David W. Kilbourne: The Creation of an Iowa Anti-Mormon

BRADY G. WINSLOW

IN APRIL 1842 Henry Caswall, an Episcopal clergyman and divinity professor at Kemper College in St. Louis, Missouri, boarded a steamboat and headed up the Mississippi River. His objective was to visit Nauvoo, Illinois, and interview the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith to prove him a fraud. On the trip, Caswall stayed at the home of a "gentleman, with his lady and his brother," in Montrose, Iowa Territory, directly across the Mississippi from Nauvoo. According to Caswall, his host "possesse[d] the independence to resist the encroachments of the Mormons, and the ability to expose their designs," and had "been an object of constant persecution since the settlement of [the Mormons] in his vicinity." Although Caswall described this individual as a "hospitable entertainer," some Mormons Caswall encountered "used the most violent language against [the man], and said that he was their bitter enemy and persecutor." In a book Caswall wrote about his sojourn to Nauvoo, he never revealed the name of the person who accommodated him but simply referred to him as "Mr. K."[1] Who was this Mr. K. and how did he come to be at odds with the Mormons?

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1. Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo, in 1842* (London, 1842), 5, 19, 22, 29–30, 32, 37, 50–51. Caswall published a much lengthier work on the Mormons the following year. See Henry Caswall, *The Prophet*

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Caswall's Mr. K. was the Iowan David W. Kilbourne.[2] A close examination of Kilbourne's life reveals the collision of forces that created antebellum American anti-Mormons. An opportunist, Kilbourne moved to Iowa for the seemingly boundless prospects that the West offered. The rapid influx of Mormons into west central Illinois and southeastern Iowa beginning in 1839 and the espousal of contrasting ideologies—Kilbourne embraced placing sovereignty in the hands of the people while the Mormons reserved their trust, loyalty, and obedience for their prophet and his authoritative revelations—brought Kilbourne and the Mormons into conflict with each other.[3] Kilbourne's frustrations with the Saints were representative of the concerns that many in the region held about the Mormons. Thus, this study of how and why Kilbourne became anti-Mormon provides context for better understanding the development of anti-Mormonism in the upper Mississippi River valley in the 1840s.[4]

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of the Nineteenth Century; or, The Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints: To Which is Appended, an Analysis of the Book of Mormon (London, 1843). For more on Caswall and his relationship with Mormonism, see Craig L. Foster, "Henry Caswall: Anti-Mormon Extraordinaire," *Brigham Young University Studies* 35 (1995–96), 144–59.

2. The identity of Kilbourne as Caswall's host is made apparent in a letter Kilbourne wrote to E. C. Hutchinson, a colleague of Caswall's and the president of Kemper College. Hutchinson contacted Kilbourne in early April 1842. Although Hutchinson's letter has not been found, Kilbourne responded, writing, "It will afford me great pleasure to see you & your friend Professor Caswell at Montrose." Kilbourne further wrote that he would do all he could "to aid you in learning the character of the Mormons & the principals by which they are governed." In closing, Kilbourne stated, "We shall expect you to come direct to our cabin." David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to E. C. Hutchinson, 4/13/1842, in Letterbook, 1841–1844, box 24, David W. Kilbourne Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines. Hutchinson is listed as president of Kemper College in *The American Almanac and Repository of Useful Knowledge, for the Year 1844* (Boston, 1843), 190. Caswall's published account of his visit to Nauvoo does not mention Hutchinson accompanying him.

3. John E. Hallwas, "Mormon Nauvoo from a Non-Mormon Perspective," *Journal of Mormon History* 16 (1990), 53–69; John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius, eds., *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois* (Logan, UT, 1995), 1–8; Steven C. Harper, "'Dictated by Christ': Joseph Smith and the Politics of Revelation," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26 (2006), 275–304.

4. This article relies on the David W. Kilbourne Papers housed at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Des Moines and the Hiram Barney Papers at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. The following abbreviations will be used in references to these collections: letters in box 1 of the Kilbourne Papers will be



David W. Kilbourne (1803–1876). Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

WHEN THE MORMONS moved into Lee County, Iowa, and Hancock County, Illinois, Kilbourne was already established in the area. Born in Connecticut in 1803, he worked for a time as a merchant in New York before moving west in the fall of 1836. Settling at Fort Des Moines (later the site of Montrose, Iowa Territory), Kilbourne bought and sold western lands as an agent for the New York Land Company. After the U.S. Army abandoned the fort in 1837, Kilbourne platted the town of Montrose.[5] In 1839 he and his brother Edward established a general store there, and Kilbourne was appointed justice of the peace for Lee

cited as DWK, box 1; missives from a letterbook in box 24, dated 1841 to 1844, as DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; and items from a second letterbook in box 24, dated 1844 to 1846, as DWK Letterbook, 1844–46. Manuscripts from the Barney Papers will be cited as Barney Papers, with the corresponding folder and box numbers.

5. On the history of Fort Des Moines, see Kathryn E. M. Gourley, "Fort Des Moines No. 1, 1834–1837," in *Frontier Forts of Iowa: Indians, Traders, and Soldiers, 1682–1862*, ed. William E. Whittaker (Iowa City, 2009), 133–45.

County and postmaster of Montrose.[6] As a prominent member of the community, Kilbourne encountered the Mormons as they moved into the vicinity.

The first Mormons to cross into Iowa likely did so in November 1838 as they fled persecution from anti-Mormons in Missouri. Tension between Mormons and non-Mormons in Missouri had been building since adherents of the religion moved to the state in 1831, and anxieties climaxed in the fall and winter of 1838, when a state militia unit clashed with Mormon troops.[7] Following the melee, church leaders counseled the Mormon men who had engaged in the conflict to leave the state because they feared that the non-Mormon Missouri militia would execute anyone they captured who had participated in the battle.[8] Consequently, a company of about 27 men departed from northern Missouri, journeying northeastward. Entering Iowa, they traveled east, eventually crossing the Mississippi River into Illinois.[9] After Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued an executive order declaring that "the Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for

6. Robert Lucas, Commission for David W. Kilbourne, 1/19/1839, folder 15a, box 22, Barney Papers; David W. Kilbourne, Letter, Keokuk, 9/22/1853, microfilm 960,050, U.S. and Canada Record Collection, Family History Library, Salt Lake City; "An Early Settler Gone," *Keokuk Daily Gate City*, 4/25/1876; George E. Kilbourne, Biographical Sketch of David W. Kilbourne, May 1883, in Caleb Forbes Davis Scrapbooks, 10 vols., 2:433, 436–39, 443–45, 448–51, 462, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City; "The Mason-Remey and the Kilbourne Collections," *Annals of Iowa* 15 (1926), 310–11.

7. For Mormon/non-Mormon relations in Missouri, see Warren A. Jennings, "Zion Is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1962); Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia, MO, 1987); Alexander L. Baugh, "A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1996); Thomas M. Spencer, ed., *The Missouri Mormon Experience* (Columbia, MO, 2010); and Leland H. Gentry and Todd M. Compton, *Fire and Sword: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri, 1836–39* (Salt Lake City, 2011).

