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DOLLAR MONTHLY,

—AND—

Old-Settlers' Memorial.



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3D SERIES

SKETCHES OF THE MORMON ERA IN HANCOCK COUNTY, ILLINOIS¹

FROM GREGG'S DOLLAR MONTHLY AND OLD SETTLERS' MEMORIAL,
HAMILTON, ILLINOIS, VOL. I, No. 5, SEPTEMBER, 1873

That Mormonism could originate and exist in the nineteenth century, is a disgrace to human nature; and that it could spring up and gain a foothold among a people so enlightened as the people of the United States claim to be, is an anomaly for which the future historian may perhaps be able to account.

We refer to Mormonism, not as a creed or system of religion; like all human creeds, it doubtless has its good and its bad; which is the good and which is the bad, it is not our purpose to inquire. But that an ignorant and worthless young man could take a few little brass plates into his rusty hat, and peering at them through his darkened hands, make people believe that he was reading therefrom mysterious revelations from heaven, of vast concern to the human race, is of itself a mystery. And having made some as worthless as himself believe, or pretend to believe; that he could have gone on, emboldened by success, and by the utterance of the most silly twaddle and outrageous blasphemy, gathered together apparently sensible and honest people, who looked up to him as an inspired leader and prophet of God, is also a fact of human conduct hard to explain.

But as the followers increased in numbers, and the pretended prophet found he was gaining power, men of brains joined themselves to his fortunes, and systematic efforts to establish a sect began, and a creed was gradually developed. It had its birth and incipient growth in New York; it gained strength in northern Ohio; it increased to considerable magnitude in western Missouri. But there it was broken and weakened in its conflict with the people and authorities; and when the little band of Latter-Day Saints (as they now called themselves) landed in Illinois in the winter and spring of 1839, they were poor and disheartened, and many of them objects of charity. They crossed the Mississippi

¹A reprint.

at Quincy, where they received much sympathy and material aid from the people; and afterwards, as they passed on into Hancock, the same kindness and consideration was extended to them. Their prophet and leader was in durance at Liberty, Missouri, and their chief men scattered as refugees. Such was Mormonism when it first became a reality to the people of Hancock County and the state of Illinois.

It will not be our purpose in these sketches to give a connected history of the Mormon period in Hancock County. We have not the documents at hand to enable us to do so, and the trouble of collecting them cannot be undertaken now.

In the beginning of the year 1839, when the Mormons first made their appearance in the county, there was a little village on the river shore, where Nauvoo now stands, called Commerce. Below was the farm of Hugh White, a river pilot and an old settler; out northeast on the hill, where the Temple was since built, was the farm of Daniel H. Wells, another old settler, who, after feathering his nest by the sale of lands to the newcomers, joined the church, and finally left with them for Salt Lake, and has since become a leader high in authority among them.

Alongside the village of Commerce lay the lots and squares, and streets and parks, of Commerce City, a paper town, which a year or two before had been ushered into existence by a couple of Yankees from Connecticut. This was the handsomest city we have seen in the West—on paper. Beautiful stores, colleges and universities, and broad avenues and parks, were lithographed, and shown to the astonished world as the beginnings of the future city.

Opposite, in Wisconsin Territory, lay the barracks of the old Fort Des Moines, then a year or two vacated by the United States Dragoons, and occupied by a few settlers. Here the New York Land Company had its office and its agents.

Such was the state of affairs when the Mormons first set foot in Hancock County. Their object in coming hither was to settle the Half-breed lands, to which their Prophet's attention had been directed. But for some reason the negotiation failed, and they remained in Hancock. The Prophet, Smith, was then in jail at Liberty, Missouri, but he soon appeared among them, and at once

began operations for planting a new "stake," and gathering his followers around him.

In September the city of Nauvoo was laid out and named, its proprietors being Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon and George W. Robinson. Afterwards, to May, 1843, as many as fifteen additions were made to it by different parties, including that of D. H. Wells, embracing part of his farm. The whole of the two farms named, with much additional land, was finally included in the limits of the city.

The scattered Saints from Missouri, Ohio, and the remnant back in New York, were summoned by revelation, and flocked to this new Land of Promise. A paper, called *The Times and Seasons*, was started by Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith, a younger brother of the Prophet, with materials saved from the wreck in Missouri. Revelations, under the sanction of "Thus saith the Lord," were promulgated in profusion. The church was reorganized; tithes levied and collected, and the appliances and machinery for proselyting actively set at work.

SKETCHES OF THE MORMON ERA, NO. 2

VOL. I, No 6, OCTOBER, 1873

In presenting these imperfect and disconnected sketches of the Mormon history of the county, we shall not pretend to claim that all the wrong was perpetrated by the Mormons, and that the old citizens were invariably in the right. Far from it. It would be futile and idle to attempt this. On the contrary, it is well known by all conversant with the history of that turbulent period, that there was much wrong committed on both sides. Many of the active participants in those troubles are yet on the stage of action, in this and other counties and they can still bear witness as to the correctness of any statement we might make.

The Mormon sojourn in Hancock County extended over a period of about seven years. During that time they increased its population probably over 15,000 souls; though here as elsewhere, and now at Salt Lake, their numbers were always overestimated. By the census of 1840 the population of the county was 10,025, of which perhaps 1,000 were Mormons; by the return of 1845 it is shown to have increased to 22,559. Of this number, 11,036

were at Nauvoo. In 1846, the year of their departure, a fair estimate would give to that city a population of 12,000 or 13,000, with 2,000 or 3,000 located at other points in the county, making up a total Mormon population of about 15,000.

