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Mormon Nauvoo in Jacksonian America

Winkler, Phillip Blair, D.A.

Middle Tennessee State University, 1991

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Mormon Nauvoo in Jacksonian America

Phillip B. Winkler

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Arts

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Mormon Nauvoo in Jacksonian America

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Abstract

Mormon Nauvoo in Jacksonian America

Phillip B. Winkler

The Mormon settlement of Nauvoo, Illinois (1828-1846) was not only the largest Mormon gathering for the time period, but was also a focal point of new theological teachings and political opportunism. Nauvoo's setting in the western frontier, its large military establishment known as the Nauvoo Legion, and its exceptional growth combined with the Mormons' use of the block vote resulted in the local non-Mormons perceiving the inhabitants of Nauvoo as a threat to economic and civil security. The city of Nauvoo grew rapidly, but not without consistent economic problems, housing shortages, and political attacks resulting from its irresponsible and questionable use of the judicial powers granted under the city charter. The state of Illinois was also growing and suffered from economic problems, constitutional challenges to its judicial powers and the rights to alien voting. During this era of rise of the common man the United States experienced problems with growth and economics. This study illustrates that Nauvoo was tied to the economy and politics of the nation. The city was affected by events taking place within and outside the state of Illinois. No one group or city can exist in an isolated atmosphere without human aid or challenges. The

Phillip B. Winkler

nation was moving to the west and men dreamed of building new places. The political focus of the nation centered on Illinois and Tennessee. It was a time of an abundance of new ideas, new concepts, and growth in Christianity. The fall of Nauvoo was a result of human error and prejudice. The Illinois non-Mormon leadership, who were men of property, sought additional resources beyond moral and legal boundaries and attempted to control the Mormon vote. The Mormon administration of the city, while experimenting with new theological concepts, fell victims to egotism and autocratic leadership. The Mormon movement consistently diminished the growth of democracy. Any dissenters were forced out of the church and the city. The fall of Nauvoo resulted when religious problems were being handled as civil problems. The non-Mormons used these events and the past problems of Missouri as an excuse to solve the Mormon problem with mob action. The Mormon leader was assassinated, the mob took control of the legal system, and the military forced the Mormons from Nauvoo. This study reveals some new information on the problems of original land purchases, contains previously unknown information on Colonel Solomon Copeland of Tennessee, and illustrates the Mormons' movement away from Jacksonian principles.

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CHAPTER I
BACKGROUND OF THE MORMON MOVEMENT

Origins of the Mormons

The term Mormon is familiar to almost every person in America because of their migration to Utah. Not as many people know anything about Mormon activities before the Utah trek and the role that this group played in the growth of the other sections of the United States. The story of the Mormons began in the state of New York where Joseph Smith, Jr. announced that he had received several angelic visitations and had been given a set of golden plates which he had translated with Divine assistance.¹ The translation became known as the Book of Mormon, the name being derived from the ancient compiler of the golden plates.² The Book of Mormon explained the origin of the American Indian and also was dedicated "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."³

¹Inez Smith Davis, The Story of the Church (Independence: Herald House, 1948), p. 22; Richard L. Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 56 and pp. 96-107.

²Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 66.

³Joseph Smith, Jr., trans., The Book of Mormon (Independence: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1953), p. iii.

During the time the translation was being accomplished, Joseph Smith, at the age of twenty-three, organized a church in New York state on April 6, 1830 that became known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.⁴ The main body of the Church moved from New York to Kirtland, Ohio and then to several settlements in Missouri from which they were forcibly removed. They fled into Illinois and then they were forced to move farther west several years later.⁵

The Mormons spent the years 1838 through 1846 in Illinois and during this period they entered into new economic entanglements, political problems and the initiation of new religious practices. The era was one of growth for the Church and its leaders, but their size in numbers, political strength and closed society, coupled with the skepticism and prejudice which always surrounds a group of this nature, spelled its eventual doom from the outset. The involvement of the Church in worldly problems that normally fall outside the realm of religious concern formed the basis for the main opposition to the group from the outside.