8. Lorenzo Dow Young, "Lorenzo Dow Young's Narrative," in *Fragments of Experience, Sixth Book of the Faith-Promoting Series* (Salt Lake City, 1882), 52.

9. A second but smaller group, with only about six or seven men taking roughly the same route, left hours after the first. Baugh, "Call to Arms," 326–29; William G. Hartley, "Mormons and Early Iowa History (1838 to 1858): Eight Distinct Connections," *Annals of Iowa* 59 (2000), 221–22.

the public peace," the rest of the Mormon population in northern Missouri also fled the state.[10]

Partly as a result of the efforts of one of the Mormon men who fled Missouri, the church purchased lands in Illinois and Iowa to organize a new gathering place. Having trekked through the southern portion of Iowa, Mormon Israel Barlow arrived in Commerce, Illinois. Destitute, he explained the church's situation to several men and "enlisted their sympathies." One of them was Isaac Galland.[11] Involved in land speculation as one of five trustees for the New York Land Company, Galland seized the opportunity to offload to the Mormons land he owned in Illinois and other lands he claimed title to in Iowa.[12]

The Iowa lands Galland offered the Mormons were part of the "Half-Breed Tract." Located in the southeastern corner of the territory, that parcel of land contained about 119,000 acres and had been set aside when the Sauk and Meskwaki tribes had ceded their claims to lands in northern Missouri to the federal government in 1824. It had been designated "for the use of the half-breeds belonging to the Sac and Fox nations."[13] The treaty allowed people of mixed American Indian and European or Euro-American ancestry to occupy the Half-Breed Tract, but it prevented individuals from buying or selling any portion of it. That changed a decade later when Congress relinquished the federal government's interest in the land and allowed it to be

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10. Lilburn W. Boggs, Jefferson City, MO, to John B. Clark, Fayette, MO, 10/27/1838, folder 49, box 1, Record Group 5, Mormon War Papers, Office of Secretary of State, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO (hereafter cited as MSA).

11. Wandle Mace, Autobiography, ca. 1890, p. 33, Church History Library (Church Archives), Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as CHL).

12. I. Galland, *Villainy Exposed! Being a Minority Report of the Board of Trustees of the Desmoines Land Association, Alias "The New York Company"* ([1849?]), 7; D. W. Kilbourne, *Strictures, on Dr. I. Galland's Pamphlet, Entitled, "Villainy Exposed," with Some Account of His Transactions in Lands of the Sac and Fox Reservation, Etc., in Lee County, Iowa* (Fort Madison, 1850), 5, 8; Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (1965; reprint, Urbana, IL, 1975), 25, 27–31; Lyndon W. Cook, "Isaac Galland—Mormon Benefactor," *Brigham Young University Studies* 19 (1979), 264–65, 267; Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT, 2002), 41, 53–57.

13. "Treaty with the Sacs and Foxes," 18th Cong., 2nd sess., 12/15/1824, *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, 2:525.

bought and sold.[14] But the act neglected to identify who rightfully owned the land, creating complicated legal issues among the many claimants. Land speculators, Galland included, jumped at the chance to buy up as much of the land as possible.[15] Anxious to make a profit, Galland proposed selling the Mormons about 20,000 acres of land in the Half-Breed Tract.[16]

As the remainder of the Mormons in Missouri prepared to flee the state, Joseph Smith and other church leaders instructed their followers not to congregate together in a single location as they had previously done.[17] Despite that counsel, most Mormons sought refuge in and around Quincy, Illinois. In February a church conference was held "to take into consideration the expediency of Locating the Church in some place." John P. Greene shared the offer that Galland had made to sell his Iowa lands to them and stated that a committee had examined the land and considered it a suitable place to relocate. Various attendees expressed their opinions on the matter. Some were for immediately purchasing and gathering on Galland's lands. Others articulated concern that assembling together might result in another forced expulsion. Bishop Edward Partridge "thought it was better to scatter into different parts and provide for the poor." Those in attendance concluded that "it would not be deemed advisable to locate on the Lands for the present."[18] When Smith learned of Galland's offer, he initially left the decision of whether to agree to the proposition to church leaders in Quincy. He soon changed his mind, however, informing his comrades to purchase the lands.

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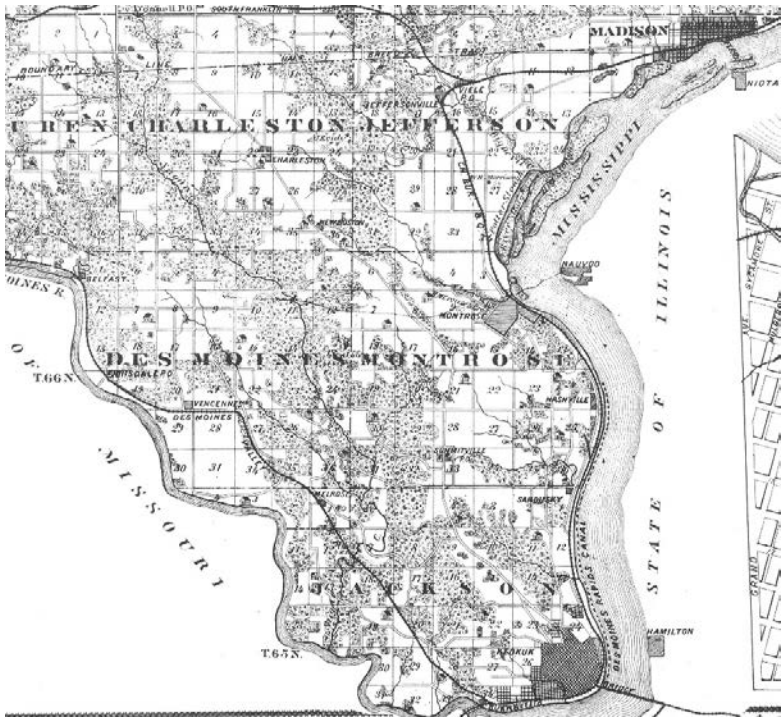
14. *An Act to Relinquish the Reversionary Interest of the United States in a Certain Indian Reservation Lying Between the Rivers Mississippi and Desmoins*, 23rd Cong., 1st sess., 6/30/1834, *Statutes at Large of the United States of America* (1846), 4:740.

15. Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 28–29; Cook, "Isaac Galland," 264–65; Timothy R. Mahoney, *Provincial Lives: Middle-Class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (New York, 1999), 72–73.

16. Conference Minutes, Quincy, IL, February 1839, CHL.

17. Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith, and Hyrum Smith, Liberty, MO, to Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young, Far West, MO, 1/16/1839, in Mark Ashurst-McGee et al., eds., *Documents*: *February 1838–August 1839*, vol. 6 of the Documents series, *The Joseph Smith Papers,* ed. Ronald K. Esplin, Matthew J. Grow, and Matthew C. Godfrey (Salt Lake City, 2017), 313 (hereafter cited as *JSP*, D6).

18. Conference Minutes, Quincy, IL, February 1839, CHL. See also Edward Partridge, Quincy, IL, to Joseph Smith et al., Liberty, MO, 3/5/1839, in *JSP*, D6:329.