The first great wrong perpetrated by the old citizens, in their intercourse with the Mormon Prophet, was participated in by members of both the great political parties alike. The presidential election of 1840, with Martin Van Buren and General Harrison for candidates, was one of the most exciting in the history of the country. In this county the Whig party was supposed to be in the ascendancy. As quite a number of Mormons would be voters at the approaching election, it was evident that if they voted under the dictation of their leader, they held the balance of power, and it was correctly judged that he would thus instruct them. Hence it became a matter of great moment to the opposing candidates that the favor of the Prophet should be secured.

Martin Hopkins, Esq., of Fountain Green, was the Whig candidate for representative, and Malcolm McGregor, Esq., of Warsaw, was the Democratic candidate. But it became known that for some reason Mr. Hopkins was objectionable to the Prophet, and such was the sycophancy of the times, that he was choked off the ticket by the wireworkers of the party, and Dr. John F. Charles, of Carthage, a gentleman against whom the Mormon leader was not known to have any grudge, substituted.

Smith, in this way being made aware of his power, determined to use it to his own advantage. So, during the canvass, in his Sunday orations at Nauvoo (preaching the Gospel, he and his friends called it) he would dally first with one party then with the other, alternately exciting the hopes and fears of the sycophants who crowded to hear him.

The election came and the Mormon vote was thrown mainly for the Whig candidates, electing their whole county ticket, and giving the Whig electoral ticket about 700 majority. Mr. Abraham Lincoln, who was on the Whig electoral ticket for this district, being like Hopkins, in some way distasteful to the Prophet, was scratched by about 200 voters, and Judge Ralston, the Democratic candidate, substituted.

Thus the Prophet, partly through the subserviency of party leaders, gradually obtained an influence which finally overleaped the limits of the county, and was felt in the councils of the state. No wonder that he became ambitious, arrogant and dictatorial. No wonder that he used his power to his own aggrandizement and that of his people. Disregarding the practical lessons taught him in Ohio, and more recently in Missouri, by the same course of conduct, he was vain enough to believe he could make his own pleasure the law, not only for his deluded followers, but for the Gentiles around him.

The next winter the state legislature held its session, and the two political parties vied with each other in conferring favors on the Mormons.

Dr. John C. Bennett, a physician from the eastern part of the state, about this time was appointed quartermaster-general of the state by Governor Carlin. Joining the new church, he came and settled at Nauvoo, and for some time was one of Smith's most active, ambitious and unscrupulous confederates.

On the 3rd of February, 1841, the city of Nauvoo was organized with great pomp and ceremony, under its charter obtained from the legislature. Dr. Bennett was its first mayor. The Nauvoo Legion, a military company, also just chartered by the legislature, was organized about the same time, with the Prophet at its head, as lieutenant-general, a title unknown to our military system, and Dr. Bennett as its major-general.

Thus was set going at Nauvoo, if not with unusual and dangerous powers, at least under unusual circumstances, two engines capable of wielding a powerful influence, an influence which was subsequently wielded and felt throughout the county and state.

BURNING OF THE NAUVOO TEMPLE

VOL. I, No. 6, OCTOBER, 1873

The Nauvoo Mormon Temple, if not one of the wonders of the world, was a great wonder to the surrounding country, and to many it was a source of apprehension. It was a curiosity, constructed after no known order of architecture. It resembled no

building in the world, and least of all did it resemble a Christian church, intended for Christian worship. Its size, although too large, was not immense, being 120 feet long by 80 in breadth, and about 60 feet in height. It was constructed of the limestone of the country, the outside of which was neatly cut and polished. The cost of the building was said by the Mormons to be \$1,250,000, really a startling amount for poor people living in shanties to invest in one place of worship. Only the basement and audience room had been finished. There was nothing gorgeous or attractive in its finish. A plain country church would rival it in that respect. When the Mormons had determined to leave the country, they found the Temple to be a very heavy elephant on their hands. In it was invested all their surplus labor and cash for years. And to turn the same into cash they found to be a most difficult task. The building was constructed for the sole purpose of their peculiar worship; and if adapted to that was certainly suited to nothing else. No church organization would likely invest in it for various reasons; one important one being that few congregations were able to pay the sum of \$200,000, the price asked, for a place of worship, whilst a more suitable building for such a purpose could be erected for a sum comparatively insignificant. Who, by the way, would want a church five stories high? Nobody, certainly, but a Mormon.

It was no better adapted for the purposes of a college or university. To remodel the anomalous structure, and render it suitable for such a purpose, would have involved a greater expenditure than to have erected a new building designed for an educational institution.

The consequence was that no person or society wished to purchase a building which could not be successfully used afterwards, and the Temple for two years after the Mormon hegira, stood as a monument to the insane folly and fanaticism of the oppressed and ignorant people whose labor and treasures had erected it. In the meantime a great many unreflecting people began to think the Mormons were not acting in good faith; that they had no intention of disposing of the building; that the Temple was to be retained as a sort of nucleus around which the Mormons were to be again gathered, to the great annoyance of the surrounding

country, whose people had already concluded they had seen enough of Mormonism. To give point to these apprehensions, it was alleged that some prominent and most obnoxious Mormons, who had been absent, were now seen prowling around Nauvoo. Amongst others, it was stated that William Pickett, the most noisy and demonstrative of all the Mormons, as well as the most capable and influential, was advancing to repossess the city. These rumors caused much excitement and alarm. Public meetings were called and the matter fully discussed on both sides.

