to receive assistance from the courts against their tormentors, together with the state government’s unwillingness to intervene on behalf of the new sect, further justified their aggressive response. Finally, the Saints felt aggrieved because during the expulsion, the governor had reneged on giving back their lands.⁸

Works classified as early and written by non-Saints tend to be anti-Saint, accordingly criticizing the Church and its doctrines.⁹ Often these writers represented apostate Saints, members of other Christian denominations, or journalists. Authors, especially during the 1840s, disdained the prevailing economic and political influence held by the Church in Illinois.¹⁰ While these authors usually noted the extra-legal nature of the anti-Saint violence, they also claimed that Joseph Smith’s policies of absolute control over those in the Church led the old settlers to fear for their own civil rights and property. Non-Saint authors usually did not support their arguments convincingly. They cited few if any specific sources or evidence to bolster their contentions. Often, their works presented exaggerated or false information. Yet, sometimes non-Saint authors inserted facts the Saints saw as unfavorable.

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⁸ Sometimes the Saints wrote in order to elicit public assistance.

⁹ John Cook Bennett, *The History of the Saints; Or, an Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston, Massachusetts: Leland and Whiting, 1842); Henry Caswall, *The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century; Or, the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints* (London: St. Paul’s Church Yard, and Waterloo Place, Pall Mall, 1843); Eber Dudley Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed: Or, A Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, From its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: Telegraph Press, 1834); The last mentioned source includes Ezra Booth’s letters written in 1831 for *The Ohio Star*; William Alexander Linn, *The Story of the Mormons: From the Date of Their Origin to the Year 1901* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902).

Modern works are written from a multidisciplinary approach, and many belong properly in the mainstream field of American West history.\textsuperscript{11} Studies based on synthesized sources yield readable narratives. For the most part, too, modern works avoid an emotional and propagandistic viewpoint. Authors try to look at the Jackson County event and its players in a balanced and detached way.\textsuperscript{12} They seek to examine the past to understand it and themselves, instead of using it to attack or defend the Church of Latter-day Saints. Likewise, they look at the external aspects of events, instead of the internal dimensions that represent the motives or thoughts of the players involved. Therefore, modern works are more concerned with factual interpretations rather than subjective judgments, like ones that express religious or slave beliefs. While most modern works consider the Saints’ expulsion to have been unjust and unlawful, some non-Saint authors profess the view that the Saints initiated the social conflict, because they failed to live in peace with their neighbors, and thus provoked the old settlers to commit violent acts.

This thesis will attempt to give a comprehensive interpretation concerning the Saints’ experience in Jackson County, which has been missing from other works. It will examine why the Saints went to Jackson County in the first place, describe their brief but tumultuous stay there, look into the grounds for the Saints’ removal, and finally discuss their restoration attempts. Although religion played a significant role in the Saints’ expulsion, the historical evidence confirms that other considerations played a role as well,

\textsuperscript{11} Church manuscript sources are now widely available online, on sites like BYU.edu.

\textsuperscript{12} Tensions between scholars and Church leaders have occurred regularly, as they do among all faiths, because ecclesiastical officials have sometimes pushed for more faith-driven history.
and that both sides share equal blame for inciting the social conflict. If the old settlers initiated the physical confrontation, the Saints began the verbal confrontation.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} I utilized primary sources like memoirs and newspapers, and secondary sources like books and journals, from a wide time span. However, it is important to point out that Saint-related sources outnumber Jackson Countian sources.
Chapter 2

LAMANITE MISSIONARIES AND THE PEOPLE AND LAND OF JACKSON COUNTY

The scripture of the Saints induced them to settle in the West. The Book of Mormon published in 1830, comparable to the Bible (also used by the Saints), reveals the ancient interaction between the Lamanites (pronounced Lay-man-ites) and the Nephites in the Americas. Both descended from Israelite tribes who had crossed the ocean to the Americas; while the Nephites practiced Judaism, the Lamanites were irreligious. After Christ’s visit to the Western Hemisphere, each embraced Christianity. Alas, two hundred years later, the Lamanites renounced Christ and destroyed the righteous Nephites. The Latter-day Saints believed that the return of the Lamanites (Native Americans) to their faith, and their aid in constructing the city of New Jerusalem/Zion as a place of peace and refuge for all righteous believers, would signal the reunification of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and the return of Jesus Christ, who would reign for a thousand years. 14

The Saints took notice when President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act into law on May 28, 1830, enabling him to grant land west of the Mississippi River to tribes that agreed to give up their Eastern homelands, while opening

14 Unlike other millenarians, the Saints set a place, not a time for Jesus’ return. The city of Zion would be its own community, separate from the outside world, but it would act like an ideal example to others of how to live. Saints engaged in sectarian communitarianism, a movement that uses “small experimental communities as the agency of social reform.” Utah Humanities Research Foundation, The Western Humanities Review Volume 7 (University of Utah, 1952), 341. Saints would have allowed anyone willing to live like them the privilege of living in Zion. The Saints gave their allegiance primarily to Zion. Unlike Stephen C. LeSueur, I do not see the Saints as a competing community wanting to overthrow and replace other political and religious organizations. Instead, if you did not become a Saint, then eventually you would just not reap the rewards of being one, and God would punish you for being wicked. God’s threat to punish you, led to you joining a new social order (the Saints). Yet, ideally, the Saints would like everyone to be like them.
up the Native Americans’ former homelands to white settlement.\textsuperscript{15} About six months after the Church’s founding, Oliver Cowdery, the first baptized into the new faith, led a major missionary expedition to preach the gospel, especially to the Native Americans, alongside the border of Missouri (at that time the westernmost region of the United States) and Indian Territory.\textsuperscript{16} Cowdery, along with fellow missionaries, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Ziba Peterson, Parley Parker (P.P.) Pratt, and Frederick Granger (F.G.) Williams, arrived in Independence (the county seat), Jackson County, Missouri on January 13, 1831.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{15} Reverend Isaac McCoy supported the Indian Removal Bill. He selected sites for Indian resettlement, and eventually wanted all Native American tribes to live in their own state. Warren Abner Jennings, “Isaac McCoy and the Mormons,” \textit{Missouri Historical Review} 61, no. 1 (1966): 64.

\textsuperscript{16} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), Section 28. A former schoolteacher, Oliver Cowdery acted as scribe to Joseph Smith during the creation of the Book of Mormon. Edward H. Anderson, \textit{A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, From the Birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith to the Present Time} (Salt Lake City, Utah: Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in America, 1926), 23. The missionaries spent half a day preaching to the Cattaraugus (Seneca/Onondaga) Tribe near Buffalo, New York. Marquardt, \textit{The Rise of Mormonism}, 256. All of the missionaries except Frederick Granger Williams began in New York. Williams tagged along after the missionaries converted many in Ohio (about 130), especially in Kirtland. He was a Thomsonian physician, who supported the usage of herbal remedies, laxatives, steam baths, and induced vomiting, instead of dependence on alcohol, drugs, and heroic medicine that prescribed “bleeding.” Thomas J. Wolfe, “Steaming Saints: Mormons and the Thomsonian Movement in Nineteenth-Century America,” in \textit{Disease and Medical Care in the Mountain West: Essays on Region, History, and Practice} (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1998), 18-28. Sidney Rigdon, a former Baptist minister and founder of the Disciples of Christ (Campbellite) movement, also converted in Ohio. Terryl L. Givens, \textit{By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 70.

\textsuperscript{17} Church Educational System, \textit{Church History in the Fulness of Times: Student Manual Religion} 341-43, Second Edition (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 85. Traveling to Missouri was slow and difficult. The missionaries had traveled between 1,200 miles and 1,500 miles. During the last part of their trip, they battled the cold winter elements and experienced the “deep snow” (one of the worst winter months in history). Church Educational System, \textit{Church History in the Fulness of Times}, 85. In 1833, Jackson County was “approximately twenty-five miles in width and seventy-nine miles in length, from the Missouri River on the north to the Osage River on the South.” In 1835, the county was reduced to one-third of its
Jackson County, named after General Andrew Jackson, originated in December 1826, and the Census of 1830 reveals that it had a sparse population of 2,823. The first American settlers in the area originated primarily in the mountainous portions of Southern states like Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and the Carolinas. According to Missourian Alexander Majors, the first settlers “were as a rule poor people… [and] barely have [had] money enough to pay their ferriage.” They usually resided in areas near or in the woods that had running water. They lived in simple log cabins with dirt floors, mud plaster chimneys, and windows without glass. In 1832, P.P. Pratt and John Murdock preached near the south of the Missouri River, where “Some families were entirely
dressed in skins.”

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 allowed slavery, which drew some settlers. By 1830, Missouri had 25,091 slaves, constituting nearly eighteen percent of the total population of 140,455. Contrary to what many LDS scholars state, the evidence points to the majority of old settlers as being not slothful slave aristocrats. Though many residents were sympathetic to slavery, only sixty citizens controlled the 193 slaves in Jackson County. Slaves were generally more expensive in the Western markets than in the Eastern markets, and they represented among the most valuable holding of any settler. Even those few who had a slave or two worked exceedingly hard on the frontier. In contrast to the Deep South with its lucrative plantation system, slave-holding Missourians generally did not enjoy a life of luxury and worked alongside their slaves in the field, in the home, or in the store.

Independence was a vibrant town. It served as a supply base for Native American tribes in Indian Territory and for Fort Leavenworth. It also acted as an arrival and

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23 Parley Parker Pratt in Evans, One Hundred Years of Mormonism, 142.


26 William Smith Bryan and Robert Rose, A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri… Early Days in Missouri (St. Louis, Missouri: Bryan, Brand and Co., 1876), 71; Dorsett, “Slaveholding in Jackson County, Missouri,” 151. Most likely, the Saints and old settlers both worked hard. The Saints probably built up their community more quickly than the old settlers, because they shared a collective religious purpose that drove them to get things accomplished.
departure point for Santa Fe Trail traders and Rocky Mountain trappers, who “were always ready for a jolly good time.”28 One could engage in recreational activities such as drinking, gambling, horseracing, prostitution, and rooster fighting.29 Moreover, “Every public gathering had to be enlivened with a fight or two.”30 Josiah Gregg, a trader who lived for a time in Jackson County, noted “the wild, unsettled and independent life of the Prairie trader,” who “knows no government-no laws,” and likes to settle his own affairs.31 The county’s location near the Indian Territory also allowed it to become a haven for fugitives. Nevertheless, the permanent settlers tended to be law-abiding.32

Before the Saints’ arrival, a congregational missionary from the American Home Missionary Society had ventured to Jackson County and described its residents as un-Christian. He wrote:

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27 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 13. Farmers in Jackson County sometimes sold excess grain to supply Fort Leavenworth. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 17.


29 Alexander L. Baugh, “A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1996), 12. Officers in the militia had to furnish their men with alcohol after they drilled. If they did not provide it, the men might not vote for them during the next election. If a farmer was able to afford it, he “built a small still house.” Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 20-21.

30 Bryan and Rose, A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri, 76.

31 Josiah Gregg, Scenes and Incidents in the Western Prairies: During Eight Expeditions, and Including a Residence of Nearly Nine Years in Northern Mexico (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.W. Moore, 195 Chestnut Street, 1856), 156-157. Josiah Gregg did not live in Jackson County from May 1831 to October 1833, as he was likely in Santa Fe. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 307.

32 Baugh, “A Call to Arms,” 12.
The prospects for our evangelical work appear less likely here than any place I have seen in my westward journeyings. Such a godless place, filled with so many profane swearers….The majority of the people make a mild profession of Christian religion, but it is mere words, not manifested in Christian living. There are a few so-called ministers of the Gospel hereabouts, but they are a sad lot of churchmen, untrained, uncouth….Christian Sabbath observance here appears to be unknown.33

It seemed to some observers that for many old settlers, freedom of religion meant freedom from religion. In fact, despite these allegations, small congregations near what later became Independence already existed, including St. Mary’s Catholic Church, organized in 1823, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, formed in 1826. 34

Oliver Cowdery, P.P. Pratt, and F.G. Williams preached to the nearby Shawnee and Delaware. 35 The Kansas/Kaw and Osage had recently inhabited the region, but encroaching settlement forced them off their land.36 The Baptists and Methodists were already courting the Shawnee, so the Saints mainly spent time with the Delaware. Chief Kik-tha-we-nund (“Causing to Crack/Creaking Boughs/Making a Noise”), otherwise


known as William Anderson, proved receptive to them. Cowdery told the Delaware leaders, “Thousands of moons ago, when the red men’s forefathers dwelt in peace and possessed this whole land, the Great Spirit talked with them, and revealed His law and His will, and much knowledge to their wise men and prophets.”

Cowdery also shared with them the Book of Mormon, in which he revealed their past and future, and promised that if they accepted the Church of Christ, they would be prosperous again. The chief asked to build a council house, so the Saints could teach his people.

Major Richard Cummins, the local Indian agent, soon learned about the Saints’ proselytizing efforts, and informed them they were in violation of the federal law by not obtaining a necessary permit to enter Indian Territory. If they ignored the order, he warned, the military would intervene. P.P. Pratt believed part of the reason for Cummins’ reaction involved the jealousy of local sectarian missionaries. The Baptist missionary Reverend Isaac McCoy, for instance, had made contact with the Delaware as

37 Mark Roscoe Ashurst-McGee, “Zion Rising: Joseph Smith’s Early Social and Political Thought” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State University, 2008), 224; Clinton Alfred Weslager, The Delaware Indians: A History (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 329; Sheryl Hartman and Steve Tucker, Natives Along the Wabash (Nashville, Indiana: Lotus Petal Pub., 2008), 105. A couple of decades before the Saints approached the Delaware, Moravian missionaries had made contact with the tribe and one of its leaders, Chief Tetabokshke (Tetepachksit)-the “Grand Glaize King.” Chief Kikthawenund had opposed the Moravians because he believed the Delaware should hold tight to their customs. Perhaps, he now listened to the Saints because their message seemed to pledge that the Delaware would regain their former power. Other tribal leaders may have influenced him to do so. He died in September 1831. Weslager, The Delaware Indians, 329, 335, 374.

38 Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times, 85.

39 Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times, 86.


41 Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times, 86.
early as 1818. Some of the Delaware chiefs had supposedly promised him that when they permanently moved west of the Mississippi, he would be allowed to build a school to teach their children.\textsuperscript{42} When Oliver Cowdery realized in 1831 that an Indian school had yet to be constructed, he wrote to General William Clark, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, and asked the right “to have free intercourse unto the several tribes in establishing schools for the instruction of their children and also teaching them the Christian religion.”\textsuperscript{43} Both the Saints and Delaware would benefit from this act, he noted, and the Delaware would rather have a school on their own land, than send their children to the Choctaw academy in Kentucky.\textsuperscript{44} However, when Pratt traveled to St. Louis, likely with the letter, Clark was absent, so he failed to secure a permit. Pratt went on to visit Joseph Smith, now living in Kirtland, Ohio (the Church’s administrative headquarters until early 1838).\textsuperscript{45} In Ohio, Pratt learned that the Church had over 1,000 members; he also obtained additional copies of the Book of Mormon to distribute.\textsuperscript{46} In the interim, the

\textsuperscript{42} Weslager, \textit{The Delaware Indians}, 354, 384-385.


\textsuperscript{45} Marquardt, \textit{The Rise of Mormonism}, 257, 260. Kirtland was about 840 miles away from Jackson County.

missionaries converted a few whites in Jackson County as well as in other parts of
western Missouri. 47

Meanwhile, the missionaries also sought the location of Zion, which according to
one of the Church’s central tenets would represent the site of the final gathering of the
Saints. 48 Despite the negative image of Jackson County’s populace, many travelers
gushed over its landscape. Washington Irving, the prominent American author, who
wandered through the area, recognized that “The fertility of all this western country is
truly astonishing. The soil is like that of a garden, and the luxuriance and the beauty of
the forests exceed any that I have seen.” 49 In May, Oliver Cowdery likewise noted its
beauty and fertility to Joseph Smith. 50 After a Church conference in June, Smith
instructed about twelve pairs of members to preach while journeying to western Missouri,
with each pair taking a different route. 51 He also commanded the Colesville Branch,

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47 Marquardt, The Rise of Mormonism, 260. Oliver Cowdery and Ziba Peterson converted
forty-four people in Big Sni Township in Lafayette County. I wonder how things would have turned
out if Lafayette had been the location of Zion. Inez Smith Davis, The Story of the Church: A History
of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Independence, Missouri: Herald Pub. House,
1955), 96.

48 The idea of the Gathering came from the Old Testament.

49 Whitney, Kansas City, Missouri, 36.

50 Charles Mackay and Henry Mayhew, The Mormons: Or Latter-day Saints With Memoirs of
the Life and Death of Joseph Smith the “American Mahomet,” Third Edition (London: 227 Strand,
1852), 51.

51 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 52.
originally from New York, and consisting of about sixty-five members, to settle there.\textsuperscript{52}

Longing to set foot in Zion before she succumbed to her illness, Polly Knight, a branch member, embodied the enthusiasm of the pilgrims on the way to the Promised Land.\textsuperscript{53}

Moreover, Smith along with seven other members headed to western Missouri.\textsuperscript{54} He visited Lafayette and Saline Counties, but Jackson County stood out.\textsuperscript{55} Perhaps, Church leader, William Wines (W.W.) Phelps wrote the following favorable description of Jackson County:

The beautiful rolling prairies lay spread around like a sea of meadows…. [There are] plums, grapes, crab apples, and persimmons. The prairies were [are] decorated with a growth of flowers…. The soil is rich and fertile, from three to ten feet deep…. It produces in abundance wheat, corn,…sweet potatoes[,] and cotton. Horses, cattle, and hogs…are tolerably plenty, and seem nearly to raise themselves by grazing…. Buffalo, elk, deer, bears, wolves, beaver, and many lesser animals, roam at pleasure….The season is mild and delightful nearly three quarters of the year.\textsuperscript{56}

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\textsuperscript{53} Church Educational System, \textit{Church History in the Fulness of Times}, 105. After a week in Zion, Polly Knight became the first Saint to die in Missouri. Billeter, \textit{The Temple of Promise}, 33.
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\textsuperscript{54} Geddes, \textit{The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)}, 10. The others were Joseph Coe, Algernon Sidney and Elizabeth Gilbert, Martin Harris, Edward Partridge, William Wines Phelps, and Sidney Rigdon.
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\textsuperscript{55} Walter Barlow Stevens, \textit{Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State): One Hundred Years in the Union 1820-1921}, Volume 2 (St. Louis, Missouri: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 99.
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\textsuperscript{56} Mackay and Mayhew, \textit{The Mormons}, 52. A common assumption is that Sidney Rigdon wrote this description; however, an 1834 letter by William Wines Phelps mimics much of the wording. Richard Lloyd Anderson, “New Data for Revising the Missouri ‘Documentary History,’” \textit{BYU Studies} 14, no. 4 (1974): 488-501. Apparently, the grasslands were so plentiful that cattle and horses rarely needed extra feed. Bryan and Rose, \textit{A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri}, 70.
\end{flushright}
Indeed, Smith believed he had found the location of the Garden of Eden.57

The Saints looked down on the old settlers. Even before visiting western Missouri, Joseph Smith believed it to be the land of the Saints’ enemies, until the locals repented.58 Smith drew parallels to the land of Canaan, in which the unholy inhabitants were exterminated to make way for the Jews. Once in Missouri, he further disparaged the old settlers, commenting, “How natural it was to observe the degradation, leanness of intellect, ferocity, and jealousy of a people [Jackson Countians] that were nearly a century behind the times, and to feel for those who roamed about without the benefit of civilization, refinement, or religion.”59 W.W. Phelps spent his first Sunday in Jackson County preaching to a group of blacks, Native Americans, and whites.60 He pointed out that Westerners used language differently than he did. For instance, they used the word “mighty” as an indefinite adjective that “qualifie[d] all things, good, bad [,] and indifferent -- as a mighty man, mighty land, mighty big…etc.”61


58 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 52.