Map of southeastern Lee County, with Nauvoo shown in the crook of the river, across from Montrose. This is also roughly the area that encompassed the Half-Breed Tract. From A. T. Andreas' Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa *(1875; reprint, Iowa City, 1970).*

He even wrote to Galland, asking him to hold the lands for the Mormons.[19] Over the next few months, church agents bought nearly 670 acres of land in and around the town of Commerce, Illinois (later renamed Nauvoo), and approximately 18,000 acres in the Half-Breed Tract in Iowa Territory.[20]

19. Joseph Smith et al., Liberty, MO, to the church and Edward Partridge, Quincy, IL, 3/20/1839, in *JSP*, D6:367–68; Joseph Smith et al., [Liberty, MO], to Edward Partridge and the church, Quincy, IL, ca. 3/22/1839, in *JSP*, D6:391–92; Joseph Smith, Liberty, MO, to Isaac Galland, [Commerce, IL], 3/22/1839, in *JSP*, D6:388.

20. *JSP*, D6:432–33, 436; Matthew C. Godfrey et al., eds., *Documents: September 1839–January 1841*, vol. 7 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Ronald K. Esplin, Matthew J. Grow, and Matthew C. Godfrey (Salt Lake City, 2018), xx–xxi, 537n514, 537n516, 537n518 (hereafter cited as *JSP*, D7).

Initially, Kilbourne simply took note of what the Mormons were doing as he corresponded with colleagues. The Mormons had purchased all of Isaac Galland's interest in the Half-Breed Tract and Galland's lands across the river in Commerce, and Kilbourne expected the Mormons to begin moving onto those lands.[21] As the Saints poured into the area, with about 50 families in and around Montrose, Kilbourne relayed a message that he had received from Mormon leaders that they anticipated a thousand families arriving in Montrose within five months and that within 18 months "they can put a Mormon Family on Every Vacant 80 acre lot in the [Half-Breed] tract." Knowing the problematic nature of land titles in the Half-Breed Tract, Kilbourne advised his colleagues to sell their land interests to the Mormons. The next month he estimated that the number of Mormon families had tripled.[22]

As the Mormons moved into west central Illinois and southeastern Iowa, many took advantage of the vacant buildings of Fort Des Moines in Montrose. Built in 1834, the fort had been a temporary location for troops patrolling the area, but with no real Indian threat, the army abandoned it in June 1837.[23] When the Mormons arrived, many of them occupied the fort because it offered ready places to stay while they constructed homes.[24]

Besides being surrounded by and interacting with the Mormons as they moved into the region, Kilbourne, in his capacity as justice of the peace, learned firsthand about the persecution and suffering the Mormons had endured in Missouri. At the time Governor Boggs issued his executive order forcing the Mormons to leave Missouri, state officials arrested Joseph Smith and other Mormons.[25] While incarcerated, Smith and his fellow prisoners wrote a letter to church leaders in Illinois, coun-

21. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Samuel Marsh, 5/2/1839, box 1, DWK.

22. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Samuel Marsh, 5/19/1839, box 1, DWK; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Samuel Marsh, 6/26/1839, folder 18, box 20, Barney Papers.

23. Gourley, "Fort Des Moines No. 1," 133–35, 140–41, 144.

24. Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 5/18/1839, 5/20/1839, folder 2, box 1, CHL; Erastus Snow, "Autobiography of Erastus Snow," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 14 (1923), 108.

25. LeSueur, *Mormon War,* 168–73; *JSP*, D6:xxvi–xxvii, 270–71.

seling members to produce accounts of their struggles and losses to present to the federal government in the hope of obtaining redress.[26] Most Saints who complied swore affidavits before justices of the peace in Illinois; others did so in Iowa. Kilbourne, one of the Iowa justices, affirmed at least 21 statements.[27]

AMICABLE RELATIONS between Kilbourne and the Mormons did not last, as familiarity bred contempt. In March 1841 Kilbourne expressed frustration with his Mormon neighbors. "I am sick of the Mormons," he announced to his brother, "and I am determined not to spend my life among them."[28] He did not reveal the reasons for his annoyance, but it probably had to do with Joseph Smith's adherents acting on one of their prophet's revelations that told the Saints to build a city where Montrose was located.[29]

Kilbourne was not alone in his resentment. In June he reported a budding regional animosity toward the Mormons to his business associate Hiram Barney, a lawyer and antislavery politician from New York. "The Excitement on both Sides of the river against the mormons is increasing Very fast. The conduct of Jo Smith and the other leaders is such as no community of white men can tolerate. It is the Entire absence of all moral & religious principal that renders them so obnoxious to the Gentiles of all denominations—wherever they reside."[30]

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26. Joseph Smith et al., [Liberty, MO], to Edward Partridge and the church, Quincy, IL, ca. 3/22/1839, in *JSP*, D6:397; *JSP*, D7:xxvii.

27. For transcriptions of statements sworn to before Kilbourne, see Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, UT, 1992), 127–28, 133–35, 148–49, 152–53, 156–57, 168–69, 212–13, 228, 265–66, 280, 304–5, 315–17, 343, 351, 356, 438–39, 494–95, 516–19, 540–41, 692–93, 713–14.

28. David W. Kilbourne, Pittsfield, MA, to Edward Kilbourne, Montrose, 3/24/1841, folder 1, box 39, Barney Papers.

29. See David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter Day-Ism No. 3," *Burlington Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot,* 10/14/1841.

30. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Hiram Barney, New York, 6/5/1841, folder 15, box 20, Barney Papers (emphasis in original). For more on Barney, see James N. Adams, "Lincoln and Hiram Barney," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 50 (1957), 343–76.

A prominent individual who took a stand against the Mormons was local Illinois newspaper editor and lawyer Thomas Sharp. Born in New Jersey in 1818, he moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1835 and studied law. In 1840 he moved to Quincy, Illinois. Within a few months he settled in Warsaw, 15 miles downriver from Nauvoo, and opened a law office. When hearing problems interfered with his "trial of cases," Sharp jumped at the opportunity to purchase the *Western World*, one of only two newspapers published in Hancock County.[31]

Like Kilbourne, Sharp had not initially opposed the Mormons. When he took over as editor of the *Western World* (later renamed the *Warsaw Signal*), he benignly commented on the sect.[32] As more and more Mormons migrated to the region and as they secured safeguards to protect themselves and avoid another expulsion, such as incorporating Nauvoo and obtaining a charter for a militia unit called the Nauvoo Legion, Sharp became anxious about the Mormons' growing influence and power.[33]

The first sign of his apprehension appeared in January 1841 in response to a proclamation published in the Mormon newspaper *Times and Seasons*.[34] In Sharp's summary of the announcement, he explained that Joseph Smith and his two counselors "call[ed] upon all who are converts to the new faith to take up their residence as soon as practicable at or in the vicinity of Nauvoo" because it had been designated the new Mormon

31. Thomas Gregg, *History of Hancock County, Illinois, Together with an Outline History of the State, and a Digest of State Laws* (Chicago, 1880), 748–49. The second newspaper was a religiously focused organ called *Times and Seasons* that the Mormons printed out of Nauvoo. It was a Mormon newspaper meant for Mormons. Terence A. Tanner, "The Mormon Press in Nauvoo, 1839–46," in *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History*, ed. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas (Urbana, IL, 1996), 97–98, 112n16.

32. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York, 2006), 427.

33. On the incorporation of Nauvoo, see Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 92–102; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 91–108; *JSP*, D7:xxiii–xxiv, 415; and "An Act to Incorporate the City of Nauvoo," Springfield, IL, 12/16/1840, in *JSP*, D7:472–488. For the militia unit, see Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 109–14; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 112–19; and Richard E. Bennett, Susan Easton Black, and Donald Q. Cannon, *The Nauvoo Legion in Illinois: A History of the Mormon Militia, 1841–1846* (Norman, OK, 2010).

34. "A Proclamation, to the Saints Scattered Abroad," *Times and Seasons*, 1/15/1841.

gathering place. Having already observed an influx of several thousand Mormons into the region, Sharp commented, "Whatever may be thought of the tenets of this sect, it is certainly an imposing spectacle to witness the moral power which in so short a period they have exerted." He continued, "Now that their numbers are concentrating they begin to assume, at least in this state, a political and moral importance possessed by no other denomination." "What may be the ultimate result," he remarked, "it is impossible to divine."[35]

In the May 19, 1841, issue of his newspaper, Sharp deviated even further from his previous neutral stance. He criticized the appointment of a Mormon as master in chancery for Hancock County, an officer in a court of equity appointed to assist the court. Noting that some recent Mormon immigrants had left Nauvoo after seeing that neither the city nor the church's leadership were what they expected, he warned that if the Mormons "as a people, step beyond the proper sphere of a religious denomination, and become a political body, as many of our citizens are beginning to apprehend will be the case, then this press stands pledged to take a stand against them." Perturbed, Joseph Smith canceled his subscription to the *Warsaw Signal*, saying, "You will discontinue my paper—its contents are calculated to pollute me, and to patronize the filthy sheet—that tissue of lies—that sink of iniquity—is disgraceful to any moral man." He signed the letter "Yours, with utter contempt." From that moment forward, Sharp was a vehement opponent of Joseph Smith and the Mormons.[36]

Others in the community held suspicions about the Saints. Enough of a concern over Mormon voting behavior existed for local Whigs and Democrats to band together in the summer of 1841 to create an anti-Mormon political party in Hancock County. At several nonpartisan meetings in June, members of both major parties congregated to pass resolutions and nominate candidates for county office. At one gathering, congregants affirmed

35. *Western World* (Warsaw, IL), 1/20/1841.

36. "Appointment," *Warsaw Signal*, 5/19/1841; "The Mormons," *Warsaw Signal*, 5/19/1841; "Highly Important!! A New Revelation, from Joe Smith, the Mormon Prophet, for the Especial Benefit of the Editor of the 'Warsaw Signal,'" *Warsaw Signal*, 6/2/1841; Marshall Hamilton, "Thomas Sharp's Turning Point: Birth of an Anti-Mormon," *Sunstone* 13 (October 1989), 16–22; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 304–5; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 427–30.

their belief that Joseph Smith wielded too much political power in swaying the votes of the ever growing Mormon population in the region. That type of control "by one man's influence," they stated, "is in effect a despotism." Determining that the Mormons intended to control county politics once they obtained a voting majority, the participants pledged to support any candidate for county office who vowed "to oppose the influence of political and military Mormonism" and declared that any in opposition of a Mormon majority "are in duty bound . . . to stand up resolutely . . . in defence of their rights, and in opposition to the concentration of power in the hands of one man." To counter political pandering to the Mormons, attendees resolved to "discountenance by our votes, the conduct of any candidate for office, who will hereafter, by any means, seek the influence of the Mormons, at future elections."[37]

At a convention at the end of the month, participants named anti-Mormon candidates for county commissioner and school commissioner. The delegates acknowledged that they were "perfectly willing" that the Mormons "shall remain in the full possession of all the rights and privileges which our constitution and laws guarantee and other citizens enjoy," but they opposed "the influence which these people have obtained, and are likely to obtain, in a political capacity, over our fellow citizens and their liberties." Fearful of what might happen if they did not counter the Mormons, participants sought only "to defend ourselves against a despotism, the extent and consequences of which we have no means of ascertaining."[38]

AMID THE SWIRL of rising antagonism, Kilbourne grew more irritated because he had been the victim of several thefts that he blamed on the Mormons.[39] From those occurrences he became

37. "Public Meeting," *Warsaw Signal,* 6/9/1841.

38. Thomas Gregg, *A Descriptive, Statistical and Historical Chart of the County of Hancock,* 2nd ed. (Warsaw, IL, 1846). Copies of the broadside can be found at the CHL and the Western Illinois University Archives and Special Collections in Macomb, Illinois. The portion of the broadside recounting the 1841 anti-Mormon convention is reproduced in Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 82.

39. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Hiram Barney, New York, 7/10/1841, 7/24/1841, and 8/21/1841, folder 15, box 20, Barney Papers.

"fully convinced that [the Mormons] band together to carry on a system of robbery." Suspecting that Joseph Smith and "all his Satelits are bitter against me—because I am in the way of their getting possession of this plase," Kilbourne decided to publish his complaints "in hand bills & circulate them through the country," so that "some inocent individual may be prevented from joining [the Mormons] & save themselves & families from ruin & disgrace."[40]

As Kilbourne wrote out his objections for publication, several interactions with the Mormons added fuel to the fire. The first instance occurred in early September, when the disaffected Mormon William Harris gave several lectures in Montrose critical of the Mormons. Harris had previously spoken in various places in western Illinois and engaged in several debates with Mormon preachers. In September 1841 he reported to the *Warsaw Signal* that, as he spoke one night in Montrose, a crowd of Mormons, "howling, cursing and swearing," threw stones and rotten eggs at the congregants. They also made and torched an effigy, exclaiming, "Thus may old Kilbourn burn." Afterward, the gang of Mormons egged Kilbourne's store.[41]

Later in the month Kilbourne had a run-in with Joseph Smith when he and other Mormons from Nauvoo attended a military training operation in Montrose on invitation from the Iowa officers in command.[42] According to the *Warsaw Signal*, Smith, lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion, "attempted to inspect" the troops while Kilbourne "invited the citizens to withdraw from the ranks." After the soldiers dispersed, the Mormons

40. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Hiram Barney, New York, 8/21/1841, folder 15, box 20, Barney Papers.

41. William Harris, Montrose, to "Mr. Editor," 9/3/1841, in "Mormonism at Montrose," *Warsaw Signal*, 9/22/1841. Harris converted to Mormonism sometime before May 1836. His opposition to Mormonism seems to have begun around January 1841. William Harris, *Mormonism Portrayed; Its Errors and Absurdities Exposed, and the Spirit and Designs of its Authors Made Manifest* (Warsaw, IL, 1841), 25–26; David Evans, Payson, IL, to Don Carlos Smith, 1/12/1841, in "Communications," *Times and Seasons*, 2/1/1841, 308. The *Warsaw Signal* reported in July 1841 that Harris had been lecturing "for some time" in Hancock County "and the neighboring counties." "Debates on Mormonism," *Warsaw Signal*, 7/28/1841. See also *Warsaw Signal*, 7/7/1841.