⁴Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, The History of The Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints (Independence: Herald House, 1951), pp. 76-77. The major Mormon movement is divided today between the Church of the Latter-Day Saints with headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints with headquarters in Independence, Missouri. There are also other very small groups.

⁵Thomas Gregg, History of Hancock County, Illinois (Chicago: Chas. C. Chapman and Co., 1880), p. 344.

Pre-Mormon Nauvoo

No history of any section of Illinois should be undertaken without giving a brief acknowledgment of the role played by the Indians who had inhabited the area. The largest group to receive early white contact was a six tribe confederation called the Illini. The term Illini meant "the Men" and the confederation members called themselves this because they felt superior to the other tribes living around them. The Illini were one of the first to accept the French traders and settlers and, as a result, were completely annihilated by the Iroquois, allies of the British in the French and Indian War.⁶

The next important group was the Sac and Fox Indians who migrated to Illinois from the Wabash Valley in Indiana prior to the War of 1812. Like the Illini, these Indians acquired their food by both hunting and farming. The Sac and Fox tribes were almost completely blended into one tribe by the time they left the state of Illinois. One group consisting of about five hundred lodges sold their land to a Captain James White for two thousand sacks of grain before they left the state. This same piece of land was later sold

⁶Phyllis Connolly, Illinois History Digest
(Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1958),
p. 7.

by the White family to Joseph Smith, and it became the first piece of land purchased by the Mormon Church in Illinois.⁷

The last of the large Indian groups was the Potawatomi, which means the people of the place of fire. The tribe ceded the last of their Illinois land to the Federal Government and moved west of the Mississippi River in 1837, just two years prior to the Mormons' return from west of the Mississippi River.⁸

During their excursion down the Mississippi and up the Illinois River, the French explorers Marquette and Joliet became the first white men to enter Illinois between 1673 and 1674.⁹ The French also built the first permanent white settlement in Illinois in 1699 and called it Cahokia in honor of one of the Illini tribes.¹⁰ The French lost their claims to Illinois to the British by the Treaty of Paris of 1763 which closed the French and Indian War. The British closed the area to further white settlement by the Royal Proclamation issued on October 7, 1763,¹¹ and ruled

⁷Reta Latimer Halford, "Nauvoo--The City Beautiful" (Master's Thesis, University of Utah, 1945), p. 7.

⁸Connolly, Illinois History Digest, p. 2.

⁹Theodore Calvin Pease, The Story of Illinois (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1962), p. 18.

¹⁰Dorrell Kildruff and C. H. Pygman, Illinois-History, Government and Geography (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1962), p. 18.

¹¹S. E. Morison Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 1.

the area from Quebec until it was taken from them by George Rogers Clark and his men sent by the colony of Virginia during the Revolutionary War. Virginia later relinquished all claims by giving the area to the Federal Government in 1781 as a gesture of approval of the Articles of Confederation. Congress, however, refused Virginia's limitations on the area and a second cession made by the state was accepted in 1783. The final deed was signed on March 1, 1784.¹²

The United States, under the direction of Congress and President George Washington, wished to establish legal government in the Illinois Territory. The man chosen for this task was Arthur St. Clair.¹³ Illinois became a state on December 3, 1818, even though its population was five thousand three hundred eighty short of the required forty thousand. This made Illinois the smallest populated of all the states added to the Union.¹⁴ The census of 1820 showed that Illinois had grown to a population of fifty-five thousand one hundred sixty-two¹⁵ and the capital, started

¹²Henry Steel Commager, Documents of American History (New York: Appleton-Crofts, Inc., 1949), p. 120.

¹³Pease, The Story of Illinois, p. 68.

¹⁴Kildruff and Pygman, Illinois-History, Government and Geography, p. 22; Robert P. Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State (Grand Rapids: W. E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p. 102.