59 Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times, 130.


61 William Wines Phelps, Ontario Phoenix, September 7, 1831. Emily Partridge Young notes in her autobiography found in Woman’s Exponent 13 (1884), a few of the different customs of the old settlers; they would “tote” objects on their heads, instead of carrying them in their hands, and go barefoot in warm weather.
Chapter 3

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE SAINTS IN JACKSON COUNTY AND THE FIRST TROUBLES WITH THE OLD SETTLERS

On July 20, 1831, Joseph Smith announced his revelation declaring Missouri, “the land of promise” and Independence, “the center place” of “the city of Zion.” In the near future, he instructed, the Saints should buy “every tract lying westward, even unto the line running directly between Jew and Gentile.”

Church leader, Sidney Rigdon, wrote a circular that described the land and requested money to buy it.

Notwithstanding the religious mandate, the Saints also learned that western Missouri offered settlers good cheap land. In 1831, most land sold for between $1.25 and $2.00 per acre. Settlers could purchase in one of three ways: from the Federal Government, from the State of Missouri, or from private individuals. The Church collected $3,000 to buy land. On July 26, Bishop Edward Partridge made his first purchase and ranked as one of the first Saints to buy land in western Missouri. By the summer of 1833, the Church had acquired about

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62 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 57. This probably refers to the border between Missouri and Indian Territory.

63 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 58.


Sidney Rigdon dedicated Missouri as a gathering place for the Saints on August 2, 1831. As a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel, Rigdon, Joseph Smith, and ten others laid down the first log for a house in Kaw Township. The next day, Smith dedicated a temple lot near the county courthouse in Independence. During the Saints’ entire stay in Missouri, only cornerstones symbolized the temple. The fifth Church conference, and the first one in Independence, took place on August 4; however, few of those asked to preach while making their way to Jackson County could attend. Three days later, Smith spoke about the need to observe the Christian Sabbath, “love thy neighbor as thyself,” and not commit adultery, kill, or steal. Soon after, Church leaders like Rigdon and Smith returned to Kirtland. Smith kept in contact with those in Jackson County by mail

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68 Andrew Jenson, ed., *Church Chronology: Or a Record of Important Events Connected With the History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Territory of Utah* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Andrew Jenson, 1886), 4.


70 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 57.


72 Jenson, ed., *Church Chronology*, 4.

73 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 59.
and messenger. The Saints in Missouri made small decisions on their own, but strove to consult with Smith when dealing with large decisions.

After the summer of 1831, the Saints migrated in greater numbers to Jackson County than other groups. They came mainly from Indiana, New England, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Several joined the Church because of its similarities to Puritanism. Most were common laborers and farmers. The few who held important Church positions in Jackson County included Edward Partridge, bishop; Algernon Sidney (A.S.) Gilbert, financial agent and manager of the “lord’s storehouse;” W.W. Phelps, printer and editor; and Oliver Cowdery, assistant printer and editor.

Once the Saints arrived, they built log cabins, bridges, dams, fences, ferries, and a mill. They prepared ground for cultivation and cut hay for their cattle. According to Newel Knight, the Saints “were not accustomed to a frontier life, so things around us


75 Stevens, Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State), 100. Saints traveled mainly by land, which they considered cheaper, quicker, and safer. “The Way of Journeying for the Saints of the Church of Christ,” The Evening and the Morning Star, December 1832.

76 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 49, 64. Like Puritanism, the Saints had “a comprehensive theology, Old Testament literalism, a providential interpretation of history, a militant faith, and a self-identification with the Israelites as the ‘chosen people of God.’” They were also both social movements and sought to convert the natives.

77 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 57. William Wines Phelps had edited the Ontario Phoenix, an anti-Masonic newspaper at Canandaigua, New York. Marquardt, The Rise of Mormonism, 130. On his way to Missouri in 1831, he bought a printing press and type in Cincinnati. After June 1833, John Corrill and Isaac Morley also became bishops. Many men had some title in the Church and had to complete specific tasks. Geddes, The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase), 10, 13.

78 Bancroft and Bates, History of Utah 1540-1886, 87.
seemed new and strange. The work we had to do was of a different nature to that which had been done in the East.”79 Some were unprepared for the winter ahead, but they saw this as part of the tribulations they would have to endure, before they received “the blessings.”80 In August 1831, a killing frost nipped the corn, thus preventing it from maturing.81 The Church’s minutes in late January 1832 reported that provisions were scarce and prices had doubled.82 The Saints survived on beef and cornbread (made from corncob gratings), and during part of the season, about ten families lived in an unfinished cabin.83 The Church had expected A.S. Gilbert and Newel Kimball (N.K.) Whitney to manage the storehouse and generate revenue by October 1831, but it took until February 1832 to open.84 The Church told Eastern branches to send only artisans and mechanics,


80 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 58. Later on, the Saints would usually come to Jackson County in the spring, and in the fall after the crop harvest. Newel Knight built a mill on the Big Blue River; the old settlers later destroyed it. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 63, 116. Richard W. Cummins built a merchant-mill after the Saints left.


82 Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1983), January 1832.


84 Newel Kimball Whitney lived in Kirtland, but during the Saints’ stay in Missouri, operated a store in Jackson County. The stores in Independence and in Kirtland each acted as a branch of a united firm. Geddes, *The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)*, 71. Whitney had acted as an Indian trader in New York. Joseph Smith and Brigham Henry Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News, 1902), 145. The storehouse probably contained surplus, like farm products, and newly purchased items for sale from places like New York.
since insufficient funds made it impossible to purchase more land and livestock feed.\textsuperscript{85} Even in October 1832, Reverend Benton Pixley, a Presbyterian missionary, indicated in a letter sent to the \textit{Christian Watchman} that the Saints suffered “for want of the necessaries of life,” for they are poor.\textsuperscript{86} In November, the Church denied that its members were struggling, claiming rather that the Saints were “generally so healthy, so industrious, so thriving.”\textsuperscript{87} On the other hand, according to Salmon Sherwood, who apostatized early on, despite a plentitude of provisions in February 1833, some Saints were eating mainly “water porridge salted and bread.”\textsuperscript{88} In April, the Church claimed the Saints “enjoyed good health, and are as well off as the generality of new settlers.” It also stated, “The present crop now on the ground looks very fine...an abundance will be raised this season, as very considerable [seed] was sown last fall.”\textsuperscript{89} It seems that the Church put up a front.

In late April 1832, Joseph Smith returned to Jackson County and stayed there about two weeks. At a general Church council, he received acknowledgement of his position as President of the High Priesthood.\textsuperscript{90} Church leaders formed a central board of control over temporal concerns and began “to manage the affairs of the poor, and all

\textsuperscript{85} Cannon and Cook, \textit{Far West Record}, January 1832.

\textsuperscript{86} Benton Pixley, \textit{Christian Watchman}, November 1832.

\textsuperscript{87} “The Gathering,” \textit{The Evening and the Morning Star}, November 1832.

\textsuperscript{88} Salmon Sherwood, “The Mormons,” \textit{Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser}, April 20, 1833.

\textsuperscript{89} “To the Brethren Abroad,” \textit{Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser}, April 27, 1833.

\textsuperscript{90} Geddes, \textit{The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)}, 11.
things pertaining to the bishopric." In May, the Church approved the printing of 3,000 copies of the Book of Commandments, later called the Doctrine and Covenants. Oliver Cowdery, W.W. Phelps, and John Whitmer’s task was to edit these communications and revelations from Smith. Phelps also had to edit and print the hymns selected by Smith’s wife, Emma.

Levi Jackman, a Church leader, expressed optimism that the Saints could finally begin to enjoy themselves, now “that our warfare was ended,” “and everything seemed to promise peace and prosperity.” Yet, soon after the Saints established their settlement, the Jackson Countians showed aggression towards them. Several old settlers made it clear they hated these constantly migrating, “Yankees worse than snakes.” Colonel Samuel D. (S.D.) Lucas considered the Saints, a “tribe of human locusts,” who threatened, “to scorch and wither a goodly portion of Missouri.” Alexander Majors noticed that the Saints “were clannish, traded together, [and] worked together.” As early as spring 1832, the Saints had their homes stoned and windows broken at night. During the fall, they

91 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 82.
92 Billeter, The Temple of Promise, 41.
94 Phelps, Ontario Phoenix, September 7, 1831.
95 Winn, Exiles in a Land of Liberty, 89. Samuel D. Lucas had command of the Jackson County militia.
96 Majors, Bill, and Ingraham, Seventy Years on the Frontier, Memoirs of a Lifetime on the Border, 45. The Saints had a strong sense of group consciousness.
had shots fired into their homes, and a large quantity of haystacks burned. In November, the Church nonetheless proclaimed that the Saints loved “their neighbors as themselves,” most likely as an attempt to placate them.

Several possible reasons account for the Jackson Countians’ aggression. One of the reasons could be the anti-slavery stance of many Northerners, hence the term “free soilers.” In actuality, some Saints thought if a slave chose to remain with his or her master it was okay, but when a slave wanted to leave, the master should sell him or her, or let him or her go free. The old settlers also complained that some claiming to be Saints stole their food and livestock, and called this act “milking the Gentiles.” Possibly, some poor Saints lacking in food did steal from others. However, lawless individuals may also have lied about their Church membership. At any rate, the Saints rarely committed any crimes while in Jackson County. Joseph Smith had revealed that no one should “break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.” If they had been caught stealing something, then they


98 Evans, *One Hundred Years of Mormonism*, 166.


102 Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State)*, 100. The old settlers perceived the Saints usage of the term “Gentile” towards them as derogatory.
would have likely been arrested, which records neglect to show.\textsuperscript{104} Old settlers probably thought the Saints suppressed any incriminating evidence.

Furthermore, the old settlers did not want to compete for available land. Aware of the importance of land ownership as a measure of community status, they resented the Saints pooling their resources to buy real estate, thereby giving them an advantage over non-Saints.\textsuperscript{105} The old settler elite also wanted control of large tracts for speculative purposes.\textsuperscript{106} In some cases, the Saints purchased land that squatters were living on, thus possibly leading to squatter retaliation. Finally, the old settlers feared that the Saints would eventually monopolize the area’s grazing lands for their own cattle. Already, the Saints’ pigs were feeding on what had been the old settlers’ pastur e lands.\textsuperscript{107}

The negative-sometimes vicious-portrayal of the Saints in newspapers likewise exacerbated community hostility against the religious newcomers in Jackson County. For instance, in September 1831, a newspaper charged Church leaders with being “gross impostors,” while at the same time defaming their disciples as nothing more than “deluded, insane enthusiasts.”\textsuperscript{108} Along the same vein, \textit{The Missouri Intelligencer and}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{103} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 58.}\
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{104} Evans, \textit{One Hundred Years of Mormonism}, 149.}\
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{105} Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, 49.}\
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{106} Zahniser, “Violence in Missouri, 1831-1839,” 86.}\
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{107} Emily M. Austin, \textit{Mormonism; or, Life Among the Mormons: Being an Autobiographical Sketch; Including an Experience of Fourteen Years of Mormon Life} (Madison, Wisconsin: M.J. Cantwell, Book and Job Printer, King St., 1882), 68.}\
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{108} “The Mormonites,” \textit{Daily Missouri Republican}, September 6, 1831.}
Boon’s Lick Advertiser in June 1832 reported that after a Methodist preacher and his wife converted to the new faith, they became deranged upon realizing they could not perform miracles. Subsequently, added the newspaper, they engaged in fighting evil spirits, attacking their house, and even attempting to sacrifice one of their children.109

The Evening and the Morning Star

Public awareness of the Saints’ settlement in Missouri became widespread with the publication The Evening and the Morning Star, in June 1832.110 Published in Independence, the Saint newspaper came out monthly and cost one dollar a year. It represented the only newspaper within a radius of 120 miles.111 The Star proved significant because it helped to keep Church membership connected, and it tried to counter the unfavorable coverage found in the national and state press. The newspaper’s contents include a brief history of the Church, a description of the Church’s organization and doctrines, as well as hymns and poems, instructions to congregants, letters about the Church’s national progress, and revelations received via Joseph Smith. W.W. Phelps also inserted a few articles from other newspapers dealing with worldly news items and natural catastrophes, like earthquakes, fires, and storms, which focused attention on the Saints’ apocalyptic beliefs. Smith realized that Phelps needed to keep the contents


110 The newspaper title refers to the “forerunner of the night of the end, and the messenger of the day of redemption.” Samuel W. Richards, ed., The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star Volume 14 (Liverpool: Samuel W. Richards, 1852), 146; one of the earliest mentions of the Saints in the Missouri press was in “Latest from the Mormonites,” Saint Louis Times, July 9, 1831. The Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser noted on June 2, 1832 that Lieutenant Governor Lilburn Williams Boggs had sent them a copy of the Saints’ paper.

111 “To Agents and the Public,” The Evening and the Morning Star, June 1832.
interesting to maintain readership. The newspaper had little space for advertisements beyond the Church’s printed material. Therefore, Phelps also published a secular weekly, *The Upper Missouri Advertiser*.

Because of the paucity of newspapers on the frontier, some old settlers read *The Evening and the Morning Star*, even though it was distasteful to them. News about the large gathering of Saints in Jackson County certainly put the old settlers on edge. Josiah Gregg blamed the *Star* as a source of “hostility between the ‘saints’ and their ‘worldly’ neighbors,” and thought the situation worsened, when the Saints openly boasted “of their determination to be the sole proprietors of the ‘Land of Zion.’” Judge Joseph Thorp noticed, “Their paper was filled up weekly with revelations, promising great things to the Saints who were faithful, and threatening destruction to the citizens [old settlers] if they did not give up their lands and homes peaceably, and leave them in peaceful possession, contending that the Jew and Gentile could not live together in the same locality.” It took the *Star* several months to acknowledge any Jackson Countian opposition towards the Church.

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113 Majors, Bill, and Ingraham, *Seventy Years on the Frontier, Memoirs of a Lifetime on the Border*, 44. In November 1832, 830 Saints resided in Jackson County, but paid circulation might have been around 1,000. Banks, “The Evening and the Morning Star,” 319-333.


The Evening and the Morning Star also informed potential migrants. In the July 1832 issue, W.W. Phelps advised those coming to Jackson County to bring along supplies, and a recommendation from the Ohio bishop or from three Church leaders. The newspaper counted about 350 Saints living in the county.116 A later issue also reminded colonists to bring their own livestock and seeds, since many thought the local types were inferior.117 In January 1833, the newspaper told migrating Saints to obey the commandments, pay their debts, protect their property, take time getting to Zion, and foster cleanliness.118 This advice aimed to avert what had befallen some members of the Colesville Branch, who had made an unreasonable sacrifice by hurrying to get to Zion, and in the process had sold their property for half of its value.119 Some disregarded these directions.

The Law of Consecration

Under what he called “the law of consecration,” Joseph Smith promoted a mixture of capitalism and theocratic socialism for the Saints settling in Jackson County. The Church made sure that colonists filled out the proper legal forms to legitimize the economic system that began with both A.S Gilbert and Bishop Edward Partridge purchasing land on behalf of the Saints. After Gilbert informed Church conferences when

116 “The Elders in the Land of Zion to the Church of Christ Scattered Abroad,” The Evening and the Morning Star, July 1832.


118 “Let Every Man Learn His Duty,” The Evening and the Morning Star, January 1833.

119 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 34.
land was available for settlement, the conferences would figure out the number of individuals who could inhabit it.120 The law of consecration stipulated that all participants or stewards (individuals or the head of household) were to consecrate or convey their belongings or stewardships (clothing, furniture, livestock, money, and other property) by deed to the Church storehouse.121 The bishop would then loan the stewards back their belongings according to their just wants and needs, which took into account a steward’s abilities, circumstances, and family needs, agreed upon by both the bishop and steward, and provide them with a legal record of the transaction.122 The bishop also leased to each family about twenty-five acres, known as an “inheritance,” which could be kept by the family throughout its existence. The family had control over its stewardship, as long as it operated in an honest and industrious manner.123 Warren Abner Jennings pointed out, “The forces of supply and demand, the drive for profits, and the price system presumably would continue to allocate resources, determine production decisions, and distribute

120 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 67.

121 Joseph Smith first conceived of the law of consecration in February 1831. The similar economic practices of the Harmonists, Shakers, and Sidney Rigdon could have inspired it. Consecration also occurred in Kirtland at this time. After the Saints’ expulsion from Jackson County, the economic system took a backseat until 1838, when the Church required Saints to consecrate one-tenth of their annual surplus. The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Sections 42, 119.

122 Karl Ricks Anderson, “Consecration: Consecration in Ohio and Missouri,” in Encyclopedia of Mormonism (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 314-315. If an agreement were not possible, then it would go to a council of twelve Church leaders to decide. Church members could serve in occupations such as mill worker, store worker, teacher, and tradesperson. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 110.

123 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 89-90.
Each steward, in turn, would give an annual account of his stewardship to the bishop. The storehouse would use any annual surplus products and profits (beyond that which provided for a frugal living) coming from stewardships to aid in the building up of the Church and providing for aged, new, poor, and sickly members. It also served as an insurance policy if an emergency occurred, such as a poor harvest. Hence, the storehouse represented the common property of the entire church. However, once goods were distributed, they belonged solely to individuals.