It must be observed that but few Mormon families remained in Nauvoo, and these few were in charge of the Mormon property still remaining unsold. At the time of which we speak, all this property had already been disposed of with the exception of the Temple, which we have seen, was not by any means a property readily sold. Yet that effort was made by the Mormon agents to dispose of the same is undeniable. In fact it was their interest to sell, as the handling of the money and their commissions would be more important to them than any fanatical notion which might encourage them to retain possession.

It must not be understood that citizens of Nauvoo encouraged the idea of the destruction of the Temple or any other property. That building was a conspicuous ornament and a great attraction to the place, and they hoped it might be useful as well as ornamental and at no distant day. The Mormons were negligent in guarding the Temple. It was thought that by securely locking the door, the building was safe from intrusion. They appeared to have never had any apprehensions from fires, had never made any arrangement for its extinguishment if fire should break out, and never was a building more liable to fire. The whole finish was of wood. The cupola, or spire, was an immense wooden structure about one hundred and fifty feet high.

On a bright and beautiful October night, about two o'clock, fire was discovered in the highest section of the cupola. When first discovered, the flames had made but little progress. The alarm was given and a large crowd speedily collected together, but all labor was useless. In an incredibly short period, the lofty spire was enveloped in flame, shooting upward to a most astonishing height, illuminating a wide expanse of country for

miles around. The crowd had nothing to do but to saunter around the blazing edifice in groups and speculate on the causes of the fire, and as to who was the probable incendiary. The few Mormons were much excited. They did not bemoan their loss, as did the ancient Jews. They did not hang their harps upon the willows. They did not pray for the restoration of Zion, or cast themselves into the consuming flame as many of the Jews are said to have done at the destruction of their last Temple. But if the voice of prayer was low and feeble, the voice of cursing was loud, boisterous and extremely pointed. The Gentile who had fired their Temple of Zion received his full share of bitter curses and fierce denunciation, and with good reason, too. The progress of the destructive element was most rapid. Two hours reduced the stately edifice to ruins. Only the walls, defaced with smoke, remained of a building which the Mormons claimed was erected by supernatural wisdom. Large rewards were offered for the apprehension of the incendiary, but without making any discovery. It was claimed a year or two ago that Joe Agnew, of Pontoosuc, was the incendiary, and boldly asserted and published that he was the identical person who committed the deed; but this story lacks confirmation. Joe Agnew was a reckless and daring man and perhaps may have applied the torch to the Mormon spire. The story was that Joe had a false key to the front door of the Temple and unlocked it and boldly ascended the stairs and applied the torch; but unfortunately for the truth of this statement, the incendiary, whoever he was, did not enter the Temple by the door. Every one present during the burning of the building, saw that the sash from one of the half circular windows of the basement had been carefully removed, affording a convenient entrance to the incendiary right at the foot of the stairs which led from the basement to the top of the cupola. This sash was no doubt removed for the very purpose of accomplishing an entrance; an entrance being effected, the accomplishment of the nefarious purpose was easy. Who this miscreant was is as much a mystery now as it was on the night of the conflagration.

The Temple was burnt October 9, 1848.

—OBSERVER.

THE MORMON TEMPLE
 VOL. I, No. 6, OCTOBER, 1873

We give on another page an interesting account of the destruction of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo, by an eyewitness. Though the event occurred about a quarter of a century ago, it still remains a mystery who the incendiary was. The writer gives little credence to the story, started a year or so ago, that a Mr. Agnew, of Pontoosuc, was the man, and had confessed on his death bed. If he made such confession somebody must have known it. The question still seems to be an open one—"Who burnt the Mormon Temple?"

SKETCHES OF THE MORMON ERA, NO. 4
 VOL. II, No. 4, APRIL, 1874

The last number of these sketches gave an account of the organization of the Anti-Mormon party in 1841, and the success of its candidates in the election of that year.

That was its first and final triumph, as an organized party. The next year (1842) the party held another convention, and as before, nominated a full set of candidates, from both political parties. This year was the general election for state officers also. The Mormons voted the Democratic ticket throughout, electing all their candidates by overwhelming majorities. The following is the official vote, those marked with a star (*) being the Anti-Mormon nominees:

Governor, Thos. Ford.....	1,748	Jos. Duncan	711
Lieut. Gov., John Moore.....	1,742	W. H. Henderson....	687
Senator, J. C. Davis.....	1,530	*W. H. Roosevelt.....	620
Representatives—			
T. H. Owen.....	1,603	*Wesley Williams	502
Wm. Smith	1,459	*Edson Whitney	546
Sheriff, W. H. Backenstos.....	1,493	*S. H. Tyler.....	789
Sc. Com., F. J. Bartlett.....	1,596	*W. D. Abernethy.....	805
Co. Com., J. T. Barnett.....	1,540	*Jno. J. Brent.....	567
Coroner, G. W. Stigall.....	1,595	*J. A. McCants.....	581

A large number of the Democrats refused to support the convention candidates. So also a portion of the Whig party adhered to their own organization and supported a full set of candidates,

giving them an average of something near 200 votes.