¹⁵Pease, The Story of Illinois, p. 270.

under St. Clair, in Kaskaskia had moved first to Vandalia and then in 1837 to Springfield.¹⁶

The Illinois Military Tract, the section of Illinois in which the Mormons settled, was devised to be given as a bonus by the Federal Government to the veterans of the War of 1812.¹⁷ The Tract had a total of three million acres which were issued in the form of land warrants that could be traded for actual land or sold to land speculators for cash.¹⁸ By January 28, 1819, seventeen thousand warrants had been exchanged for over two million eight hundred thousand acres in the Military Tract.¹⁹

At first movement into the Tract was slow because it was difficult to obtain a clear title to the land, and land improvements might be lost to a larger land speculator or anyone that might have an earlier title claim.²⁰ Title problems seemed to be a constant harassment to the western settler. Another difficulty was the Tract's topography. Much of the land was untimbered, furnishing no natural fuel or housing materials. Further, the land was hard to

¹⁶Margaret A. Flint, A Chronology of Illinois History (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1967), p. 9.

¹⁷Theodore L. Carlson, The Illinois Military Tract (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951), p. 2.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 7.

²⁰Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 690.

cultivate because of the thickness of the prairie grass roots. The marshy river bottom land presented a water problem to both farming and housing. The first home of Brigham Young (leader of the Mormons on the trek to Utah in 1848) in Nauvoo had water in the basement when he moved into it, and the house remained too damp for a normal cellar to be built²¹ at least until after 1843 when the Young family moved out of the home.²² The river bottom land was also a very unhealthy place for people to live because of diseases.²³ Joseph Smith himself stated that the Illinois Mormon settlement was at first so "unhealthful very few could live there."²⁴

Hancock County, the future center of the Mormon settlement, was established on January 13, 1825. The Military Tract was divided into eighteen counties by 1841. Carthage became the seat of the seven hundred eighty square mile county.²⁵ According to the 1830 federal census, Hancock County had a population of five hundred people.²⁶

²¹Robert Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom of the Mississippi (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), p. 51.

²²Ibid., p. 156.

²³Carlson, The Illinois Military Tract, p. 26.

²⁴Joseph Smith, Jr., The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1908), Vol. 3, p. 375.

²⁵Ibid., p. 39.

²⁶William V. Pooley, The Settlement of Illinois (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1905), p. 400.

In 1831 a new land office was opened at Quincy, Illinois and a map of the surveyed Military Tract was then published for legal entry.²⁷ Hancock County continued to grow and by 1835 it had a population of three thousand two hundred. Ten years later in 1845, which was the apex of the Mormon settlement, the county had grown to a population of twenty two thousand five hundred.²⁸

In 1818 and 1819 many small speculators (including some congressmen) were active in buying and selling the Military Tract lands, but the Panic of 1819 ended the day of small speculators. The Tract was now claimed by the small settlers living on the land and the large Eastern land speculators who could afford to wait a period of time to profit from the sale of the land.²⁹ A swampy area of two hundred and sixty-three thousand acres of the Tract was still owned by the Federal Government as late as 1855.³⁰

Between 1830 and 1840 the Quincy Land office was the most active in the state. It handled the sales of almost all the Military Tract and all the sections in which the main Mormon groups settled.³¹ Quincy's interest in the land business may have had a great deal to do with the

²⁷Carlson, The Illinois Military Tract, pp. 27-28.

²⁸Ibid., p. 79.

²⁹Ibid., p. 40.

³⁰Ibid., p. 53.

³¹Ibid., p. 51.

welcome and interest the citizens of Quincy showed in the landless Mormons fleeing from Missouri's persecutions.