A Saints’ responsibility was towards the group. As Mark Roscoe Ashurst-McGee explained, the Saints were unique in that they consecrated for the good of the whole, while most Americans at the time celebrated individualism and entrepreneurship. Joseph Smith revealed, “If ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things.” Indeed, official Church records did not generally record either the names of non-consecrators or their genealogy. Church recorder John Whitmer, however, probably kept track of those who apostatized after getting their

124 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 90.
125 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 88-89.
126 “The Family”-the Campbellsites in Ohio-held all things in common and had millennial expectations. Some Saints had been former members, like Lyman Wight and Isaac Morley. Bushman, Joseph Smith Rough Stone Rolling, 149. Joseph Smith told former Campbellsites not to share their items anymore. Instead, people should buy or work for what they needed or wanted. The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 42.
128 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 78.
129 Geddes, The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase), 53.
inheritances.\textsuperscript{130} Those who left the Church could keep their inheritance, but they forfeited their share of the annual surplus given to the storehouse.\textsuperscript{131}

Some corporate enterprises based their existence on the law of consecration. The United Firm or United Order had a branch that operated in Missouri from March 1832 to April 1834. About twelve men consecrated their belongings and received stewardships. Surpluses went to the storehouse for general Church needs. Moreover, the Literary Firm, which printed Church publications, operated from November 1831 to August 1837.\textsuperscript{132}

The law of consecration, however, was doomed from the start. The first adherents to come to Zion were not the rich, as intended by Joseph Smith, but the poor.\textsuperscript{133} Many wealthy Saints feared donating money to buy lands in Jackson County, or to move there, because they thought they would get back less than they consecrated. Smith reprimanded the wealthy, and declared that non-consecrators would not have their souls saved.\textsuperscript{134} Some Saints, too, disapproved of Bishop Edward Partridge putting his own name on a

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\item \textsuperscript{130} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 85.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 95-96. An actual legal document from Titus Billings states if one transgresses, he or she would forfeit all claims to the leased and loaned properties and return all lands and pay the equivalent price for personal property. The bishop thought the steward’s lease was held in usufruct only, so he had the authority to cancel it at any time, especially if someone did not maintain good behavior. A lease meant the bishop could redistribute stewardships when needed. Geddes, \textit{The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)}, 50-52. However, after the Bates case, the lease and loan policy changed to make all stewardships given as deeds in fee simple. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 95.
\item \textsuperscript{132} Anderson, “Consecration,” 314.
\item \textsuperscript{133} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 58.
\item \textsuperscript{134} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 56.
\end{itemize}
land deed meant for them, especially those who gave Partridge the money to buy the land. A Saint named Bates changed his mind after giving money to Partridge, and got it back after a lawsuit in 1833. The court system ruled against properties held in trust, thus undermining the Church’s control over consecrated property.\textsuperscript{135} Hoping to sell their land later at higher prices, other Saints bought land through means that circumvented the Church. Even though the Church had expected that its main source of money would come from those making consecrations, the Saints had little to consecrate.\textsuperscript{136} Many also disregarded the necessary recommendation to send money ahead. In spite of the cash shortage, A.S. Gilbert disliked the practice of customers receiving goods on credit, but Smith overrode him on this issue. The Church in fact borrowed about $6,000 to aid the poor in Missouri.\textsuperscript{137}

Despite the Church’s limited resources, Saints were still to receive inheritances. Although some temporarily squatted on public lands, officials prescribed that the correct and peaceful way to obtain lands was by buying it.\textsuperscript{138} Saints were forbidden to shed blood to obtain their inheritances, or else they would “be scourged” by their enemies and cursed. In spite of that, a few probably did wrongly perceive violence as a just means to


\textsuperscript{136}Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 105, 107.


\textsuperscript{138}Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 106; The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 63.
obtain land. The old settlers certainly charged that the Saints wanted to take their lands from them “by the sword.”

Likely, some impoverished individuals came to Jackson County under the guise of being a Saint, so they could obtain an inheritance. In an attempt to discourage this practice, the bishop warned that those neglecting to read and adhere to the Book of Mormon would no longer be part of Zion. The Church also expected able-bodied persons to work for their living. Some women washed clothes for their neighbors. Other Saints sought employment from the old settlers. The town of Shawnoe in Jackson County provided them with day labor. Reverend Isaac McCoy had several Saints work for him regularly in such tasks as building his home and helping him on a survey trip into Indian Territory. According to the Church in July 1833, those who worked for the old settlers were “honorably compensated.”

Community

By November 1832, most of the 830 Saints made their homes in one of five settlements: the Big Blue River Branch, the Colesville Branch in Kaw Township, the

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139 “Mormonism!” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, August 10, 1833.


141 “To the Brethren Abroad,” The Evening and the Morning Star, April 1833.


143 Porter and Romig, “The Prairie Branch, Jackson County, Missouri,” 20.

144 “The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, in Love, Greeting,” The Evening and the Morning Star, July 1833. Some works wrongly state the Saints did not have any affiliations with the old settlers.
Prairie Branch, the Whitmer Branch/Timber Branch, or near the temple lot in Independence.\textsuperscript{145} *The Evening and the Morning Star* counted 345 non-members living in the various Saint colonies.\textsuperscript{146} One of the most important steps in community building involved the organization of schools, as mentioned in the first issue of the *Star*.\textsuperscript{147} Late in the year, the Church had schools in Kaw Township (Colesville) and in Independence, which also acted as places of worship on Sundays.\textsuperscript{148} When the weather permitted, the Saints held school and Church services outdoors.\textsuperscript{149} P.P. Pratt taught at the Colesville school.\textsuperscript{150} W.W. Phelps assisted Oliver Cowdery in composing textbooks that promulgated Church doctrine.\textsuperscript{151} Students no doubt learned reading, writing, and arithmetic. Yet, an expanding Saint population meant that in July 1833, schools were deemed deficient and that “many children among the disciples, are deprived of, or do not enjoy the blessing of a school.”\textsuperscript{152} However, the Saints started a school for Church leaders (the school of the prophets) in the summer, which instructed them in Church


\textsuperscript{146} “The Gathering,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, November 1832.

\textsuperscript{147} “Common Schools,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, June 1832.


\textsuperscript{149} Billeter, *The Temple of Promise*, 51.

\textsuperscript{150} Church Educational System, *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 110.

\textsuperscript{151} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 55.

\textsuperscript{152} “Schools,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, July 1833.
doctrine and practice.\textsuperscript{153}

In contrast, many old settlers avoided the establishment of schools. They perceived education to be a luxury that would have to wait until the community’s maturity, despite a concern that the Saints might indoctrinate their children.\textsuperscript{154} Indeed, legal records show that the signatures of numerous adults are simply marks, instead of names.\textsuperscript{155} In general, attitudes toward education reflected the widespread popularity of public schools among persons of New England provenance and the obverse pattern among those who came from a Southern background. The best educated in the South were those who grew up on plantations and had private tutors, or went to private schools. In both regions, one usually had to be wealthy in order to attend college.\textsuperscript{156}

In early 1833, the Church in Kirtland told the branches in Jackson County to repent for their transgressions, or else they would face punishment, and God would favor another group. Transgressions included arguing over the organization and leadership of the local Church, not obeying the commandments, and believing one could receive revelations like Joseph Smith. Some Saints claimed Smith was “seeking after monarchical

\textsuperscript{153} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 88; Terryl L. Givens, \textit{People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 73.


\textsuperscript{155} Bryan and Rose, \textit{A History of the Pioneer Families of Missouri}, 74.

power.”¹⁵⁷ The Hulet brothers taught false doctrines that evil beings could repent, “that the devil, his angels or the sons of perdition, should... be restored.”¹⁵⁸ Even Missouri Church leaders were not immune from criticism. W.W. Phelps boasted to others that he was eating “fat beef and potatoes.”¹⁵⁹ He also wanted Smith to live in Zion although it was presently in a state of sin. A.S. Gilbert thought that God would not provide for the Saints during the last days.¹⁶⁰ After the chastisement by the Ohio Saints, the Missouri Saints said they would reform.¹⁶¹ Those failing to reform faced excommunication, or they willingly apostatized. After a Church council in Zion, Oliver Cowdery, Phelps, John Whitmer, Gilbert, Edward Partridge, Isaac Morley, and John Corrill took charge of affairs in Missouri and rectified the Church.¹⁶² On April 6, 1833, several Church members met at the ferry they owned on the Big Blue River and for the first time celebrated the Church’s birthday.¹⁶³ P.P. Pratt recalled during the summer, “There has seldom, if ever, been a happier people upon the earth than the Church of the Saints now were,” for “Peace


¹⁵⁸ Smith and Roberts, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 366. A “son of perdition” is a person who will not see the glory of God in the afterlife, since he or she accepted Jesus Christ and salvation with open arms and knowledge, but then chose to sin against the Holy Ghost.


¹⁶⁰ Billeter, *The Temple of Promise*, 49.


¹⁶² Andrew Jenson, ed., *The Historical Record* Volumes 7-8 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Andrew Jenson, 1888-1889), 633. Corrill is sometimes spelled Carrill, Covill, or Coville.

¹⁶³ *A Hand-book of Reference to the History, Chronology, Religion and Country of The Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1884), 42.
and plenty had crowned their labors, and the wilderness became a fruitful field.”

Joseph Smith came up with plans for the city of Zion in late June 1833. The city did not follow a traditional American design. Instead of a courthouse and a jail, its center would feature temples and storehouses. The city was to be one-mile square and divided into ten-acre blocks, with public buildings such as schools and twenty-four temples built on wider blocks in the center of the community. Each family would receive a half-acre lot, sufficient for a house and a front and back yard. Agricultural buildings and farmlands were to be located outside of city limits, but farmers were to live within the city. The proposed population of the city would come to about 17,500, and then another similar city would arise. This was a lofty goal, since the United States had only twenty-three cities with over 10,000 residents at this time. Moreover, Smith probably failed to consider how crowded the living situation would be for a city that was merely one-mile square, and the impossibility that single-family homes on half-acre lots could accommodate 17,500 denizens. Additionally, Smith’s plan boldly overlapped

164 Billeter, The Temple of Promise, 50.


167 Violette, A History of Missouri, 209-210. This concept of an expanding Zion endorsed the view of Manifest Destiny (national expansion).

with more than half the established urban layout of Independence. Ideally, the Saints hoped to control all the lands in and around Jackson County, and exclude any old settlers unwilling to convert to The Church of Christ. Nevertheless, at the time, the Saints remained more focused on building their own community, instead of displacing the old settlers.

**Free People of Color Controversy**

The old settlers saw the July edition of *The Evening and the Morning Star* as contentious and provocative. They believed an article, “Free People of Color,” promoted the migration of free blacks to Missouri by showing them how to evade the law and “exercise their right of citizenship.” Alexander William (A.W.) Doniphan charged that the Saints denounced slavery, and that the slave owners objected “to having so large a settlement of anti-slavery people in their midst.” The old settlers feared the migration and colonization of emancipated blacks, who could spread the message of freedom to slaves and make them feel dissatisfied with their lot. A revolt would likely occur, and the benefits derived from slavery would cease. Some old settlers also fretted that free

169 Today, several places, especially Los Angeles and New York City, have more than 17,500 people per square mile.


blacks and mulattoes would mingle with white women. They exclaimed, “We are not prepared…to receive into the bosom of our families as fit companions for our wives and daughters the degraded and corrupted free negroes and mulattoes.”

Yet, for all the heat it generated, the article merely enumerated the state laws concerning the restriction of free blacks, and cited W.W. Phelps’ acknowledgement that slaves were property in certain states. He explained the 1820 Missouri Constitution article III that intended to keep free blacks from settling or coming into the state, unless they carried a certificate of citizenship from another state. Failure by a free black to produce such a certificate upon demand resulted in expulsion from the state within thirty days, or jail until given a court trial. If a citizen brought in a free black without a certificate, he or she faced a possible hefty fine of $500. In 1820, 347 free blacks resided in Missouri; a decade later, the census revealed 569 free blacks, but Jackson County had none.

In an effort to clear up any misunderstandings and to curry favor on the slave issue, the newspaper released an “Extra” on July 16, 1833 that stated the previous article’s aim had been to keep free blacks from migrating to the state and to stop them

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173 Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty*, 91. Nat Turner’s Rebellion (Southampton Insurrection) was a violent slave rebellion that occurred during August 1831 in Virginia.

174 Whitney, *Kansas City, Missouri*, 81.


from joining the Church. In actuality, official policy allowed people of color to join the Church, and a few had.\textsuperscript{177} The “Extra” also urged the Saints to avoid becoming involved in the slavery controversy. It noted that they too understood the dangers of a slave revolt. However, W.W. Phelps unwisely commented in the article “the wonderful events of this age” included “abolishing slavery, and colonizing the blacks in Africa.”\textsuperscript{178} Even though the Saints generally denied tampering with slaves, and an old settler, Colonel Thomas L. (T.L.) Pitcher concurred that, “They [the Saints] did not interfere with the negroes,” it is probable that some Saints spoke to blacks about their rights or chastised old settlers for having slaves.\textsuperscript{179} Church leaders, hoping to appease their critics, vowed to punish those sympathetic to either free blacks or slaves.\textsuperscript{180}

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\textsuperscript{178} Richards, \textit{The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star Volume 14}, 471-472.  \\
\textsuperscript{179} “Mormon History, Colonel Thomas Pitcher Gives the Journal Readers His Recollections of Mormonism in This County. Events of the Memorable Year of 1833,” \textit{Kansas City Daily Journal}, June 19, 1881.  \\
\textsuperscript{180} A few of Joseph Smith’s revelations went unpublished for a time. It is believed by many Saints that one 1832 revelation took nineteen years to be published. It described a civil war between the North and South, and mentioned “slaves shall rise up against their masters.” Samuel Wegner Traum, \textit{Mormonism Against Itself} (Cincinnati, Ohio: The Standard Publishing Company, 1910), 258. The Missouri Saints realized that knowledge of this revelation would lead to further trouble with their neighbors.
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Chapter 4

THE SECRET CONSTITUTION AND THE JULY 20 MANIFESTO

Tensions between the Saints and non-Saints rose to a fever pitch in the summer of 1833. About eighty old settlers signed a manifesto called “The Secret Constitution,” which condemned the Saints and called for a public meeting on July 20, 1833 at the Independence Courthouse.181 An earlier meeting of about 300 residents in April had failed to achieve a plan of action, perhaps because of the crowd’s overindulgence in alcoholic drinks.182 The manifesto signers perceived the Saints to be detrimental to their civil society. Their goal was to expel them “peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must.”183 They imitated the Declaration of Independence when they concluded their document by pledging their “lives, fortunes, and sacred honors” in the struggle to free themselves from potential Saint domination.184 The manifesto belittled the Saints’ belief system, referring to them as “fanatics, or knaves.”185 The old settlers ridiculed the Saints for believing they

181 “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State of Missouri,” The Evening and the Morning Star, December 1833. “The Secret Constitution” may have come into existence on July 15. However, it probably did not appear on the streets until the eighteenth. Russell Hicks (county treasurer 1827, attorney, county court deputy clerk, and Rocky Mountain Fur Company partner) allegedly authored the document. Names not mentioned elsewhere in this thesis include William Brown (constable), Colonel S.D. Sears (county court judge), and John Smith (justice of the peace). Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 134-135.


183 “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State of Missouri,” The Evening and the Morning Star, December 1833.

184 “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State of Missouri,” The Evening and the Morning Star, December 1833.
could converse with God, heal the sick by the laying on of hands, receive communications and revelations from heaven, and speak in unknown tongues.\textsuperscript{186} A little over a year earlier, Sidney Rigdon had indeed preached to a large crowd in front of the Independence courthouse, claiming he had visited “the third heaven, and had talked face to face with God.”\textsuperscript{187} While the old settlers obviously scoffed at the beliefs of the Saints, the former, according to Reverend Isaac McCoy, never interfered with the Saints’ religious services.\textsuperscript{188}

The old settlers also disparaged the Saints’ conduct. They especially viewed the Saints as idle.\textsuperscript{189} And, possibly some recent emigrants were idle, since they felt immobilized until they received a stewardship, while others may have incorrectly thought an inheritance was possible without working. Indeed, Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith had sent a letter to Independence in January 1833 that warned the Saints to “not come up to Zion to sit down in idleness,” reminding them it was sinful.\textsuperscript{190} At the same time, old settlers likely resented the self-righteousness of members belonging to The Church of

\textsuperscript{185} “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State of Missouri,” \textit{The Evening and the Morning Star}, December 1833.

\textsuperscript{186} “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State of Missouri,” \textit{The Evening and the Morning Star}, December 1833. Church members believe they communicate with God via prayer. Today, Church members do not speak in tongues, but they believe that missionaries are able to learn foreign languages quickly.

\textsuperscript{187} Majors, Bill, and Ingraham, \textit{Seventy Years on the Frontier}, 44-45.

\textsuperscript{188} Isaac McCoy, “The Mormons -- Again,” \textit{Missouri Intelligencer}, December 21, 1833.

\textsuperscript{189} “To his Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State Missouri,” \textit{The Evening and the Morning Star}, December 1833.

\textsuperscript{190} Richards, \textit{The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star} Volume 14, 359.
Christ. Certainly, the Saints believed that religion should permeate every aspect of their lives, leading to common standards of behavior. They largely rejected the division of the temporal from the spiritual. Vexed by the Saints’ attitude of moral and spiritual superiority, the old settlers complained that the Saints sought to impose their beliefs on the community as a whole, including Joseph Smith’s notion about proper health (Word of Wisdom), which he revealed in February 1833. Smith instructed Church members to refrain from drinking alcohol, eating meats, and using tobacco, while they should eat plenty of grain and fruit. They also should avoid fighting, gambling, profanity, and violence. In addition, to prevent class distinctions, clothing should be plain and handmade from wool and flax.

About 450 old settlers attended the July 20 meeting regarding the Saints. They avoided regular judicial channels because they wanted their problem solved as quickly as possible. Besides, the Saints had not committed any unlawful acts, and they legally owned their property. Ultimately provoked by the Saints’ actions and behavior, the old settlers took the following steps:  

191 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 89.


193 “Mormonism!” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, August 10, 1833.