William Smith, elected to the legislature at this election, was a younger brother of the Prophet; a rattle-brained man of no talent, and no education, and with very little character, even among his own people.

The Anti-Mormon organization was kept up until the final expulsion in 1846-7, with much the same result at the polls.

The W. H. Backenstos, elected sheriff, was one of two brothers who held divers offices in the county during the Mormon era, always by Mormon votes, and who were conspicuous for their violence and hatred of the Anti-Mormon movement.

The election in 1843 resulted much the same as that of the previous year, excepting that the Mormons selected their candidates partly from each of the political parties. For Congress the vote stood:

Joseph P. Hoge, Democrat.....2,088

Cyrus Walker, Whig..... 733

showing about the proportion between the Mormon and Anti-Mormon parties.

At the election of 1843, James Adams, a convert to Mormonism, and a citizen of Sangamon County, and at the same time holding the office of probate judge in that county, was placed on the Mormon ticket, and elected to the same office in this county.

In 1844, Almon W. Babbitt (Mormon) and Jacob B. Backenstos were elected representatives by the following vote:

Babbitt1,773

Backenstos1,809

O. C. Skinner, Democrat.....1,080

Joel Catlin, Whig..... 886

For Congress, Hoge received 2,251 votes, and Martin P. Sweet 702; the Polk electors 2,399 and the Clay electors 747.

In 1845, county commissioner, school commissioner and treasurer, only were to be elected. No serious opposition was made to the ticket placed in the field by the Mormon interest, and but few of the old citizens attended the polls. The average vote was about 2,300 to less than 100 against.

About two weeks after the general election in 1845, a special election was held to fill the vacancy in the office of sheriff, occasioned by the death of General Minor R. Deming, when the before-named J. B. Backenstos was elected over John Scott (Anti-Mormon Democrat) by a vote of 2,334 to 750.

In our next issue, we shall recall the stirring events of the summer of 1843, among the most exciting of the whole Mormon period.

SKETCHES OF THE MORMON ERA, NO. 5

VOL. II, No. 5, MAY, 1874

The events of the summer of 1843 were highly exciting, and produced a profound sensation throughout the country.

On the 5th day of June in that year an indictment for treason was found against the Prophet, Smith, in the circuit court of Daviess County, Missouri, the scene of his former operations. Whether this indictment was properly secured, or was necessary to the demands of justice, is doubtful. The fact that over four years had elapsed since the alleged treasonable acts were committed, is of itself sufficient to cast a shade of suspicion over the transaction. But we shall not now enter upon that field of inquiry.

On finding the indictment, and Smith being within the jurisdiction of Illinois, Governor Reynolds, of Missouri, issued a requisition on Governor Ford, of this state, demanding the arrest and delivery of Smith. This requisition was sent to Springfield in the hands of the Missouri agent, one Joseph H. Reynolds. Governor Ford, in compliance with the demand, issued a writ for the Prophet's arrest, and it was brought to this county by the agent to be put in the hands of an officer for execution.

Harmon T. Wilson, of Carthage, now several years deceased, a man of nerve and energy, who had served as deputy sheriff, was selected for the undertaking, and the writ was placed in his hands.

It was doubtful whether the writ could be served in Nauvoo, and yet more doubtful whether, in case of service, the prisoner could be removed from the city. But it was ascertained that Smith and his wife were on a visit to some relatives at Palestine

Grove, in Lee County, Illinois, not far from Dixon, and more than 100 miles from Nauvoo.

By the officers this was regarded as a fortunate circumstance, and they quietly repaired to Lee County to make the arrest. It was planned that after securing the prisoner they would drive as if making for the Illinois River, then turn and make their best speed to Rock Island, where they would take steam for Missouri.

Accordingly the arrest was made at the house of Mr. Wasson, the Prophet's relative, and the three men started on their way; but they committed the unaccountable mistake of stopping at Dixon. This was fatal to the success of their enterprise. It gave Smith an opportunity to see and consult lawyers, which he was not slow to do; and Messrs. Southwick and Patrick, two attorneys of the place, were at once engaged, who procured a writ of *habeas corpus*, returnable before Judge Caton, of Ottawa. The day following, in custody of the sheriff of Lee County, they started for Ottawa; but after traveling some thirty miles, they learned that Judge Caton was absent in New York, and the party returned to Dixon. Now Smith commenced a suit against his captors for false imprisonment. Another writ of *habeas corpus* was obtained in behalf of Smith, returnable before Judge Young at Quincy. Reynolds and Wilson also obtained a similar writ, returnable at the same place.

Such was the position of affairs when two other parties appeared upon the scene. The election campaign was in progress, the election being held in August. This congressional district embraced Hancock and all the western counties northward to the state line, including Lee. Hon. Cyrus Walker of Macomb, was the Whig candidate, and Hon. Joseph P. Hoge of Galena, was the Democratic candidate for Congress. They were able and representative men of their parties, Mr. Walker being an old lawyer of distinguished legal attainments and character.

These gentlemen, at the time of the arrest, were engaged in stumping the district in the vicinity of Dixon. Walker, having been formerly employed by Smith as counsel, was now again engaged, and he at once left his appointments, and remained with the party until the final discharge of Smith at Nauvoo.