42. "Falsehoods Refuted," *Times and Seasons*, 10/1/1841, 563.

purportedly caused "much excitement."[43] The *Times and Seasons* published a refutation, correcting perceived errors in the *Signal*'s reporting and claiming that "all passed off with perfect good feeling, and in a highly creditable manner," with the exception of the "disturbance" when militia members were encouraged to leave their ranks. In another Mormon account, Smith supposedly went to Kilbourne's store afterward to speak with him "but was peremptorily ordered out of doors."[44]

Within a few weeks, Kilbourne and his brother Edward published three letters about their "private grievances" in a local Iowa newspaper. Having endured many "indignities and injuries," the brothers felt "a sense of duty to ourselves and others" to speak out, hoping that doing so "may be the means of preventing some individuals from making shipwreck of their fortunes and character, by embracing this miserable scheme of humbug and delusion."[45]

The issues the Kilbournes articulated in their missives reflected problems that many in the regional community had concerning the Mormons. In their first letter, the Kilbournes laid out their accusations that the Saints had stolen from them. "Three years since," they wrote, "we could retire at night without that painful feeling of insecurity which now exists." Recalling times when they did not have to worry about locking their things up at night, they now stressed that "nothing is safe, however strongly secured by bolts and bars."[46] They listed 13

43. "Difficulty at Montrose," *Warsaw Signal*, 9/15/1841.

44. "Falsehoods Refuted," *Times and Seasons*, 10/1/1841, 562–63; Joseph Smith, *History*, vol. C-1, addenda, box 3, vol. 4, pp. 18–19, CHL.

45. David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-ism, No. 1," *Burlington Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot,* 9/30/1841. After the initial publication of the Kilbournes' letters, Thomas Sharp reprinted them in the *Warsaw Signal,* and the Mormon dissident John C. Bennett reproduced them in his exposé on Mormonism in 1842. See David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-Ism. Number One," *Warsaw Signal*, 10/6/1841; David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-Ism. Number Two," *Warsaw Signal*, 10/27/1841; and John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston, 1842), 89–93, 99–103. Sharp presumably reprinted the Kilbournes' third letter in the *Warsaw Signal* on November 3, 10, or 17, 1841. Those issues have not been located.

46. David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-ism, No. 1." David apparently told Henry Caswall in 1842 that prior to the arrival of the Mormons in Illinois and Iowa, "his only neighbours were the Indians, with whom he

"principal robberies," with valuations of the items taken, all supposedly happening since the Mormons had moved into the area.[47] Their reasoning for blaming the Mormons was based on how the Mormons reacted to the reported crimes. The Kilbournes claimed that in some instances the Mormons circulated stories that the Kilbournes hid their own goods in an attempt to stir up controversy. In other cases, they alleged that the Mormons justified the burglaries, wondering why more was not taken because of the Kilbournes' opposition to Joseph Smith.

At this point, the brothers took measures into their own hands. They concocted a plan to catch some Mormons in the act of stealing from their store. When the ruse failed, two Mormons accused David and Edward of conspiracy to procure an indictment unlawfully. Appearing before the mayor's court in Nauvoo in response to the charge, the Kilbournes, according to their own account, were "immediately discharged" because "the complaint was unsustained by a shadow of proof."[48]

The Kilbournes were not alone in grumbling about Mormon theft. From 1839 to 1846, complaints about stealing became one of the most frequent issues raised about the Mormons.[49]

In their second missive, the brothers gave a history of the Half-Breed Tract and explained that Isaac Galland had taken advantage of contested land claims to defraud the Mormons.

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lived on the most friendly terms," and although he viewed them as "heathens," he judged them "superior in morality and common sense to the 'latter-day saints.'" David supposedly said to Caswall that, living among American Indians for five years, he "had never been robbed by them of the most trifling article." Caswall, *City of the Mormons*, 30, 50.

47. The robberies the Kilbournes enumerated did not include "petty, every day stealing of trifles." David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-ism, No. 1." The Kilbournes listed a fourteenth robbery in their third letter. David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter Day-Ism No. 3," *Burlington Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot,* 10/14/1841. See also "Another Robbery at Montrose," *Warsaw Signal*, 10/13/1841.

48. David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-ism, No. 1."

49. Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo, 1839–1846," *Brigham Young University Studies* 32 (1991), 195–227. William Shepard's chronology lists multiple incidents in which Mormons were accused of theft. See William Shepard, "'Marshaled and Disciplined for War': A Documentary Chronology of Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois, 1839–1845," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 33 (2013), 79–131.



Isaac Galland, 1791–1858. Portrait from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

He sold lands to the Saints on warrantee deeds, which did not convey title to the lands because the tract had not yet been divided. In addition, in order "that he might the more successfully carry out the scheme of swindling thus commenced," he was baptized as a Mormon.[50] The Kilbournes drew a connection between what Galland did to the Mormons and what the Kilbournes perceived that church leaders were doing to their own converts who migrated to the area. "Many instances might be mentioned," they asserted, in which converts gave their "valuable possessions" over to the church in exchange for "worthless land titles" in the Half-Breed Tract. The result was much suffer-

50. David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-ism, No. 2," *Burlington Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot,* 10/7/1841. Joseph Smith baptized Galland on July 3, 1839. Joseph Smith, Journal, 7/3/1839, in Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals: 1832–1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City, 2008), 345 (hereafter cited as *JSP*, J1).

ing, with some families being "reduced to beggary." Although many individuals would "relent, and desist from their cruel purpose," the Mormon leaders would not because, as the Kilbournes judged, they were "villains" and "heartless wretches."[51] David and Edward painted Galland and Mormon leaders as charlatans. Others made similar claims about church officials duping their followers.[52]

The third letter discussed Mormon attempts to create a city that was supposed to encompass Montrose. The Kilbournes recalled that "some of Joe Smith's scullions" showed up in Montrose one morning and, "with compass and chain they strided through gates and over fences to the very doors of the 'Gentiles' and drove the stakes for the lots of a City." As the Mormons, acting in response to one of Joseph Smith's revelations that commanded them to build a city, platted out the town, the Kilbournes observed that they "heeded not enclosures." "Why should they," the Kilbournes sarcastically remarked, because "is not the earth the Lord[']s and the fulness thereof, and shall not his 'saints'—of the Latter-Day—inherit and possess it forever?" According to the Kilbournes, the Mormons even went so far as to "threaten personal violence" toward one of the brothers and to "hold a club over the head" of another individual who tried to stop them. Drawing parallels to the Mormons' troubles in Missouri, the Kilbournes asked, "Have we not some reason to believe that their Missouri troubles were not *solely* for righteousness' sake, but that they there, as here disregarded all law, human and divine, and by their *conduct* brought down upon their own heads the vengeance of an outraged and insulted people?"[53]

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51. David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter-Day-ism, No. 2."

52. "Mormon Swindling," *Warsaw Signal*, 9/22/1841; "English Mormons," *Warsaw Signal*, 12/15/1841; "Comfortable Prospect for Mormon Emigrants," *Liverpool Mercury, and Lancashire General Advertiser* (Liverpool, England), 3/22/1844, 95; "The Mormonites," *Liverpool Mercury, and Lancashire General Advertiser,* 10/18/1844, 342; "Anti-Mormon Plea for Support," 9/20/1845, Cultures in Conflict, typescript, folder 56, box 1, Western Illinois University Archives and Special Collections, Macomb, IL (transcription published in Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 292–94).