194 During the 1830s, the Jacksonian ideal of popular sovereignty bolstered the majority’s belief that they had the ultimate source of authority and law, and could define, protect, and enforce community values as they saw fit. Stephen C. LeSueur, The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1987). For example, nativists feared Masons and Catholics, and thought they would destroy the American ideals of freedom of thought and individual initiative. American cities thus experienced violent riots, revolving around economic declines, election controversies, ethnic and religious conflict, hostility toward abolitionists and freed blacks, and morality questions dealing with issues like the drinking of alcohol. The Saints, like others, perceived these conflicts as auguring the end of American democracy, or a time of economic, social,
settlers considered extralegal activity as the appropriate response, justified by “the law of nature, as by the law of self-preservation.”195 As vigilantes protecting their community, they produced documents to bolster their case against the Saints. Colonel Richard Simpson acted as chair of the protest meeting; Jonas H. Flournoy, physician and postmaster, and Colonel Samuel D. Lucas, judge of the court, both acted as secretaries. A seven-member committee formulated a manifesto regarding their reasons for wanting to expel the Saints.196 These included the Saints’ belief in a fraudulent religion, their constant growing numbers, their claim that they would “inherit” all the county lands, their corrupting influence on blacks, their lack of education, and their life of indolent poverty. In sum, the committee saw them as “little above the condition of our blacks.”197

The committee laid out its demands for the Saints. About two weeks later, Missouri newspapers started publishing the ultimatums that proscribed additional Saints from settling in Jackson County. Those already there were to have sufficient time to sell their property, close their businesses, and move. The Saints’ printing office was to cease operation, as well as other Saint-owned shops. Church leaders were to inform their members to abide by the demands. In the meantime, a committee of thirteen met with

and religious anomie. Saints believed God sanctioned earthly governments as long as they effected justice and maintained order. They also accepted the notion that a government’s authority derives from the consent of the governed, and that citizens should be loyal and obey laws.

195 Richards, *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* Volume 14, 516.

196 The seven-member committee included Henry Chiles (attorney), Joel F. Chiles [Childs], Colonel James Hambright, Russell Hicks (attorney, deputy county clerk), Thomas Hudspeth, James M. Hunter, and Robert Johnson (member of the Missouri House of Representatives 1830).

197 “Mormonism!” *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser*, August 10, 1833.
local Church leaders, W.W. Phelps, Bishop Edward Partridge, and A.S. Gilbert to assure
the implementation of the demands of the old settlers.198 The Church leaders asked for
the right to converse with other members and the headquarters in Ohio before they made
their decision.199 They first asked the committee if they could have three months to
decide, but this was unacceptable. Then, they asked for ten days, but the committee
responded by giving them only fifteen minutes. In turn, the Church leaders announced
they could not comply.200

Many of those pushing for the Saints’ removal were the permanent settlers of the
community, who held significant economic and social positions. They had the most to
lose from the Saints’ residence. Members of the elite especially wanted to keep their
political control. The old settlers saw political office as a means to higher social status,
power, and wealth. At the rapid rate of the Saints’ migration, the Jackson Countians
supposed the Saints would control the majority of votes by the 1833 fall election.
Subsequently, the newcomers would control the civil government and make their own
laws.201 The old settlers did not know if they could trust the Saints in politics, and feared

198 The thirteen-member committee included James Campbell, Joel F. Chiles, Lewis Franklin
(jailer), Colonel Richard Fristoe (county court judge 1827, member of the state legislature 1833),
Russell Hicks (attorney, deputy county clerk), James M. Hunter, Garr Johnson, Robert Johnson,
Colonel Samuel D. Lucas (judge, merchant), Colonel Richard Simpson, Captain Abner F. Staples,
Colonel Moses G. Wilson (merchant, land speculator), and Thomas Wilson (grocer, land speculator).
Vigilantes met at Moses’ store to discuss their situation and organize raids. Jennings, “Isaac McCoy
and the Mormons,” 62-82.

199 “Mormonism,” The Western Monitor, August 2, 1833; History of the Church I, 394-402.

200 Andrew Jenson, ed., The Historical Record Volumes 5-8 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Andrew
Jenson, 1889), 639.

201 “Mormonism!” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, August 10, 1833.
they would lose their civil rights. They believed in the concept of separation of church and state, and probably thought the Saints would form a theocratic government, with a conservative society, based on a hierarchal Church structure gaining its authority from an alleged prophet of God.202

Likewise, the few non-Saint preachers in Jackson County probably felt threatened by the Saints’ missionary success, and the possibility that those already within their small flocks would convert. They also probably ridiculed the Saints’ belief that they had a monopoly of religious truth. In June, The Church of Christ had about 200 missionaries in the field and about 1,200 members residing in Jackson County.203 Kirtland had fewer Saints than Jackson County.204 In view of the threatening demographic pattern in western Missouri, the Reverend Finis Ewing of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church declared “The ‘Mormons’ are the common enemies of mankind and ought to be destroyed.”205 Reverend Benton Pixley, who worked to “civilize” and Christianize the Native Americans, added to the anti-Saint chorus in an article titled “Beware of False Prophets”

202 A theocracy either excludes a segment of society or relegates that segment to a subservient status, because its faith differs from that declared by the state. Yet, the Church had democratic actions, such as getting new revelations and officials accepted only after a conference of members approved of them.

203 Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, June 15, 1833; “The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, in Love, Greeting,” The Evening and the Morning Star, July 1833; Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 18. A census taken in 1832 showed a Jackson County population of 5,071 (including old settlers, Saints, and slaves). Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 18.


205 Quoted in Junius F. Wells, ed., The Contributor, Representing the Young Men’s and Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Associations of the Latter-day Saints Volume 7 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Company, 1886), 45.
that was circulated among the old settlers. In it, he raised the twin bugaboo of socialism and polygamy by charging that Joseph Smith and his followers fostered a community of goods and wives.\footnote{Quoted in Bancroft and Bates, \textit{History of Utah 1540-1886}, 99.}

Although the law of consecration did advocate a community storehouse, it excluded a “community of wives,” contrary to what some Missourians thought.\footnote{Colonel Thomas L. Pitcher acknowledged in an interview with the \textit{Kansas City Daily Journal} on June 19, 1881 that the Saints did not practice polygamy while in Jackson County.} It is possible that some people equated the Saints with other contemporary sects that did practice polygyny (when a man is married to more than one wife), like the Cochranites. Joseph Smith revealed in February 1831, “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.”\footnote{The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 42.} However, according to W.W. Phelps, while in Jackson County on July 17, 1831, Smith told him and five others, “Ye should take unto you wives of the Lamanites and Nephites [Native Americans] that their posterity may become white, delightsome [,,] and just.”\footnote{Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, 195.} When Phelps questioned Smith how already married men could perform such an act, the Church’s founder replied it was no different from those who did so in the Old Testament.\footnote{Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, 195-196.} Despite the revelation, none of the seven men married a Native American.\footnote{Richard S. Van Wagoner, \textit{Mormon Polygamy: A History}, Second Edition (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1989), 12.} Most likely, Smith meant it to make their missionary

\footnote{Quoted in Bancroft and Bates, \textit{History of Utah 1540-1886}, 99.}

\footnote{Colonel Thomas L. Pitcher acknowledged in an interview with the \textit{Kansas City Daily Journal} on June 19, 1881 that the Saints did not practice polygamy while in Jackson County.}

\footnote{The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 42.}

\footnote{Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, 195.}

\footnote{Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, 195-196.}

work with the Native Americans easier, so they could live among them, despite objections from any Indian agent. Church leader, Orson Pratt, recalled that Smith told some members in early 1832 that God had revealed plural marriage as the correct principle, “but the time had not yet come for it to be practiced.” Smith’s first plural wife may have been Fanny Alger in about 1833, but it likely had no impact in Jackson County. Polygyny became a public practice among Saints in 1852, eight years after Smith’s death.213

**Old Settlers Unite and Turn Violent**

Since the old settlers’ demands were not instantly heeded, they directed their violence against the Saints’ symbols of influence. First, they targeted the printing press for destruction “with the utmost order, and the least noise and disturbance possible.”214 About one-hundred meeting members took about an hour to demolish the Saints’ two-story brick printing office (it also contained W.W. Phelp’s home), which would at least temporarily cease the Saints’ ability to disseminate Church documents.215 Phelp’s wife

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214 “Mormonism!” *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser*, August 10, 1833.

215 Rudolph Etzenhouser, *From Palmyra, New York, 1830, to Independence, Missouri, 1894* (Independence, Missouri: Ensign Publishing House, 1894), 324. The upper rooms contained the press, while the family lived in the lower part of the house. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 59. *The Evening and the Morning Star* ceased publication during August through November 1833, but later continued in Kirtland after the purchase of a press from New York. Oliver Cowdery became the new editor. F.G. Williams reprinted the editions from June 1832 to July 1833, with revisions in 1835. The *Star* was just one of about eleven Missouri newspapers that were destroyed during the period from 1833 to 1865 (most were destroyed during the Civil War). A month after the destruction of the press, *The Free
and children fled the building. Vigilantes burned or scattered most of the publications through the streets, but in December 1833, they probably sold the printing press and type to the firm of William H. Davis and Robert N. Kelly, which then used it to publish The Upper Missouri Enquirer.216 The attack produced a huge loss in property and in business revenues (about $4,750), and seven Saints lost their employment, thereby leaving three families destitute.217 A few old settlers purportedly locked up Jacob Gregg, the sheriff of Jackson County, inside of a tavern room during the ordeal. He testified in 1892 that if he had called upon the people to assist him “in enforcing the law, a part of the citizens would have obeyed; a part of them would not.”218

Writers’ Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Missouri, Missouri: A Guide to the “Show Me” State (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), 108. Many accounts state that only about two-thirds of the Book of Commandments had been published, and that the vigilantes destroyed most of these pages. Two sisters, Caroline and Mary Elizabeth Rollins rescued some pages. Steven E. Snow, “Treasuring the Doctrine and Covenants,” Ensign (January 2009): 50-53. However, it is possible that a few complete copies underwent distribution, as David Whitmer claims. David Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ. By a Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon (Richmond, Missouri: David Whitmer, 1887), 55. Moreover, the newspaper had already printed some of the revelations and a few broadsheet revelations. Perry Porter, “D&C Relics on Display at Library,” The Daily Universe, August 9, 1979. Many accounts say the old settlers threw the press out the window and scattered the type, but it seems more likely that the vigilantes would sell it because it was expensive and rare in that area. However, it also could have been fixed then sold, or sold then fixed. Supposedly, the firm paid the Saints’ attorneys $300 of the $1000 owed to them. Jenson, The Historical Record Volumes 5-8, 650-651.


218 Billeter, The Temple of Promise, 65. The civil authorities everywhere struggled to suppress vigilantism. In part, citizens undermined civil authorities by accepting vigilante actions to
newspaper, the Book of Commandments had probably riled the old settlers to destroy the printing office. Church leader, David Whitmer, admitted that the revelations in the work portrayed the old settlers as “intruders upon the land of Zion, as enemies of the Church, and that they should be cut off out of the Land of Zion and sent away.”

Some Saints told old settlers who were working their land that they were wasting their time, because “the Lord intended the whole of Missouri to be occupied by them.”

After demolishing the printing press, the vigilantes turned their destructive attention to the storehouse or general depot, managed by A.S. Gilbert and N.K. Whitney. Gilbert promised the marauders, he would close the storehouse in three days, so they refrained from attacking it. Blacksmith Robert Rathbun was not as fortunate, having his shop broken into and tools thrown onto the street. The storehouse and blacksmith shop were targets for the meeting members because they signified the Saints’ limited buying habits. They avoided buying goods from “gentile” merchants in Jackson County. They mainly received goods via the storehouse and bought items from Saint blacksmith shops. According to Saint resident, Emily Austin, the Saints also journeyed to St. Louis to enforce laws and expel unwanted persons. Often volunteer state-militia units lacked the resources, training, or desire to quell disturbances. State militia members probably shared many of the same beliefs and values with vigilantes. LeSueur, The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri, 5.


220 Stevens, Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State), 100.

221 Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from the Birth of Joseph Smith to the Present Time 1922 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1922), 160.

222 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 146.
to buy choice flowers and shrubbery, farming equipment, groceries, and mercantile goods.  

223 The Saints may have gone to the metropolis, so they could buy items from other Saints, and/or because St. Louis simply offered better and cheaper choices for consumers than did small-town merchants in western Missouri. When Saints purchased land, it meant fewer customers for the old settler merchants as well as declining revenue. With more Saints arriving every day, the economic outlook of the old settlers grew dimmer and dimmer. James Aull, owner of a mercantile business in Independence, had started losing revenue.  

224 Rathbun’s shop may have competed with that of Samuel Weston’s.  

225 Other reasons perhaps further explain why the Saints refrained from conducting business with the Jackson Countians. Banks helped to set exchange rates and provide paper currency. However, Missouri opposed the incorporation of a state bank, and the only branch of the United States Bank from 1829 to 1833 was situated in St. Louis. With a paucity of currency, the old settlers commonly used Mexican specie (derived from the flourishing Santa Fe Trade that extended south to Mexico City), while the Saints preferred the use of the English system of pounds, shillings, and pence. Consequently, commercial transactions were often difficult.  

226 Some residents of western Missouri may
have had trouble changing “their habits of mental reckoning and fixing prices.” In addition, the Jackson Countians may have been reluctant to allow the Saints to buy on credit. Moreover, bartering may not have worked because the person doing the buying had nothing the seller wanted.

The next act the meeting members participated in was one of humiliation and dehumanization. They dragged Bishop Edward Partridge and Charles Allen from their homes to the public square in Independence, where hundreds of people surrounded them. The vigilantes demanded the two men renounce the Book of Mormon or leave the county. When Partridge and Allen refused, the angry mob removed part of their clothing and covered them from head to foot with tar and feathers. The Saints felt like the tar was eating their flesh; according to the bishop’s daughter, it “seemed to have been prepared with lime, pearlash, acid, or some flesh-eating commodity.” For the time being, Partridge ceased to be a symbol of Saint authority.

On July 23, another meeting took place, and seventeen old settlers formed a third committee that met with Church leaders. Allegedly, some of the Church leaders

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228 Richards, *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* Volume 14, 486.

229 Emily Partridge Young quoted in Joseph Smith and Heman Conoman Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1805-1835*, Volume 1 (Lamoni, Iowa: The Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1897), 353.

230 “The Mormons, or New Jerusalem in Jackson County Missouri. Millennium!” *Jeffersonian Republican: Freedom of Opinion – Civil and Religious – Throughout the World*, August 17, 1833. The seventeen-member committee included Colonel William Bowers, H.L. Brazile (attorney), Henry Chiles (attorney), Harmon Gregg, John Harris, Russell Hicks (attorney, deputy
offered up their own lives in exchange for the rest of their congregation’s safety, but the old settlers paid it no heed.\textsuperscript{231} After a time, however, the committee and Church leaders fashioned a written compromise.\textsuperscript{232} Half of the Saints were to leave Jackson County by January 1, 1834, and the other half by April 1. Some of the Church leaders’ families were obligated to leave first.\textsuperscript{233} Church leaders pledged they would keep further Saints from settling in the county, that they would cease publishing \textit{The Evening and the Morning Star}, and that they would have no other printing office established in the region. In return, W.W. Phelps was to receive a reimbursement from the old settlers for his property losses, John Corrill and A.S. Gilbert were allowed oversee the expulsion of their co-religionists, and Gilbert would be permitted to sell the remaining goods in the storehouse, but he could not bring in any new items. Finally, the committee pledged it would seek to


\textsuperscript{232} The Saints later deemed this document illegal, since they signed it under duress. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 155.

\textsuperscript{233} Simeon Carter, Oliver Cowdery, William E. McLellin (one of the few Southern-born members), Edward Partridge, William Wines Phelps, John and Peter Whitmer, Harvey Whitlock, and Lyman Wight.
persuade the old settlers to avoid violence against the Saints, as long as the latter followed through with the terms of the compromise.234

The Church Reacts

Oliver Cowdery visited Kirtland over a month later to tell Church leaders of the recent events.235 Earlier, in August 1833, Joseph Smith had revealed that the Saints needed to build a temple in Jackson County quickly, via tithing, and the failure to do so would result in fire, plague, and warfare.236 This proved a badly timed revelation; for it indicated, even God was unaware of the Saints’ misfortunes in Missouri. Given the county’s special importance, a Church council decided that it should use the law to establish the rights of the Saints. Smith commanded the Saints to keep possession of their lands and stay in the county, except those who had signed the agreement. Yet, if their personal safety came into question, he granted them permission to leave.237 Smith also announced a revelation that dealt with the divine law of vengeance. The Saints, he said, should profess peace, even when others proclaimed war against them. When an enemy offended the Saints, they should bear it patiently and forgive the transgression. However, if their adversaries persisted, the Saints should tell God their situation. God would then


235 Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times, 134.

236 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 97.

237 Linn, The Story of the Mormons, 176.
give them some sign if they were justified in attacking their enemy.\textsuperscript{238}

Orson Hyde and another Church leader, John Gould, returned to Missouri with news from the Church council.\textsuperscript{239} Some Saints living in Missouri felt that in these trying times, Joseph Smith should move to the state, instead of dictating to them from afar. In late September, the Church gathered signatures for a petition that would go to Governor Daniel Dunklin in Jefferson City. He had won the 1832 election on the Democratic ticket, with mainly the support of rural areas. The petition discussed the wrongdoings inflicted upon the Saints by those in Jackson County and included “The Secret Constitution,” a few relevant pages from \textit{The Evening and the Morning Star} and its “Extra,” and information describing the events of the two meetings in Independence.\textsuperscript{240} The Saints denied the charges made against them, except for that of poverty, but they pointed out that indigence was not a crime.\textsuperscript{241} The Saints next requested troops for protection, while they sued for damages, because the vigilance committee had warned against any defiance of its orders. They also asked if they could legally charge the old settlers with treason.\textsuperscript{242}

\textsuperscript{238} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 98.

\textsuperscript{239} Jenson, \textit{The Historical Record} Volumes 5-8, 409.


\textsuperscript{241} Winn, \textit{Exiles in a Land of Liberty}, 96.
Finally, W.W. Phelps and Hyde visited the governor, but he refused to make a decision on the controversy until he talked to Robert William (R.W.) Wells, the attorney-general, who was presently away.

After Governor Daniel Dunklin consulted with the attorney-general, he wrote the Saints on October 19, 1833. He said he sympathized with them, and that their best course of action would be to turn to the law for redress. He affirmed that no citizens “have a right to take the redress of their grievances, whether real or imaginary, into their own hands.” Dunklin advised the Saints to present an affidavit to a justice of the peace, if they felt endangered by others. If a justice failed to apprehend the offenders and protect them, the Saints could notify him, and he would get involved to ensure their protection. He thought force was unnecessary to keep the old settlers in line. He also told the Saints to go ahead and sue for any damages done to them. Unfortunately, for the Saints, several of those wanting to expel them were court officials.