It is stated that Hoge also offered his services. This may not be

true; but we have the testimony of Wilson that he and Reynolds asked his aid, and were refused.

On Monday, the 26th, a whole cavalcade, consisting of Smith, the prisoner, with his three attorneys, Walker, Southwick and Patrick; Smith's relative Wasson, and Walker's son-in-law and traveling companion, Montgomery; Campbell, sheriff of Lee, with his prisoners, Reynolds and Wilson, and their attorney Mason; with the necessary coaches, wagons and drivers—in all about a dozen persons—started southward, ostensibly for Quincy. They carried with them two writs of *habeas corpus* returnable to Judge Young, involving the liberty of three of their number.

Who was chief in that cavalcade of officers, attorneys and prisoners, may readily be guessed, when it is stated, that the procession, instead of going to Quincy, made directly for Nauvoo.

In the meantime there was intense excitement in that city. News had reached them that their leader was in danger. But among the conflicting rumors, the Mormon people knew not what course to take. It was conjectured that their prophet would be carried down the Illinois River, and so a little steamer owned in the city, was manned and equipped, and sent down the Mississippi, with the hope of intercepting him in that direction. Parties on horseback started across the country in the direction of Dixon. These met the cavalcade of lawyers and prisoners, and officers and writs, at various points, and before Smith reached Nauvoo he was surrounded and escorted by probably fifty or a hundred of his devoted and faithful followers. A correspondent of the *Warsaw Message*, stated to have been an eyewitness, says that these men were unarmed, a statement which, in view of all the circumstances, is extremely improbable.

Arrived at home, Smith was very magnanimous and courteous to his guests and prisoners. He took them to his mansion; pledged his honor to them that they should not be molested; took them to his table and feasted them, introducing Wilson and Reynolds to his family, with whom the former was acquainted before.

The reader who has seen in the party papers, after an election, the likeness of the defeated rooster, with his feathers all ruffled and turned the wrong way, his comb torn and bleeding, and

with a wretchedly woebegone expression of countenance—any one familiar with this picture, will be able to realize how those two officers felt on that memorable expedition from Dixon to Nauvoo, and especially after their arrival in the latter city.

Of course nothing now remained but to carry out the programme determined on previously. Accordingly both the *habeas corpus* writs in favor of Smith were dropped, and a new one applied for and issued by the Municipal Court of the city, citing Reynolds to appear with his prisoner before that tribunal. This he was compelled to do, though refusing to acknowledge its jurisdiction. Of course Smith was discharged. It was said, how truly we do not know, that Walker made a speech before the court, on the trial of the writ, in which he avowed his belief that it had ample jurisdiction. How much ground existed for the opinion the reader can judge by an examination of the following clause from the charter of that city:

"The municipal court shall have power to grant writs of *habeas corpus* in all cases arising under the ordinances of the city council."

In our next we shall give the finale of this highly dramatic adventure, together with some particulars of the Prophet's arrest, not herein before mentioned.

NOTES OF THE MORMON ERA, NO. 6

VOL. 2, No. 7, JULY, 1874

In continuing these notes of the events of 1843, connected with the arrest of Smith on the requisition from Missouri, but little remains to be told. The discharge of Smith by the Municipal Court having been accomplished, the sheriff of Lee County allowed his prisoners to proceed to Carthage, where Reynolds procured bail in the false imprisonment case, and was set at liberty.

The Missouri agent, however, feeling that his prisoner had been illegally wrested from him, proceeded to Springfield, and asked of Governor Ford a detachment of militia to assist in his recapture. This request was refused; and in a long letter to the Governor of Missouri, written on the 14th of August, Governor Ford states his reasons for the refusal. Among other reasons, he says:

"Now, sir, I might safely rest my refusal to order a detachment of militia to assist in retaking Smith, upon the ground that the laws of this state have been fully executed in the matter. A writ has been issued for his apprehension; Smith was apprehended, and was duly delivered by the officer of this state to the agent of the state of Missouri, appointed to receive him. No process, officer or authority of this state has been resisted or interfered with. I have fully executed the duty which the laws impose upon me, and have not been resisted either in the writ issued for the arrest of Smith, or in the person of the officer appointed to apprehend him. If there has been any resistance to any one, it has been to the officer of Missouri, after Smith came to his custody, and after everything had been done on my part, which the law warranted me in doing."

It will be seen that the Governor excuses himself on the ground that the laws have been fully complied with; thus entirely ignoring the question whether the Municipal Court at Nauvoo had jurisdiction in the case.

At any other time than in the midst of a heated and exciting political campaign the result might have been different. The Mormons were presumed to hold the balance of power in the district, and neither party wished to take any action that would offend their prophet and leader. The Governor, in ignoring the question of jurisdiction, only pursued the same policy adopted by his Whig opponents. Probably not a paper in the district, of either party, but that treated the question as one of much doubt. And yet it is questionable if any lawyer could now be found who would hesitate a moment in deciding the point.

The result of the election clearly proved the feeling of the people in the premises. Walker, a good lawyer and popular man, possessing high qualifications for the office, in a district in which the Whigs had a large majority, was badly beaten; though, had he, by pursuing a different course, been able to obtain the full Whig vote of all the counties, he could have been elected with the Mormon strength solid against him.