53. David Kilbourne and Edward Kilbourne, "Latter Day-Ism No. 3," *Burlington Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot,* 10/14/1841. For Joseph's Smith's revelation about building a city, see Revelation, ca. March 1841, in Book of the Law of the Lord, p. 16, CHL.

In articulating their aversion to the dutifulness of Mormons in following the pronouncements of their prophet, the Kilbournes expressed a broadly held worry about the perceived threat Mormonism presented to American democracy. Just as nativists at the time saw Catholicism as undemocratic, the Kilbournes and many other non-Mormons viewed obedience and loyalty to Joseph Smith and his revelations as antithetical to democratic principles.[54] They feared the possibility of a Mormon takeover of the community.

After all the trouble the Kilbournes stirred up with their published letters, the Mormons in Lee County tried to remove David as postmaster. Apparently it was the second time they had done so. In corresponding with Francis Scott Key, attorney for the New York Land Company (and author of the "Star Spangled Banner"), Kilbourne explained that individuals in Montrose were seeking signatures for a secret petition addressed to the postmaster general, asking for the removal of Kilbourne and the appointment of someone new to the position. He did not know the reasons for the attempted ouster but alleged that the Mormons were behind it. He recognized that Joseph Smith was upset with him and concluded that Smith's "sattelites" in Montrose were doing what they could to harm him. "The office is of no importance to me," he maintained, "but still I would not like to be removed through the influence of the mormons." In another letter, addressed to the postmaster at Fort Madison, Kilbourne confided that he had learned that the petition had circulated privately among the Mormons. Seeking help from his correspondents, Kilbourne asked them to "represent the situation" to the postmaster general and to "characterize it as a mormon proceeding." Even if, as Kilbourne asserted, the position of postmaster did not mean much to him (two years later he referred to it as "the very high & responsible office of P[ost]. M[aster]."), losing it would damage his political and social standing in the community. Fur-

54. J. Spencer Fluhman, *"A Peculiar People": Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012), 79–102; Richard Lyman Bushman and Dean C. Jessee, "General Introduction: Joseph Smith and His Papers," in *JSP*, J1:xxvi–xxvii.

thermore, it would have affected him financially since operating the postal service out of his store brought in customers.[55]

The friction between Kilbourne and Smith peaked in January 1842, when Hiram Barney cut Kilbourne out of a land transfer negotiation with Smith. As an agent for the New York Land Company who lived in the vicinity, Kilbourne usually handled such deals, but because of his conflict with Smith, Barney relieved Kilbourne of that duty. Instead, Barney contacted Smith about land for sale within the limits of Nauvoo that Smith had expressed interest in purchasing.[56] Like Kilbourne, Barney harbored ill feelings for Joseph Smith and the Mormons, but he understood the importance of maintaining a professional demeanor for business purposes.[57]

Amid these struggles, Kilbourne surmised that tensions could dissipate between himself and the Mormons in Lee County. Hearing that church leaders had discontinued the development of their city in Iowa and having learned that the titles to the lands in the Half-Breed Tract that Galland had sold the church were invalid, many Mormons prepared to leave Iowa for Nauvoo.[58] Kilbourne anticipated that the Mormons "will not trouble us much longer on this side of the river." Several Mormon families living in close proximity to Kilbourne had already left Montrose,

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55. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to F. S. Key, 12/23/1841, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to "P[ost]. M[aster].," Fort Madison, 12/27/1841, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Hiram Barney, New York, 12/26/1843, folder 15, box 20, Barney Papers. It was common for postmasters in small communities in the first half of the nineteenth century to conduct postal duties out of general stores or private residences. David M. Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, 2006), 64.

56. Hiram Barney, New York City, to Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, 1/24/1842, Joseph Smith Collection, folder 2, box 3, CHL.

57. For examples of Barney's dislike for Joseph Smith and the Mormons, see Hiram Barney, New York, to David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, 6/18/1841, box 1, DWK; Hiram Barney, New York, to David W. Kilbourne, 8/12/1841, folder 1, box 3, Barney Papers; Hiram Barney, New York, to David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, 9/7/1841, box 1, DWK.

58. Minutes of a Conference Held in Zarahemla, 1/6/1842, Elias Smith Papers, folder 5, CHL; Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 1/6/1842, folder 4, box 1, CHL; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to F. S. Key, 1/10/1842, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Hiram Barney, New York, 1/18/1842, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44.

and he projected that most of the others would depart by spring. In letters to two separate colleagues, Kilbourne remarked that Smith had instructed his followers in Iowa to leave Montrose and "let it & Kilbourn go to Hell."[59]

IN THE SPRING OF 1842 a controversy arose regarding former Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs. In May Boggs was shot in the head (but not mortally wounded) while reading a newspaper in his home in Jackson County, Missouri. Within a week, county citizens devised a plan to detect and catch the culprit. They informed Missouri governor Thomas Reynolds that initial efforts to locate the shooter had failed. A newspaper in Fayette, Missouri, reported that suspicion rested on a Mormon who was being pursued by the sheriff of Jackson County.[60]

The Fayette newspaper was not alone in suspecting Mormon involvement in the shooting. When word of the incident reached the Nauvoo area, Kilbourne conjectured their culpability. He wrote to Governor Reynolds, reasoning that if Missouri authorities remained unaware of who had attacked Boggs, "then I should not Entertain a doubt that it was done by some of Joe's minions at his instigation." Smith, Kilbourne announced, "has sworn Vengeance publickly against Gov Boggs Ever since he settled in this neighborhood."[61]

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59. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to F. S. Key, Washington, DC, 3/4/1842, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to F. S. Key, 1/10/1842, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Edward Johnston, Iowa City, 2/5/1842, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Edward Johnston, Iowa City, 2/5/1842, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44. See also David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Hiram Barney, New York, 1/28/1842, folder 15, box 20, Barney Papers; For Kilbourne's retained copy of the letter sent to Barney, see DWK Letterbook, 1841–44.

60. Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 104; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 278–79; Citizens of Jackson County, MO, to Thomas Reynolds, Jefferson City, MO, 5/13/1842, folder 61, box 2, Thomas Reynolds Papers, Office of Governor, Record Group 3.7, MSA; "Assassinated," *Boon's Lick Times* (Fayette, MO), 5/14/1842.

61. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Thomas Reynolds, Jefferson City, MO, 5/14/1842, folder 61, box 2, Thomas Reynolds Papers, Office of Governor, Record Group 3.7, MSA (transcription published in Warren A. Jennings, "Two Iowa Postmasters View Nauvoo: Anti-Mormon Letters to the Governor of Missouri," *Brigham Young University Studies* 11 [1971], 276–77); Kilbourne's retained copy of the missive can be found in David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Thomas Reynolds, Jefferson City, MO, 5/14/1842, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44.