The Saints took Governor Daniel Dunklin’s response favorably, as they believed he would come to their aid. They resumed their occupations, built more houses, and improved their lands. Their migration continued to the county, especially when false
rumors ceased that “Zion was to be extended as far east as Ohio.” Meanwhile, Reverend Isaac McCoy apparently was buying up guns from the Saints to give to the Native Americans. Although, it seems likely he was stockpiling weapons to use against the Saints. As the anti-Saint rhetoric intensified and fears of vigilante attacks grew, on October 20, the Saints announced they would defend their homes and lands; until now, they had generally turned the other cheek. To show their resolve to defend themselves, they purchased powder and lead, and distributed guns.

Simultaneously, Church leaders sought after a law firm that would support their case. They obtained the services of four prominent attorneys from Clay County, Captain David Rice (D.R.) Atchison, A.W. Doniphan, Amos Rees, and William T. (W.T.) Wood. The attorneys charged $1,000, which today would be the equivalent of about $25,706. The attorneys probably realized that whatever group they represented, they would likely lose clients from the other side, and already the attorneys experienced threats, thus justifying the high price. The court trial was scheduled to begin on

247 Richards, The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star Volume 14, 539.

248 Early Scenes in Church History, Eighth Book of the Faith-Promoting Series (Salt Lake City, Utah: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 82.


251 Alexander William Doniphan had first made contact with the Saints while getting a suit made by the Lamanite missionary, Peter Whitmer. Doniphan, “Mormonism. The Settlement of the Peculiar People in Jackson County. And Subsequent Expulsion. Gen. Doniphan’s Recollections of the Troubles of That Time,” Kansas City Daily Journal, June 12, 1881. Rees is sometimes spelled Reese.
October 28, but no vigilantes showed up. Instead, about fifty old settlers had met on the twenty-sixth and voted to move the Saints. The next day, the old settlers rode all over the county notifying others of their decision, and some recent Saint migrants were threatened.\footnote{253 Jenson, \textit{The Historical Record} Volumes 5-8, 642.}
Chapter 5

THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN THE SAINTS AND THE OLD SETTLERS

By undermining the agreement to leave, the Saints provoked a series of escalating mob-like attacks from the old settlers.\textsuperscript{254} On the night of October 31, 1833, about forty-five old settlers, some of them armed, destroyed about eleven Saints’ homes (doors and roofs were taken off) along with other property belonging to them near the Whitmer Branch.\textsuperscript{255} The vigilantes threatened to rape the women, but this seems unlikely.\textsuperscript{256} Many Saints fled into the woods, but a few men chose to protect themselves and their property, which resulted in their beating with clubs, stones, and whips.\textsuperscript{257} Philo Dibble recalled he heard “the blows of heavy ox goads upon the backs of my brethren.”\textsuperscript{258} P.P. Pratt noticed that the “men were covered with blood from the blows they had received.”\textsuperscript{259}

During the night of November 1, vigilantes attacked Saints’ homes on the prairie and in Independence, including A.S. Gilbert’s domicile. They pelted them with bricks and stones, and thrust them with rails and poles, thus destroying doors, windows, and

\textsuperscript{254} Many Saint-authored works blame the old settlers for undermining the agreement.


\textsuperscript{256} Evans, \textit{One Hundred Years of Mormonism}, 175. I did not come across any documents that verified rape.


\textsuperscript{258} \textit{Early Scenes in Church History}, 82.

\textsuperscript{259} Joseph Smith and Heman Conoman Smith, \textit{History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1805-1835}, 325.
furniture. In response, the Saints armed themselves and patrolled the district.\textsuperscript{260} It appears that no Saint had joined the county militia regiment. According to historian Alexander Lewis Baugh, the Saints living in each settlement organized a quasi-military unit to defend themselves, and they would go wherever needed.\textsuperscript{261} For instance, P.P. Pratt led sixty men from the Colesville Branch to protect the gristmill if needed.\textsuperscript{262} The Saints captured two armed old settlers, Robert Johnson and Harris. Both were taken hostage for the night, after Johnson cracked Pratt over the head with the barrel of his gun.\textsuperscript{263} The vigilantes also wrecked and looted the storehouse and scattered some goods throughout the street. About seven Saints captured one of the storehouse looters, Richard McCarty. They took him to Justice of the Peace Samuel Weston, but he refused to act.\textsuperscript{264} Ironically, soon after, McCarty had the complainants jailed for assault and battery and false imprisonment.\textsuperscript{265}

The storehouse goods, incidentally, included “calicoes, silks, and other fine


\textsuperscript{261} Baugh, “A Call to Arms,” 16.

\textsuperscript{262} Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 170.

\textsuperscript{263} Union Historical Company, \textit{The History of Jackson County, Missouri}, 255-256; Richards, \textit{The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star} Volume 14, 571.

\textsuperscript{264} Samuel Weston had been a deputy clerk of the county court in 1828.

goods.266 About half the merchandise that traders took to Santa Fe was comprised of silks and cotton items like calicoes, cambrics, handkerchiefs, and shawls.267 Traders would obtain these and other goods from merchants in Missouri, especially in Independence.268 Without financial assistance from the Church to stock and run the storehouse, A.S. Gilbert likely had transacted business with Santa Fe traders to gain money to buy essential supplies for the community of Saints.269 The Jackson Countians, however, might have resented Gilbert’s business for depriving them of opportunities to make money. Other Saints may have also sold goods to traders. For instance, Lyman Wight raised $1,758.00 for the Church by selling such items as flour, livestock, pork, and potatoes. Wight either aided Gilbert as an agent for the Church in Jackson County, or took on these responsibilities for the Prairie Branch.270

On November 2, about thirty Saint families gathered about a half-mile away from Independence to protect themselves.271 The vigilantes had attacked the Big Blue River Branch and had destroyed a few homes and their furnishings.272 Finding David Bennett, a

266 “Missouri-ism, No. III,” Quincy Whig, June 8, 1839.

267 Violette, A History of Missouri, 196.


269 Geddes, The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase), 72.

270 Porter and Romig, “The Prairie Branch, Jackson County, Missouri,” 19. “Eighty head of cattle for $500; four horses, $175; twenty-two thousand pounds of flour at $2.50 per one hundred pounds, $550; pork $141; leather goods $72; corn $50; potatoes $75; store goods $75; and bacon $120.” The value in today’s currency would be about $45,191.27.

271 Bancroft and Bates, History of Utah 1540-1886, 102.

272 Whitney, Kansas City, Missouri, 83.
Church member, sick in his bed, the marauders beat him up, and one of them shot at the top of his head, leaving a deep wound.273 Soon a gunfight between the vigilantes and the Saints ensued, and one vigilante member, possibly Judge George Manship’s son, received a wound to the thigh.274

On the third, Church members, Joshua Lewis, Hiram Page, P. P. Pratt, and Thomas B. Marsh traveled to Lexington in Lafayette County to obtain a peace warrant, but Judge John F. (J.F.) Ryland hesitated to give them one.275 He told them, “You had better fight it out and kill the outlaws if they come upon you.” Ryland issued a peace warrant on the sixth, but it is unknown if the county sheriff received it, for if he did, it was not served. Other Saints had previously asked Judge Silvers in Independence for a peace warrant, but he denied one, even after hearing Governor Daniel Dunklin’s comments from the letter he had sent the Saints.277 Obviously, either the vigilantes had instilled fear in the judges, or they were sympathetic with the vigilantes. To be sure, some old settlers wanted nothing to do with the vigilantes and even “offered to mediate between the parties, and to bear messages of peace from one to the other.”278

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277 Wells, *The Contributor* Volume 7, 123. Silvers is sometimes spelled Silvens.

with the Saints to advise them to leave, so they would no longer be terrorized. Reverend Isaac McCoy claimed to be one of these peacemakers. Oliver Cowdery conceded that some old settlers were “individuals of respectability, who are kind, benevolent [,.] and very hospitable to strangers.”

The vigilantes resumed their mayhem on the fourth. For a brief period, they took over a Saint-owned ferry on the Big Blue River. Then, they attacked near the Whitmer Branch. About seventeen Saints, including David Whitmer, went to investigate the vigilantes’ actions. They met two young boys, whom they questioned. Once the Saints left, the boys told the vigilantes what had transpired. The Saints next came across some thirty-five vigilantes, which caused them to flee and scatter. David Whitmer then reported the news to the Colesville Branch. Another group of about thirty Saints, only half-armed with guns, attempted to locate their dispersed brethren. Some sixty-armed vigilantes, led by James Campbell, searched for the Saints near Christian Whitmer’s cornfield.

Eventually, a gunfight took place, resulting in the death of two vigilantes (Hugh Lawson Brazeale, an attorney, and Thomas Linville), as well as one Saint, Andrew Barber. In addition, both sides recorded a number of wounded, together with some dead horses. Exaggerated news of the skirmish reached the Jackson Countians. Many mistakenly believed the Saints had killed the son of merchant Moses G. Wilson, but his wound was

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281 Reverend Isaac McCoy claimed that about eighteen vigilantes battled with about forty Saints. McCoy, “The Disturbances in Jackson County,” *Daily Missouri Republican*, December 20, 1833.
not lethal. While the Saints who complained about Richard McCarty stood trial, the vigilantes attempted to kill them. Knowing the intent of the old settlers, Samuel C. (S.C.) Owens, the clerk of the county court, advised the Saints to serve their sentences immediately in jail, where they might be better protected against their enemies. Even though Owens had been a member of the committee that had urged the July 23 written agreement and thoroughly disliked the Saints, he remained composed and worked to prevent unnecessary bloodshed. Nevertheless, the incarcerated Saints realizing that their community must leave the county or else they would perish, asked permission to leave their cell to discuss their impending move with other Saint leaders in Jackson County. Under the supervision of the sheriff, John Corrill, A.S. Gilbert, and Isaac Morley left their cell during the night. Returning to their cell before dawn, the Saints were shot at by some seven vigilantes. The sheriff shouted for the old settlers to cease firing. Corrill and Morley fled, but the sheriff retained Gilbert. In the fracas, an old settler, Thomas Wilson, pushed down Gilbert. In any case, the remaining Saints gained release the next day. Gilbert, William E. (W.E.) McLellin, and W.W. Phelps sent an affidavit to Governor Daniel Dunklin.

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284 Union Historical Company, The History of Jackson County, Missouri, 256.
A rumor concerning the Saints joining with the Native Americans to take over the county circulated widely on the fifth day. The rumor gained credibility because while many old settlers avoided the Native Americans, the Saints tried to build a relationship with them.286 When the Federal Government moved several Native American tribes to near Missouri’s border, Clay Countians petitioned Congress to protect them by constructing roads and staffing military forts.287 Conversely, the Saints “watched the migration [of the Native Americans] with a kind of ecstasy.”288 They helped feed the natives that passed through the county to their new lands in Indian Territory. For instance, John Brush of the Big Blue River Branch took wagonloads of corn to sell to the Shawnee.289 Joseph Smith even instructed that the storehouse should carry goods suited to the Indian trade. Yet, the Saints never received the federal trading permit to do so.290 The old settlers saw the Saints’ involvement with the Native Americans as a threat to the region’s security.291

In 1832, Missouri newspapers had kept citizens on edge by extensively describing

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286 A great degree of prejudice towards Native Americans existed at this time.

287 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 317.


289 Porter and Romig, “The Prairie Branch, Jackson County, Missouri,” 19.


291 This does not mean that some old settlers did not engage in trade with Native Americans, it just means they did not feel comfortable with the Saints doing it.
the events of the Black Hawk War in Illinois.\textsuperscript{292} The Missouri governor at the time ordered 1,000 volunteers for the defense of the frontier against possible Native American attacks.\textsuperscript{293} A state militia law required all able-bodied white male citizens between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years to be enrolled or liable to military duty, unless exempted.\textsuperscript{294} In response, Jackson County formed three volunteer military companies.\textsuperscript{295} Fear of the Black Hawk War may help explain the small number of Saints migrating to Jackson County in 1832. Indeed, the population rose slightly from about 402 by the end of spring, to only 538 in December.\textsuperscript{296} Settlers, ever paranoid about the Native American threat, continued their military organizations and drills even after the war. No doubt, some old settlers also continued to view the Native Americans as obstacles to Western commercial expansion, particularly in light of raids on trading posts and caravans.

Most recently, a few Saints believed that through the gift of tongues, they had learned of a prophecy that promised, “The Indians will fight for us.”\textsuperscript{297} Some thought, too, that with the gift of tongues one could communicate with the Native Americans in their own dialect. However, on October 10, 1833, Church leader, Frederick G. Williams

\textsuperscript{292} Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, 48.

\textsuperscript{293} Geddes, \textit{The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)}, 103.

\textsuperscript{294} H. Niles, ed., \textit{Niles’ Weekly Register, Containing Political, Historical, Geographical, Scientifical, Statistical, Economical and Biographical Documents, Essays and Facts. From March, 1834, to September, 1834-Volume 46 or, Volume 10-Fourth Series} (Baltimore, Maryland: H. Niles, 1834), 368.

\textsuperscript{295} Arrington and Bitton, \textit{The Mormon Experience}, 48.

\textsuperscript{296} Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 63.

\textsuperscript{297} Winn, \textit{Exiles in a Land of Liberty}, 91.
pointed out that even if the Saints were endowed with this special linguistic ability, they should keep it to themselves, for it would anger the old settlers. Furthermore, those espousing to have the gift of tongues may misinterpret the content of their messages.\textsuperscript{298}

Hundreds of old settlers armed themselves for the prospective confrontation with the Saints and Native Americans. About 125 Saints with fifty guns, led by Lyman Wight, gathered within a mile of Independence during the morning. They hoped to assist the Independence Branch and their brethren, who they thought were still in jail with bloodthirsty vigilantes outside.\textsuperscript{299} Several old settlers, such as Reverend Isaac McCoy, thought the Saints wanted to kill or drive out all the old settlers in Independence, and then destroy the village.\textsuperscript{300} Seemingly in agreement with this view, Colonel T.L. Pitcher, also a deputy constable, in the absence of Colonel S.D. Lucas, called out the county militia to deal with the armed groups, giving the militia’s subsequent conduct the appearance of legality.\textsuperscript{301} Josiah Gregg recalled, “The note of alarm was sounded far and near, and armed men, eager for the fray, were rushing in from every quarter.”\textsuperscript{302} Alexander Majors observed, “Every citizen, as soon as he could run bullets and fill his powder horn with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{298} Richards, \textit{The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star} Volume 14, 520.
\item \textsuperscript{299} Smith and Roberts, \textit{History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints}, 433; McCoy, “The Disturbances in Jackson County,” \textit{Daily Missouri Republican}, December 20, 1833.
\item \textsuperscript{300} McCoy, “The Disturbances in Jackson County,” \textit{Daily Missouri Republican}, December 20, 1833.
\item \textsuperscript{301} Stevens, \textit{Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State)}, 98.
\item \textsuperscript{302} Gregg, \textit{Commerce of the Prairies}, 317.
\end{itemize}
powder, gathered his gun and made for the town [Independence]; and in a few hours men
enough had gathered to exterminate them [the Saints] had they approached. 303

Colonel T.L. Pitcher received approval for calling out the militia from Lieutenant
Governor Lilburn Williams (L.W.) Boggs. 304 Many Saints believed Boggs to be the silent
leader of the anti-Saint mob. A large landholder who resided in Jackson County, he also
engaged in the fur trade, and might have harbored a grudge against the competing
Saints. 305 Moreover, even if he did not play a role with the vigilantes, he did nothing to
stop them. Indeed, if the lieutenant governor had intervened on behalf of the Saints, he
would have alienated his political supporters.

Although the opponents of the Saints had mobilized full force against them, the
outnumbered Saints did not agree to disband until they received word that their brethren
had been released from jail, and that a plan had been made among the Saint leaders to
have their community abandon the county. However, on their return home, they met the
militia, which consisted in part of vigilantes. Colonel T.L. Pitcher demanded the Saints
surrender their arms, and pledged they would get them back after they had left the

303 Majors, Bill, and Ingraham, Seventy Years on the Frontier, 48.
304 Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History, 165.
305 Bushman, Joseph Smith Rough Stone Rolling, 229; Perry Scott Rader, Civil Government of the United States and the State of Missouri (Jefferson City, Missouri: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1907), 426. Lieutenant Governor Lilburn Williams Boggs had been a member of the Missouri House of Representatives (1826), county clerk (1827), and state senator (1828). False rumors led to the Daily Missouri Republican at St. Louis, on November 15, 1833, to report that Boggs had faced expulsion in Jackson County during the social conflict. On December 6, 1833, the same newspaper related Boggs’ side of the story, which he had recorded on November 16. He pointed out that Hicks had not died, and that a second deadly battle had never occurred. Three years later, Boggs became governor and issued the extermination order that resulted in the expulsion of some 15,000 Saints from Missouri during the winter of 1838-1839.
Lyman Wight and Pitcher negotiated a compromise that once the Saints relinquished their arms, the militia would too, but the militia failed to comply. Furthermore, Pitcher demanded that the Saints hand over those who had fought the day before, so they could stand trial for murder. While detained for one night and day, these men were threatened and beaten. Pitcher took a Saint’s watch to cover the costs of the court.

On November 6, 1833, the vigilantes’ actions became more rampant. They went into Saints’ settlements, threatening death to those who did not leave by night. They also chased down the Saints, took their weapons, shot at them, tied them up, and whipped them. The Saints claimed Reverend Isaac McCoy was at the forefront of one of the vigilante groups. However, McCoy attested he accompanied one of the companies merely to regulate its conduct and keep it peaceful. He contended that the company abstained from violence “upon any person, and no depredation was made [on] any species of their [the Saints’] property.” One who knew McCoy noted he carried his gun

306 Jenson, The Historical Record Volumes 7-8, 645.

307 Orson Hyde’s personal account appeared in the Daily Missouri Republican on November 12, 1833, three days after he wrote it. He had left Jackson County by steamboat, probably on the fifth. Hyde incorrectly stated that a battle had occurred in which an old settler and attorney named Hicks and twenty other vigilantes had died. In addition, he wrongly reported that one or two Saints had died. He later recanted this statement in the December issue of The Evening and the Morning Star.


309 George Quayle Cannon, Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet (Salt Lake City, Utah: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), 162. Reverend Isaac McCoy had slaves and was probably a land speculator. He had connections as a Federal Government surveyor. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 327.

everywhere for protection against bandits or rogue Native Americans. It was also common for old settlers to kill a wild animal if the opportunity presented itself. Though possible that some Jackson Countians simply wanted the Saints to give up their arms to prevent bloodshed; McCoy and some other old settlers wrote a letter on the eighth urging that the Saint leaders, especially Bishop Edward Partridge, should “be arrested and detained upon the charge of forming a conspiracy to murder and rob the other inhabitants of the county.” The Saints were finding it hard to hold their ground.