Most dramas have a comic side to them; and this highly dramatic occurrence, which excited the people of the whole district to a high pitch, which was so auspiciously begun and so ignomin-

ously closed, was not an exception.

Calling at the residence of Mr. Wasson, enquiry was made of members of the family for Mr. Smith. The answer was very unsatisfactory, but that he was not there. They took seats, however, Reynolds in the hall, and Wilson on or about the door step, and entered into conversation. While thus engaged, Wilson, who had a view of the stairway, saw Emma, the Prophet's wife, hastily cross the head of the stairs. This convinced him that they were on the right track. The conversation was continued a few minutes longer, but Wilson was excited and uneasy. Rising from his seat he gave a step or two to the corner of the house and cast his eye along the side of the building, and what did he see? Off in an open field several hundred yards away, he espied the Prophet "making for tall timber"—a piece of woods some distance away.

With a yell and a leap—and without bidding good-bye to the household—he started in pursuit, leaving Reynolds to bring up the rear. The pursuers, being lighter in weight and nimbler of foot, gained upon the pursued. So he resorted to strategy. He was nearing an old building, uninhabited, but at the side of which was a well, and near by a lot of clothes spread upon some tall weeds to dry. It was evident that Smith had been making for the forest beyond; but on arriving at the building, Wilson could nowhere see the fugitive. He certainly had not had time to reach the woods, nor could he be seen about the building. Giving a hurried glance at the surroundings, taking in the cabin, the weeds, the drying bed clothes, an idea struck him, and the next moment he saw a pair of boots partly protruding from beneath a blanket.

By this time Reynolds was close at hand; but, in his excitement, and without waiting to see if there was a man in the boots, or who that man might be, Wilson sprang upon the blanket, and called upon Reynolds to come on. The man in the boots—in short, the Prophet himself—soon emerged from beneath the blanket and stood before them their prisoner. In due time they placed him in their carriage and started on their journey.

SKETCHES OF THE MORMON ERA, NO. 7

VOL 3, No. 6, JUNE, 1875

In continuing these sketches of Mormon history, we are brought down to the memorable year 1844, which closed the Prophet's career.

Emboldened by his success in resisting the efforts of his Missouri enemies, he became more arrogant than ever. Seeing what an engine of defence the Municipal Court had been, in its use of the writ of *habeas corpus*, he resolved to strengthen it still further and increase its efficacy. During the winter of 1843-4, the City Council passed an ordinance enacting that no writ issued elsewhere for the arrest of any person in the city, should be executed until it first had the approval of the mayor.

It also provided a punishment of imprisonment for life against any officer who attempted the execution of such writ without the said mayor's endorsement, and took from the governor of the state the power of pardoning the offender. Such was the character of the legislation of the City Council, and the practice of the officials corresponded generally therewith.

In the meantime dissensions were growing up in the Mormon church. Tyrannous acts of various kinds over his followers created a spirit of opposition which finally culminated in open rebellion. Accordingly, a prospectus was issued for the publication of a weekly paper, to be called the *Nauvoo Expositor*, of which the brothers William and Wilson Law, the latter of whom was at the time major-general of the Nauvoo Legion, Charles Ivins, Francis M. and Chauncey L. Higbee, Dr. Robert D. and Charles A. Foster, were to be the publishers, and Sylvester Emmons, editor. These men had all been, with perhaps two exceptions, active and leading members of the church. The avowed purpose of the paper, as expressed in the prospectus, was to oppose the despotic action of the Prophet, and especially to advocate the repeal of the Nauvoo charter under which so many flagrant and illegal acts had been perpetrated.

On Friday, June 7, 1844, the first and only number of the paper was issued. Although its editor and some of the publishers were men of considerable talent, yet the paper itself was

lacking in force. But it was an avowed enemy to the Prophet and a contemner of his power—and that was enough.

At the instance of the Prophet a meeting of the Municipal Council was called, the press was declared a nuisance, and an order made authorizing the mayor to abate it; and power was given him to call to his assistance the Nauvoo Legion, if necessary, to aid in its enforcement.

Accordingly, the city marshal, under the instruction of the mayor, collected a strong force from the Legion and repaired to the office, the doors of which they forced open, broke the press to pieces, and scattered the fragments and the types and other material into the street. In the report of these high-handed proceedings published in the Mormon organ, the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, a full justification for the act was urged on the plea that *The Expositor* was an organ of dissension in the church and among the people, that it was a traducer of the Prophet and other leading men, and consequently a nuisance in the community. And by its report it appears that the proceedings were entirely *ex-parte*, that no one connected with the paper was cited to appear, that no notice of the proposed action was given them, that no witnesses were called or examined; but that the order was given upon statements made by the mayor and one and another of the councilors.

A curious and ludicrous proceeding, truly, was this action of the Nauvoo City Council, and one to which it would be hard to find a parallel. Certain men were charged with offences against law and morality—with being sinners and swindlers generally. They were charged, not in action for libel, or by indictment before a grand jury, but by statements made in session by members of a common council, each one stating what he knew, or was supposed to know, about them; whereupon it was voted not to punish them for crimes committed and proven, but to destroy their printing press, as a nuisance, owned in part by men who had no charges brought against them.