Accusations of Mormon involvement in the shooting of Boggs were not the only issues Joseph Smith and his followers had to contend with in the spring and summer of 1842. An important challenge came from Mormon convert John C. Bennett, who had joined the church in September 1840. Winning Smith's affection, Bennett became a prominent member of the community. That ended when it was learned that Bennett had been seducing Nauvoo women to have illicit sexual intercourse with him. Bennett's exposure, expulsion from the church, and subsequent attack on the Mormons caused major problems.[62] To protect his church, Smith wrote to Illinois governor Thomas Carlin to inform him of Bennett's conduct. Smith also shared rumors that David and Edward Kilbourne, in conjunction with Bennett, had posted handbills in Galena, Illinois, asking people to be prepared to mobilize for an attack on the Mormons at Nauvoo.[63] When Smith later questioned Edward about the incident, Edward denied any conspiracy to assault the Mormons.[64] Smith's claims and fears about a supposed plot between Bennett and the Kilbournes reflect the tension and anxiety brewing between the Mormons and their neighbors in Illinois and Iowa.

DESPITE his anti-Mormonism, Kilbourne had compassion for some of the Mormons he knew. Such was the case with Samuel and Ann Cope, British converts who emigrated to the United States. Settling in Montrose, the Copes rented land from Kilbourne. In the fall of 1842, Samuel and Ann fell ill and died, leaving behind eight children. Various individuals and families in the area took the children into their homes, including David and Harriett Kilbourne, who cared for daughters Ann and Ellen.[65]

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62. Andrew F. Smith, *The Saintly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett* (Urbana, IL, 1997), 51–128; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 459–65.

63. Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, to Thomas Carlin, 6/24/1842, in Joseph Smith Letterbook 2, p. 235, folder 2, box 2, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL.

64. Joseph Smith, Journal, 7/15/1842, in Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals: December 1841–April 1843*, vol. 2 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City, 2011), 77.

65. Ellen continued to live with the Kilbournes until at least 1850. She is listed as a member of the Kilbourne household in the 1850 census. 1850 U.S. Census,



David W. Kilbourne poses for a formal portrait with his wife, Harriett, at a studio in Keokuk. From State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.

It may seem odd that the anti-Mormon Kilbourne would accept this arrangement, but having gotten to know the Copes, he developed empathy for them after listening to Samuel tell of their struggles. According to Kilbourne, Samuel claimed that Joseph Smith took all their money when they arrived from England. Failing to get any of it back, Cope conceded to purchase land in the Half-Breed Tract from Smith, ignorant that "Joe had no shadow of title" to it.[66]

By that point Kilbourne had lived among the Mormons for several years. Angered by recent burglaries in Montrose that he

Fort Madison, Lee County, Iowa, digital image s.v. "Ellen D. Cape" [as Ellen Cope's name is misspelled here**],** Ancestry.com.

66. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to Robert or James Cope, Atherton, Lancashire, England, 3/2/1843, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to John Tharme, Manchester, Lancashire, England, 3/3/1843, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to John Tharme, 9/21/1843, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44.

blamed on the Mormons, he "suspended all opperations here," with the intent to move away as soon as he could. That spring several Mormon women, who had been attempting to bring all the Cope children into Mormon homes, "finally succeed[ed] in capturing Ellen," and "too[k] her over the river to Nauvoo." After several days, David and Harriett located Ellen and took her back to Montrose. At their wits' end, the Kilbournes "turned our backs upon Montrose and its miserable inhabitants." They moved about ten miles upriver to Fort Madison because living "so near the Saints has not been very pleasant for some time past."[67]

In Fort Madison, Kilbourne did not experience the same level of interaction or controversy with the Mormons that he had in Montrose, but he kept a close eye on events. William Law and others withdrew from the church after Joseph Smith allegedly "made proposals" to Law's wife. The seceders created their own church and published their own newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*. After the first issue appeared, the Nauvoo City Council resolved to have the press destroyed. Soon thereafter, a group of "about three hundred marched in a body to the printing office" and "took the press out & broke it into ten thousand peices." When the Mormons threatened Law and other dissidents, Kilbourne, with other volunteers from Fort Madison, boarded a steamboat and went downriver to help evacuate the dissenters. Noting that "there is great Excitement throughout the state of Ill[inois]," he predicted that "sooner or latter bloodshed must take place." With Nauvoo a "reseptacle of outlaws & robbers for the whole country," Kilbourne hypothesized that "the people it seems . . . will be oblige[d] to resolve themselves into the original Elements of society & rise in their majesty & disperse the bandit[t]i."[68]

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67. David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to J. P. Doan, 3/6/1843, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Montrose, to John Tharme, 9/21/1843, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44; David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Hiram Barney, New York, 12/26/1843, folder 15, box 20, Barney Papers (for Kilbourne's retained copy, see David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Hiram Barney, 12/26/1843, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44); David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Alijah Fisher, 12/8/1843, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44.

68. David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Thomas Dent, Billington, Lancashire, England, 6/15/1844, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44 (transcription published in Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 161–62).

His prophecy was fulfilled. Two weeks later Kilbourne reported "the wonderful events which have taken place at Nauvoo." Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum had been arrested and jailed. While they were in state custody a mob stormed the building and killed them. "There is but one feeling throughout this country in regard to this last tragedy," Kilbourne explained, "& that is, that merited venge[a]nce has fallen on the right men, at the same time all regret that it happened while he was a prisoner & had a right to expect protection."[69]

Following the assassinations, Kilbourne believed that the Mormons "have been taught a lesson which I think they will not soon forget," and he surmised that "they will hereafter be afraid to interfere at all with the rights of the people." In time he contradicted that statement, noting that the Mormons "continue to commit so many depredations upon the surrounding citizens —that it is thought by many that there will be serious trouble there again in a few months."[70]

MAJOR DIFFICULTIES did return. In the summer of 1845 anxieties heightened over two botched robberies that resulted in several murders. The offenders were said to be associated with Nauvoo and the Mormons.[71] "These things so Excited and Exasperated the people in all this region of country," Kilbourne noted, "that publick meetings were held during the summer & resolutions passed giving the Mormons formal notice that they must leave Nauvoo."[72] In response, church leaders agreed to

69. David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Thomas Dent, Billington, Lancashire, England, 6/29/1844, DWK Letterbook, 1841–44 (transcription published in Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 227–28; and in Warren A. Jennings, "The Lynching of an American Prophet," *Brigham Young University Studies* 40 [2001], 207–11).

70. David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Thomas Dent, Billington, Lancashire, England, 7/29/1844, DWK, Letterbook, 1841–44 (transcription published in Jennings, "Lynching," 212–13); David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to John Tharme, Willaston, Cheshire, England, ca. February 1845, DWK Letterbook, 1844–46.

71. See Bill Shepard, "The Notorious Hodges Brothers: Solving the Mystery of Their Destruction at Nauvoo," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006), 260–86.