311 Jennings, “Isaac McCoy and the Mormons,” 74-77.
Chapter 6

THE EXPULSION OF THE SAINTS AND THEIR ATTEMPTS TO RETURN

Facing widespread militarized opposition during the last months of 1833, numerous Saints fled Jackson County; ironically, their city of Zion, proved to be anything but a refuge. Saints mostly journeyed to the Missouri River and crossed north into Clay County, while some relocated to Lafayette County, the prairie, Ray County, or into south Jackson County (formed into Van Buren County in 1835).312 According to P.P. Pratt, “Some had the good fortune to escape with their family, household goods, and some provisions; while others knew not of the fate of their friends, and had lost all their goods.”313 Cold and rainy weather added to their misery. Yet they endured, and a few women even gave birth during this tumultuous time.

The few Saints who stayed in Jackson County, mainly elderly or living more than a dozen miles away from Independence, received occasional threats, until they were expelled as well. In one instance, on December 23, 1833, four elderly families were forced to flee when the vigilantes destroyed their homes.314 Often the Saints were afraid to return to their homes and collect their belongings. A few that had resettled in Van


313 Parley Parker Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri Upon the Mormons* (Detroit, Michigan: Dawson and Bates, 1839).

314 “The Mormons, &c.,” *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser*, February 1, 1834. Nearly all publications note the date to be (Monday) December 24, 1833, but if it happened on a Monday, then it would have been the 23rd.
Buren County returned to Jackson County in February 1834 to collect personal belongings and received horrible beatings in the process. For instance, Abigail Leonard recalled that five armed men came into her family’s home and severely beat her husband. They hit him in the head with a chair, stripped him down to his pantaloons, and whipped him.\textsuperscript{315} Yet, a few old settlers like Stephen Cantrell gave a Saint some of his own provisions to make up for those that had been lost.\textsuperscript{316} Indeed, several old settlers had harvested some of the Saints’ crops for their own consumption.

The Great Leonid Meteor Shower occurred on November 13, 1833, and the sight of over 200,000 meteors gave the Saints’ hope about the future.\textsuperscript{317} During this era, few people knew about astronomy. At first, many Saints perceived the event to be a sign of judgment day and the return of Jesus Christ. A revelation from 1830 had asserted that before Jesus Christ returned, “the stars shall fall from heaven.”\textsuperscript{318} When the Saints realized the end-time had not yet come, they expressed their belief that God was watching over them. Commenting on the dazzling astral display, Joseph Smith wrote that it was “as though all the artillery and fireworks of eternity were set in motion to enchant and entertain the Saints, and terrify and awe the sinners on the earth.”\textsuperscript{319} Judge Joseph

\textsuperscript{315} Smith and Roberts, \textit{History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints}, 480.

\textsuperscript{316} Porter and Romig, “The Prairie Branch, Jackson County, Missouri,” 29.


\textsuperscript{318} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 29.

\textsuperscript{319} Mackay and Mayhew, \textit{The Mormons}, 71-72.
Thorp noticed that the Saints saw “it as being a sign from heaven that the Lord would in some miraculous manner enable them to overcome the ungodly Gentiles.”320 Some of the old settlers took the meteor shower as “evidence of God’s displeasure [for their maltreatment of the Saints], and believed that fearful calamities would probably speedily follow.”321 Accordingly, they “fell upon their knees in penitence, confessing all the sins of their past lives, and calling upon God to have mercy.”322

Joseph Smith learned of the expulsion from John Gould and Orson Hyde on November 25, 1833. Smith notified Bishop Edward Partridge on December 5 that it would “be impossible for us [the Kirtland Church] to render you any assistance in a temporal point of view, as our means are already exhausted, and we are deeply in debt.”323 Instead, the Missourian Saints were to help each other out. They should remain faithful and realize their circumstances did not compare to the hardships experienced during biblical times. They were to withhold the selling of their lands in Zion, unless no other way could be found to provide for their needs.

On December 10, Joseph Smith wrote to the Missouri Saints, providing them with a course of action. He suggested that the Lord might have caused the difficulties experienced because of “some individuals, who have walked in disobedience, and

320 Thorp, “Early Days in Missouri,” Liberty Tribune, October 12, 1883.
322 Samuel Rogers and John I. Rogers, Autobiography of Elder Samuel Rogers, 134.
323 Richards, The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star Volume 14, 598-599.
forsaken the new covenant.\textsuperscript{324} Therefore, the Missouri Saints were to rid themselves of these members. He declared also that good Saints should be willing to die before they “give up the land of Zion,” or else they would not see God.\textsuperscript{325} He pleaded for the Saints to employ “every lawful means to seek redress.”\textsuperscript{326} If the judge, governor, and President failed the Saints, they were to ask God to bring judgment against their enemies, who would then destroy them.\textsuperscript{327}

Joseph Smith’s lengthy revelation on December 16 gave the Saints a Church-backed reason for their expulsion from Zion. Clearly, their numerous transgressions, “jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires,” were to blame.\textsuperscript{328} The Saints’ current lack of faith meant God was unwilling to redeem them. Only after proving themselves worthy again, would they “build up the waste places of Zion.”\textsuperscript{329} Orson Pratt commented over forty years later that the Saints’ noncompliance with the law of consecration and inheritance was to blame for their expulsion.\textsuperscript{330}


\textsuperscript{325} “Beloved Brethren,” \textit{The True Latter Day Saints’ Herald}, July 1863.

\textsuperscript{326} “Beloved Brethren,” \textit{The True Latter Day Saints’ Herald}, July 1863.

\textsuperscript{327} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 103.

\textsuperscript{328} Some copies of the revelation sold for one dollar. The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 101.

\textsuperscript{329} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 101.
provided a parable about the redemption of Zion: A nobleman owned a prime piece of land on which his servants planted twelve olive trees. He wanted his olive trees protected in a specific manner from thieves, but his servants disobeyed. Subsequently, thieves captured the property containing the olive trees. The nobleman then wanted his able-bodied servants to fight and regain his property. His servants would receive a reward, once they did as he commanded. Smith also ordered the Saints to not only battle for the Church’s property they already owned, but to continue to buy up land in and around Jackson County. Yet, another reason they should control land would be so no more people would “be in bondage one to another.”

Missouri newspapers vouchsafed their opinions about the Saints’ expulsion. The editor of the Daily Missouri Republican on November 15, 1833 wrote, “There may be many worthless and intolerable members of the obnoxious sect; but the laws are equal to the punishment of all those who are guilty of violating them….We think they acted perfectly right in offering the resistance which they did, and thus far they have the sympathy of this part of the community.” Even though the Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser viewed the Saints with abhorrence, and agreed with the Jackson Countians that they probably were a nuisance, it too disagreed with the actions taken against them. On November 16, the newspaper declared that the Saints “have rights

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331 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 101.

guaranteed by the constitution…and should be as like protected in the freedom of conscience, and in the enjoyment of Life, Liberty and Property.”  

It also beseeched the governor to intervene and punish the vigilantes. It later reprinted from the Salt River Journal that if “the worshippers of the moon to settle [settled] in this State, no one would have a right to molest them.” The St. Louis Free Press added, “To proceed against them [the Saints] as a religious body…must be considered persecution.” In general, during the Saints’ stay in Missouri, the newspapers and public viewed them less positively as time went on.

Both the Attorney-General of Missouri R.W. Wells and Governor Daniel Dunklin seemed sympathetic to the Saints after their expulsion. After Wells and Dunklin talked to each other, on November 21, Wells contacted the Saints’ legal counsel. He wrote that the Saints could obtain military aid from the governor to allow them to return to Jackson County. He also said they could form a militia with elected officers and possibly get public arms for their own defense. If the colonel of the Jackson County regiment opposed an election of officers, Wells assumed he would get court-martialed. A few days later, Judge J.F. Ryland wrote to the Saints’ legal counsel that the governor had instructed him to investigate the expulsion and punish those responsible. Ryland said he was willing to

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333 “War with the Mormons!,” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, November 16, 1833.

334 “The Mormons,” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, November 30, 1833.

335 “Intolerance,” St. Louis Free Press, August 15, 1833.

help the Saints, but he needed to know if they wanted to take legal action against the old settlers, in which case some Saints would have to appear at the Jackson County court. He requested a meeting with the legal counsel to discuss the situation. A.S. Gilbert responded to the governor on the twenty-ninth, and noted it was bad timing to hold a court of inquiry, since the Saints were scattered throughout various counties (thus, making it difficult for them to give testimony), and the danger for them remained high in Jackson County. John Corrill wrote to Oliver Cowdery in December 1833 that since the law required a criminal to receive a trial in his or her own county, obviously there could be no justice for the Saints. He lamented, “If the heads of the mob should be taken and put into jail [,] it undoubtedly would be torn down and they liberated.” Corrill also acknowledged that fighting the more numerous old settlers would lead to much bloodshed among the Saints. On December 6, Church leaders sent another petition to the governor that discussed their expulsion, their plan to go back to Jackson County under a guard’s protection (either by the state militia or United States Rangers), and their desire to form their own company, so they could protect themselves once the guard left. Gilbert contacted the governor again on January 9, 1834. He reported that the Saints continued to be threatened. He suggested that the Saints buy the property of the old settlers—Corrill estimated their number at about 175—who disliked living around them.


Only then, he concluded, would there be fewer cases of persecution against the Saints.\textsuperscript{340}

Governor Daniel Dunklin responded somewhat favorably to the Saints on February 4. He offered the fifty-member Liberty Blues militia, under the leadership of Captain D.R. Atchison, to protect those who attended court and make sure they followed court orders. Moreover, during the trial, the armed group would help apprehend those responsible for the Saints’ expulsion and protect the Saints while they returned to their homes. However, he informed the Saints, once they returned to their own properties, the militia would not be allowed to remain in Jackson County, unless he called a special legislature for that purpose or the President of the United States allowed the Rangers to stay. The governor urged the Saints to go to civil court to redress their injuries.\textsuperscript{341}

The Missouri governor saw the Saints’ case as significant for the entire state, but only to a degree. He allegedly tried his best to make sure “the laws be [were] faithfully executed.”\textsuperscript{342} However, the state constitution most likely would have backed Governor Daniel Dunklin if he had decided to keep the militia in Jackson County until the violence subsided, because it stipulated the militia could be used during periods of insurrection, public danger, or other emergencies. On the other hand, the governor had much to concern himself with the development of a new state. He was trying to balance the interests of both the Saints and Jackson Countians. Although willing to help the Saints, he

\textsuperscript{340} Smith and Roberts, \textit{History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints}, 472-474; Geddes, \textit{The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)}, 15.

\textsuperscript{341} Richards, \textit{The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star} Volume 14, 701-702; Launius, \textit{Alexander William Doniphan}, 19.

\textsuperscript{342} Union Historical Company, \textit{The History of Jackson County, Missouri}, 258.
was unwilling to jeopardize his political office in the process, thus preferring to keep the majority of his supporters happy.

About a dozen Church leaders received subpoenas to attend the Independence Courthouse in February. Before taking the Saints into town, Captain D.R. Atchison requested 200 more militia and additional ammunition, since scouts that had reconnoitered the town noticed that the tense situation might turn dangerous. Yet, Governor Daniel Dunklin had told Atchison to perform his “duties in the mildest manner possible,” to avoid further arousing the old settlers’ wrath. Attorney-General R.W. Wells also planned to attend the courthouse and aid circuit attorney Amos Rees. For all of Missouri’s efforts to achieve justice for the Saints, its leading officials recognized it would prove impossible to prosecute the vigilantes, because of their vehement defiance of the state. Judge J.F. Ryland, recognizing the futility of the state’s effort to achieve justice, instructed Atchison that his company could leave Jackson County.

In the meantime, Lyman Wight and P.P. Pratt made their way to Kirtland and arrived on February 22, 1834 to report to the Ohio Church leaders about the Missouri Saints’ present bleak situation. They assumed from their correspondence with both Missouri’s attorney-general and the governor that the Saints would enjoy only an armed guard to escort them back to their homes. Therefore, the Ohio Church leaders decided to

343 Union Historical Company, *The History of Jackson County, Missouri*, 259.

344 “Mormon Difficulties,” *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser*, March 8, 1834.

345 Union Historical Company, *The History of Jackson County, Missouri*, 259.

send their own militia to Missouri to protect their brethren, until the vigilantes were no longer a threat. A couple of days later, Joseph Smith divulged a revelation about the redemption of Zion. He proclaimed that the Saints would possess the holy city forever.347 Assured of their divine mission to build the New Jerusalem in western Missouri, the Saints, in accordance with Smith’s recent parable, now determined to gather able-bodied men, raise funds, and purchase weapons to take back their land.348 Eight Church leaders had the task of recruiting members from various congregations for the expedition. Like Luke Johnson, many Saints volunteered to “go into Jackson co., or die in the attempt.”349 Some, however, served the Church by working on the temple in Kirtland.

As Joseph Smith insisted, the Saints then turned to the President of the United States Andrew Jackson. They mailed a petition with 114 signatures to him on April 10, 1834.350 This was the first time private citizens had bypassed state officials to appeal

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347 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 103.
348 Money helped to buy supplies for those in Zion’s Camp, and possibly for the destitute Missouri Saints. It also could have bought more land and lessened the Kirtland Church’s debt. About twenty-five baggage wagons accompanied the group when entering Missouri. People had to walk most of the way because of the full wagons. The Saints also picked up provisions along the way. The Saints may have needed at least five dollars and one weapon to be a member of Zion’s Camp. Weapons included farm tools, knives, pistols, muskets, rifles, and swords. They probably did not receive any public arms. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 250, 254, 255; Eber Dudley Howe, History of Mormonism: Or a Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion (Painesville, Ohio: Eber D. Howe, 1840), 156; Valeen Tippets Avery and Linda King Newell, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Second Edition (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 50.
350 Firmage and Mangrum, Zion in the Courts, 67.
directly to the President. They explained their expulsion as the result of their religious tenets, expressed their desire to return to their homes and lands, and pleaded for protection from Washington until vigilante violence ceased. They also noted Governor Daniel Dunklin was unable to keep a military force in Jackson County for an extended period. The President referred the petition to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, who wrote back to the Saints on May 2, informing them that the Federal Government was unauthorized to call out a military force to impose state laws, without the consent of state authorities. One may speculate whether Reverend Isaac McCoy’s visit to the secretary of war earlier in March, influenced Cass’ decision.

Also on April 10, the Church wrote to Governor Daniel Dunklin to inform him about the petition sent to the President. Church leaders, hoping for direct aid from the Federal Government, asked the governor to write to the President on their behalf. However, on the twentieth, the governor wrote the Saints that both he and the President might not be able to protect them, as they would like. He requested a copy of the petition sent to the President by the Saints. Dunklin also let the besieged Saints know that a proposed federal arsenal built along Missouri’s western border in Clay or Jackson County


354 Joseph Smith and Heman Conoman Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1805-1835, 415.
might soon offer them military protection.\footnote{On February 12, 1833, the Missouri Legislature had sent a memorial to Congress about the need to protect the state’s western border in case of Native American hostilities. Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 317. The arsenal or military storehouse came to fruition in Clay County in 1837 and served as a strategic place for storing ammunitions. Howard Louis Conard, ed., \textit{Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri}, Volume 4 (New York: The Southern History Company, 1901), 45.} He notified the Saints that as long as they kept their “adversaries in the wrong,” they would enjoy more support than the Jackson Countians.\footnote{Richards, \textit{The Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star} Volume 15, 49.} Dunklin admitted, “The laws, both civil and military, seem deficient in affording your society proper protection; nevertheless, public sentiment is a powerful corrector of error.”\footnote{Richards, \textit{The Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star} Volume 15, 49.}

The Church leaders in Clay again wrote to Governor Daniel Dunklin on April 24, asking for the outcome of Colonel T.L. Pitcher’s court martial, and if they would get their arms back. They expressed their intent to “organize according to law, and apply for public arms,” and informed the governor that about 250 (it actually came to about 200) of their brethren from the East would come to Jackson County during the summer to help them defend themselves and their possessions from the vigilantes.\footnote{Richards, \textit{The Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star} Volume 15, 53-54. The Saints called for a force of 500 men, but they could not recruit that many. The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 103.} They appealed for a military guard that would escort them throughout this process.

In December 1833, a court of inquiry into the conduct of Colonel T.L. Pitcher in disarming the Saints ensued in Liberty, Clay County. However, Pitcher did not face the court until February 20, 1834. The presiding military officer waited until May 1 to file a
report to Governor Daniel Dunklin, only doing so because the governor had goaded him to action. At the same time, it appears that the governor himself only responded when pressured by the Saints to do something. The court found in the Saints’ favor, denying that the religious group had risen in insurrection, and that because no uprising had occurred, no reason had existed for either calling out the militia or depriving the Saints of their arms. Dunklin first ordered Colonel S.D. Lucas to return the weapons to the Church members, but Lucas had resigned. Next, on July 10, the governor reprimanded Pitcher for calling out the troops without the necessary provocation and authority. He ordered Pitcher to return the Saints’ arms, but he too never complied.359

On April 29, 1834, J.M. Henderson, postmaster of Chagrin, Ohio, wrote to the postmaster in Independence, divulging that the Saints near him were “organizing an army…to restore Zion.”360 He also reported they had sent emissaries to the surrounding Native Americans, hoping to enlist them in their cause against the old settlers.361 Perhaps to proclaim their resolve against the incoming Saints, as well as those already present, during late April and early May, the Jackson County vigilantes went on a rampage, burning and looting the Saints’ gristmill and about 175 of their homes.362 Whether the

359 Wells, The Contributor Volume 7, 161-162. The vigilantes supposedly stole the Saints’ arms from the jailhouse. However, Alexander Majors wrote the guns “were eaten up with rust.” Majors, Bill, and Ingraham, Seventy Years on the Frontier, 49.

360 J.M. Henderson, “Another Mormon War Threatened!,” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, June 7, 1834.