It matters little, in its bearing upon the proceedings of the City Council, whether these offences were real or imaginary, whether they were of great magnitude or only slight and trivial, whether proven or not. But let us enquire what these charges were. In *The Expositor*, a copy of which is now before us, is a

long statement made by persons claiming to be dissenters from the Mormon church, in which they charge that Smith and his adherents have introduced new doctrines and practices, among which is that of polygamy. These charges are supported by several affidavits. These, with several severe strictures upon the conduct of Smith and the leaders, constitute the offences, as appearing in the columns of the paper.

Of course these proceedings produced great excitement both in and out of the city. The dissenters, fearful of danger to themselves, left at once, and repairing to Carthage, had warrants issued for the arrest of the mayor and the leading participators, on a charge of riot. Some of them submitted to arrest; but the convenient writ of *habeas corpus* was interposed, as in the former case of Smith, and they were set at liberty. Upon this the officer having the writs in charge, called the *posse comitatus* to assist in rearresting them; and a committee was sent to Springfield to ask from Governor Ford an order for the military to aid them. The Governor determined to visit the county and decide for himself the merits of the case. He was at no loss in ascertaining, after hearing the evidence of both parties, that the proceedings at Nauvoo, both of the Common Council and the Municipal Court, were grossly wrong, and that they must submit to arrest.

But the Governor, although we believe, anxious to do right and maintain the laws, lacked decision and firmness, and his vacillating course lost him the confidence of the people. Both sides were at once under arms. The Legion was assembled and placed under arms, by order of the Prophet, as its commander. All Mormons capable of bearing arms, residing in the country, were ordered into the city, and the most active measures taken for defence. Previous to the Governor's arrival, the militia had been called out. A considerable force from other counties had arrived at Carthage, and another force was gathering at Warsaw. By repeated threats and promises, the Prophet and his brother Hyrum, and the other persons charged in the writ, were induced to give themselves up, and accordingly, on the 24th of June, they appeared at Carthage and surrendered to the constable, and were taken before a magistrate, and bound over to appear at court on the charge of riot. The two Smiths were immediately rearrested for treason. They were placed in jail for security, neither party being ready to proceed with the examination.

On the 27th of June the Governor ordered the militia to be disbanded, excepting three companies, two to guard the prisoners in the jail, and the third to accompany him to Nauvoo, whither he had determined to go. Captain Dunn's company, from Augusta, was detailed for the Governor's escort, and the Carthage Greys and another company, under the command of Captain Smith of the Greys, were left to guard the jail. The militia, both at Carthage and Warsaw, having been disbanded, much against their inclination, Carthage was full of armed and exasperated men. Before the Governor had returned at night the Mormon Prophet and his brother and ablest and most devoted supporter were dead.

The Governor's order to the troops to disband, given previous to his departure for Nauvoo, was, to say the least, very unwise. In his extreme anxiety to prevent violence it was the very means of bringing about such a catastrophe. Instead of leaving the troops under arms and under the control of their officers, they were discharged and thus left free to act their own pleasure. The McDonough and Schuyler men being very anxious to return to their farms mostly left at once for home. Those under Colonel Williams at Warsaw, having previously been ordered to march to Golden's Point, on the way to Nauvoo to concentrate with those at Carthage, were met by the order to disband. The conduct of the Governor from the first had been such as to lose him the confidence of the people, especially of the citizens of Hancock County, who believed that a determined and energetic course was demanded. It had been voted in a council of officers, called by him, to march the whole force to the Mormon city, and there to make full investigation of all charges, and take into custody the offenders. But his fears of the consequences prevailed, and he decided to disband the troops instead, and visit the city himself without military display.

During the day all was confusion at Carthage, though nothing of importance occurred till in the afternoon. The Greys were encamped on the public square, with a detail of men around the jail. Discharged soldiers and citizens filled the streets, many of them exhibiting much anger and dissatisfaction at the turn affairs had taken.

At about four or five o'clock in the afternoon, a lot of men, armed and disguised, collected on the prairie back of town, made a rush upon the guards, whom they overpowered or disarmed and, scaling the enclosure, made a furious attack upon the jail. The door to the hall was forced, and shots fired within at the prisoners, by which Hyrum Smith was killed and John Taylor wounded. The Prophet undertook to jump from the window to the ground, but was shot as he fell, and afterwards upon the ground. The assailants immediately fled.

Consternation now took place of all other emotions. Governor Ford had not carried out the programme he intended to pursue in the morning. Instead of remaining at Nauvoo till the next day, he had made a speech to the Mormons in the afternoon, and left a little before night to return to Carthage. A short distance out he was met by messengers with the information that the Smiths were killed. He hastened on to Carthage, where he arrived in the night, to find the people in extreme alarm. The leaders are killed, and the Mormons will surely take vengeance, was the feeling in every body's mind, a belief in which the Governor shared. Halting only long enough to address some very hard words to the Greys and such of the citizens as he met, he hastened on, and it is said never dismounted till he reached Augusta. Believing the Mormons would be down upon them, the people of Carthage hurried their women and children out of town as fast as vehicles could be obtained to carry them, many of whom traveled the greater part of the night and took refuge among the farmers on the roads eastward.

At Warsaw the same consternation prevailed. All believed the town would be attacked. Women and children were hurried over to Alexandria, and guards were placed at different points on the road.