72. David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to Thomas Dent, Clitheroe, Lancashire, England, 12/16/1845, DWK Letterbook, 1844–46 (transcription published in

comply, with the intention of departing in the spring.[73] Upon hearing that the Mormons planned to move to California, Kilbourne exclaimed, "It will be a glorious deliverance for all this region of country," and "the great beauty of the thing is they go so far that they cannot come back to steal from us & annoy us."[74]

The Mormons expected to begin their trek across Iowa in the spring of 1846, but after hearing of a scheme to prevent their departure, they altered course. A group of a few thousand church members left in February and March. The next wave of 10,000 departed in the months of April, May, and June.[75] The process was not fast enough for many anti-Mormons. Throughout March, April, and May, individuals in several counties in Illinois held meetings to discuss what was to be done about the Mormons.[76] Anti-Mormons also gathered in Lee County, Iowa. They congregated in Montrose on April 23 "to take into consideration the condition of the county in regard to the mormons and backsliding mormons yet remaining in the County and who apparently have no intention of removing westward with their brethren." An individual with the surname Kilbourne (undoubtedly David) and others spoke, dwelling "with considerable animation on the importance of immediate united action by the citizens of Lee County, to rid themselves of this obnoxious class of citizens."[77]

Jennings, "Lynching," 214–16). Kilbourne's recollection of when the community meetings took place is faulty. They occurred in September and October. Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 329–30; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 534–39.

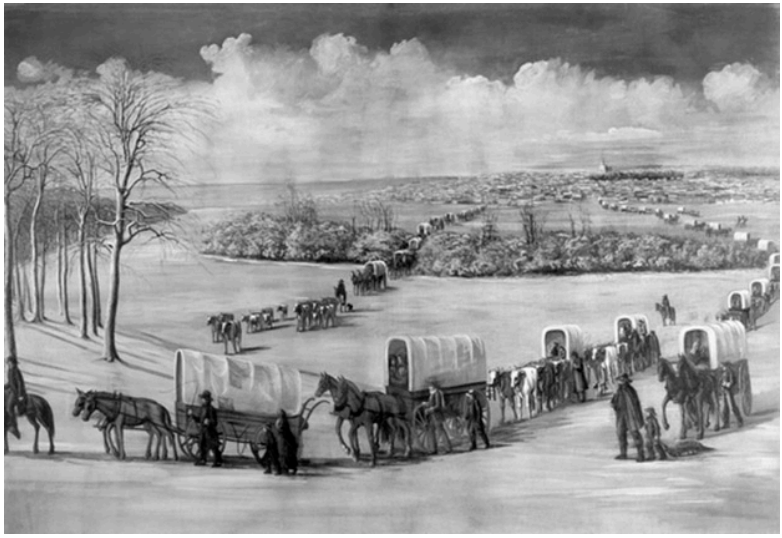
73. *Proclamation: To Col. Levi Williams*, broadside, 9/16/1845 (copy of original located at the CHL); Brigham Young, Nauvoo, to John J. Hardin et al., 10/1/1845, in *To the Anti-Mormon Citizens of Hancock and the Surrounding Counties*, broadside, 10/4/1845 (copy of original located at the Chicago History Museum); Flanders, *Nauvoo*, 330; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 527–31, 537–39.

74. David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to "Dear Friends," 12/2/1845, DWK Letterbook, 1844–46; David W. Kilbourne, Fort Madison, to John T. Norton, 12/8/1845, DWK Letterbook, 1844–46.

75. William G. Hartley, "Winter Exodus from Nauvoo: Brigham Young's Camp of Israel, 1846," in *The Iowa Mormon Trail*, ed. Susan Easton Black and William G. Hartley (Orem, UT, 1997), xv–xvi; idem, "Mormons and Early Iowa History," 232–33; idem, "Spring Exodus from Nauvoo: Act Two in the 1846 Mormon Evacuation Drama," in *Iowa Mormon Trail*, 61–83.

76. Reports of these various meetings can be found in the *Warsaw Signal,* 4/1/1846, 4/15/1846, 4/22/1846, 4/29/1846, 5/6/1846, and 5/13/1846.

77. "Anti-Mormon Meeting," *Lee County Democrat* (Fort Madison), 5/2/1846.



The artist C. C. A. Christensen depicted the Mormons' winter crossing from Nauvoo to Iowa in 1846 in Crossing the Mississippi on the Ice. *© Brigham Young University Museum of Art.*

Kilbourne and other anti-Mormons hoped that the Saints still lingering in Nauvoo and the surrounding areas would quickly abandon the region. That did not happen until near the end of 1846. In September Nauvoo still contained about 600–800 Mormons, most of whom were poor and lacked the means to depart. A band of anti-Mormons attacked the city, intending to force its inhabitants to flee. A battle ensued, during which several were injured and a few killed. Sorely outmatched, the people of Nauvoo surrendered and agreed to leave as soon as possible. They crossed the Mississippi River into Iowa and set up a makeshift campground near Montrose, where they languished until two companies of their coreligionists who had departed Nauvoo earlier in the year backtracked with wagons and supplies to rescue them and help them make the journey across Iowa.[78]

78. Richard E. Bennett, "Eastward to Eden: The Nauvoo Rescue Missions," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19 (1986), 100–108; idem, *Mormons at the Missouri: Winter Quarters, 1846–1852* (1987; reprint, Norman, OK, 2004), 82–84; idem, " 'Dadda, I Wish We Were Out of This Country': The Nauvoo Poor Camps

WITH THE MORMON DEPARTURE, Kilbourne had one less thing to worry about. He and his family remained in Fort Madison until 1852, when they moved to Keokuk. Along with his work as an agent for the New York Land Company, Kilbourne pursued various professional opportunities. In 1848 he was admitted to the Iowa bar and practiced law, focusing on land title cases. He engaged in politics and was elected mayor of Keokuk in 1855. The next year he became a railroad executive, helping to organize and promote the Des Moines Valley Railroad. He served for a time as the company's president. In 1872 he retired. Four years later he died while in New York City.[79]

Discussions of the formation of anti-Mormons in the 1830s and 1840s mostly focus on Mormonism's main gathering locations (Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois). Kilbourne offers an example of that development in Iowa, illustrating the role Iowans played in the mounting drama between Mormons and non-Mormons in the upper Mississippi River valley in the 1840s. Because Kilbourne's criticisms of the Mormons reflected many of the complaints that other individuals expressed, his life sheds light on how and why persons at the time became anti-Mormons. The local nature of Kilbourne's resentments is indicative of much of anti-Mormonism in this period. Physical closeness to large settlements of Mormons, coupled with divergent cultural beliefs, led to animosities. Regardless of the accuracy of Kilbourne's allegations against Joseph Smith and the Mormons, the struggles between Mormons and non-Mormons were real and transformed initially sympathetic figures such as Kilbourne into critical and committed anti-Mormons.

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in Iowa, Fall 1846," in *Iowa Mormon Trail*, 155–71; Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 329–45; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 600–621; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Battle of Nauvoo Revisited," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 22 (2002), 133–46.

79. "An Early Settler Gone," *Keokuk Daily Gate City*, 4/25/1876; George E. Kilbourne, Biographical Sketch of David W. Kilbourne, May 1883, in Caleb Forbes Davis Scrapbooks, 2:433, 502–3, 512–15, 519–22, 535–36; "Mason-Remey and Kilbourne Collections," 311–12; Mahoney, *Provincial Lives*, 224. For an account of Keokuk's shifting economic fortunes during this time, see Michael A. Ross, "Cases of Shattered Dreams: Justice Samuel Freeman Miller and the Rise and Fall of a Mississippi River Town," *Annals of Iowa* 57 (1998), 201–39.