361 Henderson, “Another Mormon War Threatened!,” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, June 7, 1834.
vigilantes engaged their slaves’ help in the frenzy of property destruction is not clear, but the old settlers had vowed earlier that they would “allow their negroes to destroy their [the Saints’] crops, and demolish their dwellings.”\textsuperscript{363} The Saints in Clay similarly began to arm themselves in anticipation of joining their brethren against the vigilantes.\textsuperscript{364}

On June 6, Governor Daniel Dunklin wrote Colonel J. Thornton, who lived in Clay County that it would be desirable if the Jackson Countians and Saints could come to a compromise, but while in his official capacity, he did not want to get involved in effecting it. He worried about supporting a compromise that could fail, and then citizens would criticize him for his poor advice or for being partial to one side. The governor wanted Thornton to effect a compromise. Dunklin believed that the Saints-as long as they abided by the law-had a right to live in Jackson County. He also expressed his belief that the Saints had a constitutional right to bear arms in self-defense, and to worship as they please, even if their religion was eccentric. However, he cautioned, “Men must not ‘levy war’ in taking possession of their rights, any more than others should in opposing them in taking possession.”\textsuperscript{365} The governor warned that Jackson Countians could not legally join with citizens from other counties against the Saints, without the authorization of the commander-in-chief. He also declared that Saints from Ohio could not march into

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\item \textsuperscript{362} Jenson, \textit{The Historical Record} Volumes 5-8, 3; Union Historical Company, \textit{The History of Jackson County, Missouri}, 259.
\item \textsuperscript{363} Roberts, \textit{The Missouri Persecutions}, 88.
\item \textsuperscript{364} “The Mormons,” \textit{Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser}, June 21, 1834.
\item \textsuperscript{365} Daniel Dunklin, “The Mormons,” \textit{Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser}, July 5, 1834.
\end{itemize}
Jackson County without state authorization. Finally, Dunklin suggested some conciliatory alternatives for both sides that would avert bloodshed. The Saints might consider selling their property for a reasonable price and move; the old settlers might decide to follow the laws and treat the Saints with respect; or as Thornton had suggested, each group could live separately, with their only interaction occurring on public roadways. In any case, the last and best resort would be to settle the issue legally.366

The old settlers received a letter from Governor Daniel Dunklin that advised them to compromise with the Saints. He suggested that they buy the Saints’ land and pay reparations for any damages done to them. At the same time, the governor made it clear he would only restore those that owned land in Jackson County, unless a landless Saint agreed to conciliation. In response to Dunklin, the old settlers held a meeting to discuss the course of action they would take, and consequently formed a ten-member committee to meet with the Saints in Liberty.367

In the interim, for all the talk about conciliation, both sides remained deeply suspicious of each other. Convinced that the Saints would launch an attack, the Jackson Countians, led by Colonel S.C. Owens, organized an army to defend themselves.368 The old settlers prepared for battle by performing maneuvers, studying military tactics, and harassing those unwilling to fight the Saints. Jackson County’s leaders also visited surrounding counties to spread negative information about the Saints. In Clay County,

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they sought to garner signatures on an anti-Saint petition that demanded the removal of
the Saints, but it received less than two-dozen signatures.369

The meeting between the old settlers and Saints occurred on June 16 at the
Liberty Courthouse. Joel T. Turnham presided as the chairperson of the gathering, and a
group of Clay Countians acted as mediators. Judge J.F. Ryland, one of the 900 or so
persons in attendance, reminded both sides they should abide by the law. He told the
Saints in particular that they put themselves in danger when they allowed fake “Prophets
of God” to lead them.370 He also warned against them fighting the Jackson Countians,
because such a clash could escalate into a bloody civil war across Missouri that would be
blamed on the Saints.371 Even though the Saints had made it unequivocally clear
beforehand that they would not under any circumstances accept a proposition requiring
them to sell their lands, Judge Ryland’s message suggested that it would be politic for the
sect to take a less dogmatic stance. Most residents in Clay County, for example, treated
the Saints kindly, but religious leaders employed extreme martial rhetoric in condemning
them. For one, Reverend M. Riley, a Baptist minister, said the Saints “must either clear
out, or be cleared out.”372

Perhaps taking its cue from “gentile” religious leaders, the Jackson County
committee announced a strict policy dedicated to the removal of the Saints. A committee

369 Jennings, “Zion is Fled,” 259-260.

370 Launius, Alexander William Doniphan, 21; “The Mormons,” Missouri Intelligencer and
Boon’s Lick Advertiser, June 28, 1834.


372 Evans, One Hundred Years of Mormonism, 212.
member, probably chairperson S.C. Owens himself, vowed, “That they [the old settlers] would dispute every inch of ground, burn every blade of grass, and suffer their bones to bleach on their hills, rather than the Mormons should return to Jackson County.” The committee declared that after three disinterested arbitrators chosen by both parties appraised the properties, it would buy all of the Saints’ land. The committee also agreed to allow a dozen Saints to present to the arbitrators their land and improvements without provocation. Moreover, the old settlers assented to add one hundred per cent to the appraisal, and pay the amount within thirty days. If, however, the Saints disapproved of these proposals, the committee suggested that the Saints buy all of the old settlers’ lands under the same conditions. Perhaps to reduce fears of an impending bloody confrontation between the two competing groups, the Saints informed the committee that Zion’s Camp would stay away from Jackson County. The meeting ended abruptly, when a stabbing occurred outside between two non-Saints.

The Saints took a few days to consult with their brethren; on June 21, they rejected the committee’s propositions. The Saints knew they could not afford all the old settlers’ land. Nonetheless, they wanted to keep their consecrated properties in Zion, since parting with them would blaspheme their religion. According to A.S. Gilbert, to sell

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373 “The Mormons,” Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser, June 28, 1834.


375 Union Historical Company, The History of Jackson County, Missouri, 262.
their lands “would be like selling our children into slavery.” Consequently, they offered their own propositions. They suggested the appointment of twelve disinterested appraisers who would first evaluate the landholdings of the old settlers unwilling to live with them. Then, the appraisers would determine the Saints’ loss of land and property, subsequently subtracting that sum from the first evaluation. The Saints would pay the old settlers within one year, and none would reside in Jackson County, until the money was paid. The old settlers, however, firmly opposed the Saints’ proposition, thus halting further negotiations.

Tragedy struck the old settlers on their return home at around 9:00 p.m., when William Everett’s ferry sunk with them on it. According to those who escaped, before the ferry departed, it “appeared to be in as good order as we ever saw it.” However, after 200 yards, it filled up with water, and seven passengers-mostly members of the committee-drowned. Apparently, the ferry hit nothing, so the old settlers believed the Saints had tampered with it. Even so, the ferry might simply have foundered because it was carrying an extra heavy load. Joseph Smith attributed the tragic event to God’s wrath against the old settlers who had threatened to kill him.

378 “Propositions of the Mormons,” *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser*, July 12, 1834.
380 Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State)*, 106.
Zion’s Camp

The main body of Zion’s Camp left Kirtland in early May. Joseph Smith acted as commander-in-chief, and Lyman Wight, a veteran of the War of 1812, served as the general of the contingent. On their way to Missouri, they practiced maneuvers. They also held prayer in the morning and evening, and worshiped on Sundays. In addition to the men, about twelve women and nine children traveled along. In these cases, the family usually wanted to emigrate. News accounts provided incorrect estimates of the number in Zion’s Camp, with some guessing up to 700.

While the Saints marched on to Missouri, Church leaders in Clay notified Governor Daniel Dunklin on June 5, 1834 that they would soon like to have a military guard to help them reinstate their legitimate lands and property. A week later, Smith sent Orson Hyde and P.P. Pratt to meet with the governor, reiterating the request for military assistance, but also warning that Dunklin’s refusal would force the Saints to

381 Wells, The Contributor Volume 7, 201.

382 The Young Woman’s Journal Volume 17 (Salt Lake City, Utah: General Board, 1906), 398.

383 David J. Ridges, Mormon Beliefs and Doctrines Made Easier (Springville, Utah: CFI, 2007), 340.

384 Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times, 145.


recover their property unilaterally and to defend themselves. Alas, Hyde and Pratt returned with disappointing news that the governor had “refused to fulfill his promise of reinstating the brethren on their lands.”388 Instead, he advised them to relinquish their rights and sell their lands to obtain peace.389 Before this incident, the governor had aided the Saints to a modest degree, but now, they believed, he had betrayed them. Perhaps, Dunklin concluded that the Saints would fight vigorously for their lands if they had the support of a state-furnished guard. This would ensure a drawn-out bloodbath in Missouri. However, he may have figured, without the state’s military backing, they would know that they lacked a fighting chance and would be much more apt to negotiate peacefully with the old settlers. A letter dated August 14 further demonstrated Dunklin’s seeming contempt for the Saints. He wrote that he had “much regard for the people of Jackson County, both personally and politically; they are, many of them, my personal friends, and nearly all of them are very staunch democrats.”390 Yet, at the end of his letter, he stressed the fulfillment of his gubernatorial duties as his primary objective.391 To the Saints, this meant he was reluctant to enforce the laws of the state, for fear of negative political ramifications, even at the tragic expense of a community.

Zion’s Camp rested on an elevated piece of land between the Big and Little


389 Myrtle Stevens Hyde, Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel (Salt Lake City, Utah: Agreka Books, 2000), 50.


Fishing Rivers on June 19. Before night, five armed men arrived and informed the Saints that over 300 men from surrounding counties would soon attack them. The threat to the Saints may have come from the same group of men that a black woman earlier that morning had warned wanted to kill “Mormons.” Fortunately, for the Saints, a strong hail-rain-windstorm kept the vigilantes from getting to them. On the twenty-first, Colonel John Sconce along with two leaders from Ray County met with the Saints to determine their intentions. Supposedly, Sconce told the Saints they had the protection of an almighty power, because he had had “a company of armed men, having a fixed determination to destroy you, but was kept back by the storm.” The old settlers had lost horses, broken guns, and sustained injuries. The Saints told them about their persecutions and their desire to aid their brethren; they had brought along provisions like clothing and bedding. They also insisted they did not want to harm anyone or their property. A day later, the Sheriff of Clay County Cornelius Gilliam, sent by Judge J.F. Ryland, also met with the Saints. They gave the sheriff a letter about their peaceful intentions, which he promised to disseminate to the public.

After the sheriff left, Joseph Smith divulged a revelation, later known as the

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393 Whiting, *David W. Patten*, 41.


Fishing River Revelation, which notified the Saints that it would have been possible to redeem Zion, if they had maintained their faith and unity. On the other hand, some faulted by boasting of their faith and accomplishments, while others had talked about revelations without the prophet’s consent.\textsuperscript{397} In general, the Saints likewise neglected to give liberally of their substance or join Zion’s Camp, so they were undeserving of blessings.\textsuperscript{398} Now, Smith admonished, the Saints would have to wait to regain Zion until they learned “obedience, and until means could be raised to purchase all the lands in Jackson County…and also in the surrounding counties; and until the Lord’s army had become very great.”\textsuperscript{399}

Furthermore, around this same time, cholera attacked Zion’s Camp. Joseph Smith said it was due to the Saints disobeying God and him. He wrote, “I attempted to lay on hands for their recovery, but I quickly learned...that when the great Jehovah decrees destruction upon any people…man must not attempt to stay His hand.”\textsuperscript{400} The bacterial ailment afflicted almost seventy Saints, killing thirteen men, one woman, and one child.\textsuperscript{401} The burial of bodies occurred in a stream bank at night in order to avoid

\textsuperscript{397} The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 105.

\textsuperscript{398} In 1835, Joseph Smith appointed most of those to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy from members of Zion’s Camp. Abanes, \textit{One Nation Under Gods}, 120.

\textsuperscript{399} Wells, \textit{The Contributor} Volume 7, 209.

\textsuperscript{400} \textit{The Young Woman’s Journal} Volume 17, 399.

\textsuperscript{401} Radke, “We Also Marched,”160.
detection and panic.\textsuperscript{402} Smith ordered Zion’s Camp disbanded in late June, since it was weakened by the onslaught of cholera and unwilling to shed considerable blood. Members received $1.16 for their services.\textsuperscript{403} Many went back to their homes on the East, but some stayed and helped the Missouri Saints with such tasks as farming.\textsuperscript{404} Smith and a few others secretly crossed into Jackson County, one last time on July 1.\textsuperscript{405}

**Restoration Attempts Continue**

Joseph Smith stayed in Missouri until July 9, attending to Church business. He set up a High Council in Clay County, which helped to spread the Saints’ message of their persecution and their desire to obtain their rights.\textsuperscript{406} Yet, he realized they should refrain from holding public meetings, or “congregate [ing] too much together,” so the locals would stay friendly.\textsuperscript{407} The Saints wrote an “An Appeal to the American People/An Appeal to the People of the United States” to spread their message that they had experienced religious persecution.\textsuperscript{408} On July 19, 1834, the *Missouri Intelligencer and...*  

\textsuperscript{402} Richards, *The Latter-Day Saints’ Millennial Star* Volume 15, 87.


\textsuperscript{404} “The Mormons,” *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser*, July 19, 1834.

\textsuperscript{405} Jenson, ed., *Church Chronology*, 8.

\textsuperscript{406} Andrew Jenson, ed., *The Historical Record* Volume 9 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Andrew Jenson, 1890), 8.


\textsuperscript{408} Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State)*, 107.
Boon’s Lick Advertiser exclaimed, “We rather think that the WAR is over!”  

Joseph Smith continued to advocate for a return to Jackson County and believed that those who “are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances.”  

In August, Smith told the Missouri Saints to send a petition to Governor Daniel Dunklin to ask him to allow President Andrew Jackson to send a guard, so they could regain their Jackson County property. Missionaries throughout the United States carried copies of the petition to solicit public sympathies. The Saints obtained many signatures to the petition, which they mailed in December 1835 to the governor, but nothing came of it.  

The Saints’ formation of Zion’s Camp and the ferry incident, led to some erosion of public sympathy on their side, since the paramilitary group seemed like an invasion. Rumors continued to abound about the intentions of the Saints, including their desire to kill women and children. Although the followers of Joseph Smith believed the redemption of Zion would occur on September 11, 1836, they failed to achieve that goal.  

On November 18, 1834, Governor Daniel Dunklin reported to the Missouri Legislature, “As yet, none [of the old settlers] have been punished for these outrages, and it is believed that, under our present laws, conviction for any violence committed upon a

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410 The Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Section 101.

411 Jenson, The Historical Record Volumes 7-8, 663-664.


Mormon, cannot be had in Jackson County…. It is for you to determine what amendments the laws may require so as to guard against such acts of violence for the future.” The governor also noted that the governing laws of the militia needed revision. For example, “the superior officers cannot be compelled to discharge the duties devolved upon them.” In turn, a special legislative committee was appointed to handle the Saints’ case, but it did not secure any punitive action against the old settlers.

Bishop Edward Partridge and W.W. Phelps continued to utilize the services of the four Clay attorneys. Their civil suit for damages connected with the July 20, 1833 vigilante actions took place in Ray County in 1836. Partridge claimed $50,000 in damages from more than forty defendants, and Phelps claimed $55,500. Amazingly, none of the defendants denied the charges. They asserted that Partridge had threatened them, and that they had responded in self-defense by “shaking, kicking, striking, [and] throwing him upon the ground,” as well as tearing his clothes and covering him with tar. The defendants said they tore down the printing office at the request of the owner, although they neglected to identify that owner. The court found in favor of Partridge and Phelps,


416 Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 68-69. The attorneys for the defendants were the Reynolds, Birch, Burden, Young, Hicks, Chiles, and Wilson firm. Russell Hicks (deputy county clerk) had signed “The Secret Constitution.”

but awarded Partridge only nominal damages and Phelps $750. Unfortunately, for Partridge and Phelps, their legal fees were slightly more than their financial settlements.\footnote{418 Firmage and Mangrum, \textit{Zion in the Courts}, 69-70. Before the Saints left Missouri in 1838, Bishop Edward Partridge deeded land to Alexander W. Doniphan and Amos Rees in settlement of their fees. The final bill appears to have totaled $5,000, for which the attorneys received 1,080.58 acres in Jackson County. Eventually, Partridge lost ownership to all of the land holdings in Jackson County. A faction of the Church retained the Temple Lot. Britton, “Mormon Land Titles,” 145-153. For Phelps, the amount he received is worth about $17,036.29 today. “Relative Values – US $,” Measuring Worth, http://www.measuringworth.com/index.html (accessed January 2010).}
Chapter 7

SAINTS IN CLAY COUNTY

Saints living in Clay County experienced a conflict similar to the one that occurred in Jackson County. Some of the Clay Countians—mocked by Jackson Countians as “Jack-Mormons”—offered the Saints provisions, work, and even vacant slave cabins to live in, while they built their own homes. Male Saints acquired jobs as laborers, and female Saints as domestic servants and schoolteachers. Judge Joseph Thorp, who employed several Saints, thought they were industrious. W.W. Phelps wrote to Kirtland in December, “Our people fare very well, and when they are discreet, little or no persecution is felt.” During the spring, some followers of Joseph Smith rented land and started to plant crops. At a July 1834 conference in Clay County, Church leaders decided they should “teach the disciples how to escape the indignation of their enemies, and keep in favor with those who were friendly disposed.”

Clay Countians probably showed the Saints sympathy after their expulsion, because social and economic relations were more stable than in the more recently created

419 Church Educational System, Church History in the Fulness of Times, 137.
421 Thorp, “Early Days in Missouri,” Liberty Tribune, October 12, 1883.
422 The True Latter Day Saints’ Herald Volume 23 (Plano, Illinois: The Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1876), 99.
423 Wells, The Contributor Volume 7, 246.
Jackson County. Clay County, which had been formed almost five years earlier than Jackson County, sported more developed civil institutions that could mitigate the tensions between the Saints and old settlers. Nevertheless, if the Clay Countians initially felt less threatened by the Saints and trusted their government institutions to resolve differences between the two groups, their attitudes changed when the Saints continued to increase their numbers, and it became apparent that the Saints would not be merely temporary denizens. In fact, Joseph Smith advised the Saints to buy land in Clay County, and some of his disciples predicted they would eventually possess all the land. Apparently, some offered inflated amounts for lands, making it virtually impossible for the settlers to resist the opportunity to profit hugely. A settler named Anderson Wilson cited a case where the Saints paid $1,000 for land that had sold for only $250 a year before. He complained that the Saints would ultimately force the old settlers out of the area entirely.

Because of the alleged takeover of Clay County by the Saints, on June 29, 1836, the old settlers decided to follow the lead of their neighboring county and expel the Saints. However, unlike the Jackson Countians, they determined to accomplish this peacefully. Clay County officials thus convened a public meeting with about 1,000 residents in attendance at the Liberty Courthouse. A committee with several county officials

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424 Clay County formed in January 1822. Whigs rather than Democrats had political control.


leaders including D.R. Atchison, A.W. Doniphan, John Thornton, and W.T. Wood, formed to come up with a resolution that explained the reasons why the Saints should leave. First, the committee claimed the Saints were “Eastern men, whose manners, habits, customs, and even dialect, are [were] essentially different from our own.” 428 Second, their peculiar religious tenets supposedly “excite[d] deep prejudices.” 429 Third, the Saints, who also were “non-slave-holders, and opposed to slavery,” had continued communication with the Native Americans, and had declared “from the pulpit, that the Indians are a part of God’s chosen people, and are destined by heaven, to inherit this land,” together with them. 430 Finally, the citizens feared that the Saints would take political control of the county.