At Nauvoo an equal panic prevailed. Vengeance gave place to fear. The enraged military have slain our chiefs, and they will vent their vengeance also upon us, seemed to be the prevailing feeling there, and large numbers of them fled across the river.

But the morning dawned and no butchery had been perpetrated, no village or city had been devoted to the flames. The dead chiefs and their wounded comrade lay quietly at Mr. Ham-

ilton's hotel, whither they had been conveyed and cared for. And as the day waned, most of the refugees on all sides returned to their homes.

The night of the 27th of June, 1844, will long be remembered in Hancock County.

SKETCHES OF THE MORMON ERA, No. 8

VOL. III, No. 8, AUGUST, 1875

Our last report left the slain Mormon Prophet and his brother, with their wounded companion, lying at the residence of Mr. Artois Hamilton in Carthage. The morning of the 28th dawned fair and bright; the night had spread its pall over the deeds of the day, and had gone again; and no act of violence was known to have been committed by either side. All seemed to be awed by the magnitude of the crime that had been committed, and in doubt and apprehension as to the consequence. None cared to assume an aggressive attitude, but all thought only of defence and personal safety.

During the day of the 28th most of the fugitives from the several towns returned to their homes. Upon the announcement of the murder to the people of Nauvoo, the excitement was intense. Rage and grief were manifested throughout the city. The bodies of the dead chiefs, having been decently cared for by Mr. Hamilton, were conveyed to the city, where they were received with every demonstration of affection, and were buried with great ceremony.

Thus ended the career of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and the so-called "Prophet, Seer and Revelator," at the age of a little less than forty years. To say that he was not a remarkable man would not be true; yet it was the peculiar circumstances with which he was surrounded, more than any talent or genius of his own, that made him so. By those ignorant of his character, his aims, and his surroundings, he has been regarded as a great man. But he was not a great man, in any sense which constitutes greatness. That he was not deficient in mental power is conceded. He had a faculty for governing and controlling men not generally possessed; and he had a certain species of low cunning, that supplied the place of genius. Many men

who never attain to any note in the world, to be found frequenting the grogshops of the land, are just as talented and just as capable of being manufactured into a great prophet and seer, as was Joseph Smith. They only lack the ambition and the surroundings.

The distinguishing feature of his character in youth was indolence. Acting on the belief that the world owed him a living, he determined to obtain it without earning it. He and his family connections were all lowbred, uneducated, and naturally superstitious. From going about the country with a divining rod to find water, he rose by an easy step to telling fortunes with a peep stone in a hat. His peep stone in time gave place to brass plates with hieroglyphics written in "reformed Egyptian, in the language of the Jews," and with the plates came the idea of going a step further and claiming supernatural aid. So, "angels from heaven" were brought into requisition, and "revelations" obtained. These angels, judging from the character of their communications, were about as smart and sensible as some of the "spirits" that nowadays present themselves at the spiritual seances. The ignorant neighbors were excited over some of these pretended revelations, and the idea of getting up a system of religion and becoming a religious leader was gradually developed.

Smith, at that time ignorant of human nature and the depth of human credulity, was doubtless as much astonished as any one at the success of his schemes. When he first found or forged the plates, on which he claimed the Mormon bible was written, at "Mount Moriah," in western New York—a mountain, by the way, which never had existence—it is not likely he had any well-defined purpose in view. But men of means as well as brains became involved in his schemes, and they gradually developed the system to which they gave the name of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," a name by which it has become known in the world and still retains.

It might have been supposed that the death of their leader would have been fatal to the success of the Mormon movement. But such was not the case. The policy had been for years to create hostile feelings among their neighbors, and the pressure thus produced from without tended to hold his adherents more closely

together. It was soon understood that the cry of persecution was an effective aid to propagandism, and this theory was acted on throughout. Had it not been for this pressure at the time of his death, there can be little doubt that the whole structure of Mormonism would have tumbled to pieces. It contained many elements of weakness, and more than one of its chiefs aspired to the leadership. Sidney Rigdon, who had always furnished its best brains and had been its chief architect, had already become dissatisfied and left and others were prepared to follow. But the pressure held the main body together there, and from that day to this has been the power that binds the heterogeneous and discordant materials together.

CADETS OF TEMPERANCE

In regard to the history of the Cadets, we can give no more full and satisfactory information than that furnished in the following extract from a letter of W. A. McKee, the present G. W. P. of the Order, addressed to a gentleman of St. Louis. He says:

“Our beloved Order is still spreading rapidly. * * * I looked upon the institution as second only to the Sabbath School in its moral effects, if carried out in the spirit of its foundation principles; having for many years been connected with the Sabbath School cause here: and notwithstanding all its efforts and influences for good, I saw multitudes going the broad road to ruin—and endeavored, in 1845, to excite the Sons of Temperance to take up the subject; which efforts reached the Grand Division, and there went to sleep. Subsequently this movement was commenced—taking as its foundation the constitution and forms drawn up and published by W. H. Stokes, of Germantown. Bro. Faust and myself made the first move in the city (Philadelphia). Other Sections soon sprung up: a Grand Section was formed, (on the 22d day of February, 1847), with Bro. Stokes, as the founder, for Grand Worthy Patron, and Bro. Faust as Grand Secretary.”

In addition to the above we may state, that Grand Sections of the Order now exist in the states of Pennsylvania, New York

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