The old settlers wanted the Saints to stop their migration to Clay County, and find a location where they could mingle with those like them. Some old settlers suggested that the free-soil Territory of Wisconsin would prove ideal, and that already a few inhabitants from the North and East had settled there. Clay Countians wanted recent Saint settlers to leave immediately, but other Saints had extra time to harvest their crops, settle their businesses, and sell their land if it amounted to at least forty-acres. 431 To establish a timetable for the evacuation, a ten-member committee formed to meet with the Saints.

While the Saints agreed to leave to avert another conflict, they denied the charges that they were opposed to slavery, had colluded with Native Americans, or had claimed any land without buying it. In the case of slavery, it mattered little to the Clay Countians that in April 1836, the Church had written to the editor of the *Messenger and Advocate* expressing its disapproval of an abolitionist lecturer in Kirtland; instead, they supported the biblical arguments for slavery, and warned missionaries from preaching to slaves without the owner’s consent. Nor did it matter to locals that Joseph Smith had written to Oliver Cowdery “We have no right to interfere with slaves, contrary to the mind and will of their masters. In fact, it would be much better, and more prudent, not to preach at all to slaves, until after their masters are converted.” Efforts to distance the Saints from abolitionist sentiment did not catch the attention of Missourians hostile to the LDS. As Governor Daniel Dunklin pointed out to W.W. Phelps: “Your neighbors seem to believe [the allegations] it [are] true; and whether true or false, the consequences will be the same.”

All the same, the Saints had learned their lesson; it was better to leave when asked, then stick around and face the dire consequences. Moreover, they had fewer qualms about leaving Clay County, because it was not the divine location of the city of Zion, as was Jackson County. A meeting in July confirmed the strong consensus in Clay County.

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435 *Improvement Era: Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association* Volume 8 (1905), 947.
County for removal of the Saints, and a group of sympathetic old settlers organized to raise money to help in their removal. This also lessened the potential for any violence. Even the Church at Kirtland agreed that the Saints should go willingly. Subsequently, the Saints decided to settle in Ray County. In December 1836, under the leadership of Legislator A.W. Doniphan, the Missouri Legislature split Ray County and carved Caldwell County from it. With Far West as the county seat, the Saints hoped to make Caldwell their major settlement as well as the new bastion of their faith in Missouri.436

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

Group differences, whether based on class, ethnicity, race, region, or religion can—and often will—precipitate tensions and conflict. Groups that represent the majority ethos will frequently feel threatened by those who challenge the dominant society, especially when a minority operates in secrecy and appears to be plotting the overthrow of those who represent traditional society. To prevent the rise of groups that would challenge the consensus view, defenders of the status quo may employ government institutions, the law, mainstream churches, and the press. Perhaps, those who continue to challenge the dominant society face the risk of incarceration, beatings, and death.

From the outset, the Saints and the Jackson Countians appear to have been at odds. With each side besmirching the other with vile attacks on their religious faith, their regional loyalties, and their views on slavery, efforts at finding common ground failed and physical violence ensued. Clearly, the cultural-religious differences between the Saints and the old settlers were unbridgeable. Each rejected the other’s lifestyle as downright immoral. The old settlers viewed the Saints as bizarre and heretical. Indeed, Joseph Smith, with his hope of formulating a theocratic state, appeared to many as treasonous. Apparently, his disciples would grasp control of Jackson County, and then join with the Native Americans and slaves to dominate large swaths of adjacent territory. At the same time, the old settlers perceived that the formidable financial resources of The Church of Christ would enable it to buy out old settler farmers and ruin merchants
throughout Jackson County. Of course, the expanding Saint population meant that the political grip of Jackson County could shift away from the Jacksonian Democrats.

John C. McCoy, Isaac McCoy’s son, wisely observed that the differences between the old settlers and Saints made them “completely unfitted to live together in peace and friendship.” 437 He acknowledged that the Saints received harsh treatment, and that the old settlers perpetrated most acts of hostility towards them. Nevertheless, he noted that the old settlers thought their only options were either “fight, flight, or submission [submit] to a fanatical hierarchy.” 438

Most old settlers probably viewed the anti-Saint manifestos as entirely truthful. In reality, they usually represented propagandistic salvos meant to vilify the Saints, and foster a united front against them. In this manner, the elite old settlers could justify their vigilante assaults and ultimate expulsion of the Saints. After their eviction, the Saints in turn demonized the old settlers, in an effort to elicit public sympathy. Both sides traded the same insults about each other, such as being ignorant, godless, and shiftless. In light of such inflammatory rhetoric, both sides had difficulty negotiating a peaceful resolution to their disputes.

The expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County marked the first act in the saga of the on-going anti-Saint movement in Missouri. The severe economic depression in 1837 (the so-called “Panic of ’37”) contributed to the litany of issues dividing old settlers


and Saints and which earlier had played out in Jackson County. So, too, did the large influx of Joseph Smith’s followers to Caldwell County after the Church moved its headquarters from Ohio to Far West. The number of new migrants proved so large that many settled in areas adjacent to Caldwell County, including Daviess and Carroll Counties. For many Missourians, the planting of Saint colonies outside of Caldwell seemingly violated their pledge not to live anywhere else in the state, and again served as evidence of the grasping tendencies of the LDS Church and its goal to control all of Missouri. As had been true in 1833, old settlers feared not only economic losses at the hands of the land-grabbing Saints, but the eclipse of the Democratic Party because of the surging population of pro-Whig Saints.

Beginning in July 1838, vigilantes once again sought to use arson, pillage, and physical assaults to intimidate the Saints into abandoning their homes. This time, however, the Saints formed their own vigilante groups and retaliated with equal vigor, beating “gentiles,” and plundering and burning the property of their enemies. Only the governor’s dispatch of the State Militia ended the bloody “Mormon War” by October. The situation ended badly for Joseph Smith’s followers. Not only were at least twenty Saints killed in the conflict, but the state of Missouri blamed the sect for the war and forced them to pay for the cost of hostilities by stripping them of their property in Missouri. Finally, and most ignominiously, government officials ordered over ten thousand Saints out of Missouri. They would relocate in Illinois, where they would build the new town of Nauvoo.
In early 1840, Joseph Smith went to Washington, DC to obtain redress for the wrongs suffered by the Saints. The Saints declared that they had lost $120,000 worth of property in Jackson County alone. Unfortunately, for the religious group, Congress saw the incident as being solely a state matter. After the Civil War, the Saints found their way back to Jackson County when a denomination known as the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) settled in and around Independence. Next, the Community of Christ (also known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, or the “Josephites”) led by Joseph Smith III, began to arrive during the early 1870s. While most Saints currently living in the United States reside in Utah, the Church still maintains that the new city of Zion will be located in Jackson County, Missouri.

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440 Campbell, Images of the New Jerusalem, 104.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

Carl Christian Anton Christensen, *Saints are Driven From Their Homes* [Jackson County, Missouri] *by Gunmen* (Museum of Art, Brigham Young University).
APPENDIX D

“The Secret Constitution”

We, the undersigned, citizens of Jackson County, believing that an important crisis is at hand, as regards our civil society, in consequence of a pretended religious sect of people that have settled, and are still settling in our county, styling themselves “Mormons;” and intending, as we do, to rid our society, “peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must,” and believing as we do, that the arm of the civil law does not afford us a guarantee, or at least a sufficient one, against the evils which are now inflicted upon us, and seem to be increasing, by the said religious sect, deem it expedient, and of the highest importance, to form ourselves into a company for the better and easier accomplishment of our purpose—a purpose which we deem it almost superfluous to say, is justified as well by the law of nature, as by the law of self-preservation.

It is more than two years since the first of these fanatics, or knaves (for the one or the other they undoubtedly are) made their first appearance amongst us, and pretending as they did, and now do, to hold personal communication and converse face to face with the most high God; to receive communications and revelations direct from heaven; to heal the sick by laying on hands; and, in short, to perform all the wonder-working miracles wrought by the inspired apostles and prophets of old.

We believed them deluded fanatics, or weak and designing knaves, and that they and their pretensions would soon pass away; but in this, we were deceived. The arts of a few designing leaders amongst them have thus far succeeded in holding them together as a society; and since the arrival of the first of them, they have been daily increasing in numbers; and if they had been respectable citizens in society and thus deluded, they would have been entitled to our pity rather than to our contempt and hatred; but from their appearance, from their manners, and from their conduct since their coming among us, we have every reason to fear that with but very few exceptions, they were of the very dregs of that society from which they came, lazy, idle, and vicious. This we conceive is not idle assertion, but a fact susceptible of proof, for with these few exceptions above named, they brought into our county little or no property with them and left less behind them, and we infer that those only yoke themselves to the “Mormon” car who had nothing earthly or heavenly to lose by the change; and we fear that if some of the leaders amongst them, had paid the forfeit due to crime, instead of being chosen ambassadors of the Most High, they would have been inmates of solitary cells. But their conduct here stamps their characters in their true colors. More than a year since, it was ascertained that they had been tampering with our slaves, and endeavoring to sow dissension and raise sedition amongst them. Of this, their “Mormon” leaders were informed, and they said they would deal with any of their members who should again in like case offend. But how specious are appearances. In a late number of the Star, published in Independence by the leaders of the sect, there is an article inviting free negroes and mulattoes from other
states to become “Mormons,” and remove and settle among us. This exhibits them in still more odious colors. It manifests a desire on the part of their society, to inflict on our society an injury that they know would be to us entirely insupportable, and one of the surest means of driving us from the county; for it would require none of the supernatural gifts that they pretend to, to see that the introduction of such a caste amongst us would corrupt our blacks, and instigate them to bloodshed.

They openly blaspheme the most high God, and cast contempt on His holy religion, by pretending to receive revelations direct from heaven, by pretending to speak unknown tongues by direct inspiration, and by diverse pretenses derogatory of God and religion, and to the utter subversion of human reason.

They declare openly that their God hath given them this county of land, and that sooner or later they must and will have the possession of our lands for an inheritance; and in fine, they have conducted themselves on many other occasions, in such a manner that we believe it a duty we owe ourselves, our wives and children, to the cause of public morals, to remove them from among us, as we are not prepared to give up our pleasant places and goodly possessions to them, or to receive into the bosom of our families as fit companions for our wives and daughters, the degraded and corrupted free negroes and mulattoes that are now invited to settle among us.

Under such a state of things, even our beautiful county would cease to be a desirable residence, and our situation intolerable. We, therefore, agree that after timely warning, and receiving an adequate compensation for what little property they cannot take with them, they refuse to leave us in peace, as they found us—we agree to use such means as will be sufficient to remove them, and to that end we each pledge to each other our bodily powers, our lives, fortunes, and sacred honors.

We will meet at the courthouse at the town of Independence, on Saturday next, the 20th inst., [July] to consult on subsequent movements.

This meeting, professing to act, not from the excitement of the moment, but under a deep and abiding conviction that the occasion is one that calls for cool deliberation, as well as energetic action, deem it proper to lay before the public an expose of our peculiar situation, in regard to this singular sect of pretended Christians, and a solemn declaration of our unalterable determination to amend it.

The evil is one that no one could have foreseen, and is therefore unprovided for by the laws, and the delays incident to legislation, would put the mischief beyond remedy.

But little more than two years ago, some two or three of this people made their appearance in the Upper Missouri, and they now number some twelve hundred souls in this county; and each successive autumn and spring pours forth its swarm among us, with a gradual falling of the character of those who compose them; until it seems that those communities from which they come, were flooding us with the very dregs of their composition. Elevated, as they mostly are, but little above the condition of our blacks either in regard to property or education; they have become a subject of much anxiety on that part, serious and well grounded complaints having been already made of their corrupting influence on our slaves.

We are daily told, and not by the ignorant alone, but by all classes of them, that we, (the Gentiles,) of this county are to be cut off, and our lands appropriated by them for inheritances. Whether this is to be accomplished by the hand of the destroying angel, the judgments of God, or the arm of power, they are not fully agreed among themselves.

Some recent remarks in the Evening and Morning Star, their organ in this place, by their tendency to moderate such hopes and repress such desires, show plainly that many of this deluded and infatuated people have been taught to believe that our lands were to be won from us by the sword. From this same Star we learn that for want of more honest or commendable employment, many of their society are now preaching through the states of New York, Ohio, and Illinois, and that their numbers are increased beyond every rational calculation; all of whom are required as soon as convenient, to come up to Zion, which name they have thought proper to confer on our little village. Most of those who have already come are characterized by the profoundest ignorance, the grossest superstition, and the most abject poverty.

Indeed, it is a subject of regret by the Star itself that they have come not only to lay an inheritance, which means some fifteen acres of wild land for each family, but destitute of the means of procuring bread and meat. When we reflect on the extensive field in which the sect is operating, and that there exists in every country a leaven of superstition that embraces with avidity, notions the most extravagant and unheard of, and that whatever
can be gleaned by them from the perils of vice, and the abodes of ignorance, it is to be cast like a waif into our social circle, it requires no gift of prophecy to tell that the day is not far distant when the civil government of the country will be in their hands. When the sheriff, the justices, and the county judges will be Mormons, or persons wishing to court their favor from motives of interest or ambition.

What would be the fate of our lives and property, in the hands of jurors and witnesses, who do not blush to declare, and would not upon occasion hesitate to swear that they have wrought miracles, and have been the subjects of miraculous and supernatural cures; have converse with God and His angels, and possess and exercise the gifts of divination and of unknown tongues, and fired with the prospect of obtaining inheritances without money and without price, may be better imagined than described.

One of the means resorted to by them, in order to drive us to emigrate, is an indirect invitation to the free brethren of color in Illinois, to come up, like the rest, to the land of Zion: True, they say this was not intended to invite, but to prevent their emigration; but this weak attempt to quiet our apprehension, is but a poor compliment to our understandings. The article alluded to, contained an extract from our laws, and all necessary directions and cautions to be observed by colored brethren, to enable them upon their arrival here, to claim and exercise the rights of citizenship. Contemporaneous with the appearance of this article, was the expectation among the brethren here, that a considerable number of this degraded caste were only awaiting this information before they should set out on their journey. With the corrupting influence of these on our slaves, and the stench both physical and moral, that their introduction would set afloat in our social atmosphere, and the vexation that would attend the civil rule of these fanatics, it would require neither a visit from the destroying angel, nor the judgments of an offended God to render our situation here insupportable. True, it may be said, and truly no doubt, that the fate that has marked the rise and fall of Joanna Southcote and Ann Lee, will also attend the progress of Joe Smith; but this is no opiate to our fears, for when the fabric falls, the rubbish will remain.

Of their pretended revelations from Heaven -- their personal intercourse with God and His Angels -- the maladies they pretend to heal by the laying on of hands -- and the contemptible gibberish with which they [habitually] profane the Sabbath, and which they dignify with the appellation of unknown tongues, we have nothing to say; vengeance belongs to God alone. But as to the other matters set forth in this paper, we feel called on by every consideration of self preservation, good society, public morals, and the fair prospects, that if not blasted in the germ, await this young and beautiful county, at once to declare, and we do hereby most solemnly declare:

1. That no Mormon shall in future move and settle in this county.

2. That those now here, who shall give a definite pledge of their intention within a reasonable time to remove out of the county, shall be allowed to
remain unmolested until they have sufficient time to sell their property and close their business without any material sacrifice.

3. That the editor of the *Star* be required forthwith to close his office, and discontinue the business of printing in this county; and as to all other stores and shops belonging to the sect, their owners must in every case strictly comply with the terms of the second article of this declaration, and upon failure, prompt and efficient measures will be taken to close the same.

4. That the Mormon leaders here, are required to use their influence in preventing any further emigration of their distant brethren to this county, and to counsel and advise their brethren here to comply with the above requisition.

5. That those who fail to comply with these requisitions be referred to those of their brethren who have the gifts of divination, and of unknown tongues, to inform them of the lot that awaits them.

“Mormonism!,” *Missouri Intelligencer and Boon’s Lick Advertiser*, August 10, 1833.
APPENDIX F

Excerpts: An Appeal to the American People

Whereas the Church of Christ, recently styled the Church of the Latter Day Saints, contumeliously called Mormons, or Mormonites, has suffered many privations, afflictions, persecutions and losses on account of the religious belief and faith of its members.

We may have the privilege of enjoying our religious rights and immunities, and worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, as guaranteed to every citizen by the constitution of the National and State Governments. Thus, although the laws have been broken, and are defied in Jackson County, we may be enabled to regain and enjoy our rights and property, agreeable to law in this boasted land of liberty.

The inhabitants of Jackson county arrayed themselves against us, because of our faith and belief, and destroyed our printing establishment, to prevent the spread of the work, and drove men, women and children from their lands, houses and homes, to perish in the approaching winter; while every blast carried the wailing of women and the shrieks of children, across the wide spread prairie, sufficiently horrible to draw tears from the savage, or melt a heart of stone!

Now we seek peace, and ask our rights, even redress and redemption, at the Lands of the rulers of this nation; not only our lands and property in Jackson county, but for free trade with all men, and unmolested emigrations to any part of the Union, and for our inherent right to worship God as we please. We ask the restoration of these rights because they have been taken from us, or abridged by the violence and usurpation of the inhabitants of Jackson county; as a people we hold ourselves amenable to the laws of the land, and while the government remains as it is, the right to emigrate from state to state, from territory to territory, from county to county, and from vicinity to vicinity, is open to all men of whatever trade or creed, without hindrance or molestation.

We will not yield our faith and principles for any earthly consideration, whereby a precedent might be established, that a majority may crush a religious sect with impunity; knowing that if we give up our rights in Jackson county, farewell to society! Farewell to religion! Farewell to rights! Farewell to property! Farewell to life! The fate of our Church now might become the fate of the Methodists next week, the Catholics next month, and the overthrow of all societies next year, leaving nation after nation a wide waste where reason and friendship once were!

Sidney Rigdon, An Appeal to the American People: Being an Account of the Persecutions of the Church of Latter Day Saints; and of the Barbarities Inflicted on Them by the Inhabitants of the State of Missouri (Cincinnati, Ohio: Shepard & Stearns, 1840).
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