The Mormon entrance into Illinois came as a direct result of their persecution in Missouri. During the winter of 1838-1839, a nucleus of about five thousand of the Saints (as the Mormons called each other) gathered at or around Quincy, Illinois. Joseph Smith's family arrived in Quincy on February 15, 1839,³² after Emma Smith, Joseph's wife, carried two of their four children across the frozen Mississippi River.³³ Joseph and his brother, Hyrum, did not enter Quincy until April 22, 1839,³⁴ and then they came as fugitives after their lifesaving escape from a Missouri sheriff.³⁵

³²Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 3, p. 327.

³³Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 287.

³⁴Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 3, p. 327.

³⁵Ibid., p. 320.

CHAPTER II
THE EARLY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NAUVOO

The Mormons Purchase Nauvoo

There are several possible explanations why the Mormons were received so openly by the people of Illinois, especially those around Quincy. The first of these explanations stresses the humanitarian instincts of the Illinoisans as they viewed this hapless group that had arrived at their doors. Many of the Mormons were taken in, or they found jobs which offered a subsistence wage or room and board.¹ Further, the people of Quincy were already hated by the Missourians because runaway slaves found a safe harbor in Quincy.² So it would appear that the people of Quincy were conditioned to giving aid to the human backwash that flowed out of Missouri.

The land speculation, centered in Quincy, could be another reason for the warm reception given by the Illinoisans. The first land offer made to the Saints was tendered to Israel Barlow, in the fall of 1838, by Dr. Isaac Galland, who was a landowner in both Illinois and Iowa.³ Galland's offer was for twenty thousand acres in the Iowa "half-breed tract." The half-breed tract was one hundred

¹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 13.

²Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 287.

³Pooley, The Settlement of Illinois, p. 400.

nineteen thousand acres lying between the Mississippi River and Des Moines River which was to be settled by the descendants of Sac and Fox mothers and white fathers. The land was later settled by the Saints, but had to be abandoned because it was impossible to gain a clear title to any of the lands. Galland offered his holdings at two dollars an acre with no interest and payable in twenty annual installments.⁴

The offer was rejected by the Church at the February conference held in Quincy. The rejection came mainly as the result of the advice given by Bishop Partridge, a strong leader at the time, and due to the absence of Joseph Smith.⁵ The idea was not forgotten because Joseph Smith wrote from his jail cell in Missouri and asked Galland to keep the offer open at the price offered to Barlow.⁶

The discussion of purchasing land must have raised a question among many of the Mormons as to the advisability of another attempt at a gathering. The communal system of living in Ohio and the gathering at God's chosen area in Independence had both ended in failure. This administrative question seemed to present no problem to Joseph Smith, because two days after his arrival in Quincy he was buying

⁴William Alexander Linn, The Story of the Mormons, (New York: Russell and Russell, Inc., 1963), p. 222.

⁵Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 3, p. 260-261.

⁶Times and Seasons, February, 1840.

land for another gathering which developed into the largest of the three attempts to this point. It was to be centered around the projected town of Commerce (originally called Venus)⁷ which was the occasional home of Dr. Galland.⁸ Smith renamed the town Nauvoo, a Hebrew word which he said meant "beauty and repose."⁹

Joseph and Hyrum Smith had arrived in Quincy, Illinois on Monday, April 22, 1839, fleeing from the Missouri authorities. Upon arrival they found their families were being supported by the Illinoisans. Joseph Smith not only arrived tired and hungry but must have been short of funds in view of his claim that he had just paid out fifty thousand dollars for legal fees in "cash, land, etc."¹⁰ The Prophet seemingly exposed his eccentricity by not complaining about the loss of home, land, money, and several months of his life, but about the loss of his favorite horse. The horse had been stolen by the members of the

⁷Pooley, The Settlement of Illinois, p. 400.

⁸Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, p. 265.

⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 41. Some authorities feel Smith misspelled Nauvoo and think it should be Naveh which in Hebrew means pleasant and beautiful. Pleasant is נָחֵם and beautiful is נָחֵם in a Hebrew dictionary.

¹⁰Smith, The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 3, p. 327.

Missouri mob and sold to a General Wilson who had promised to return it, but failed to do so.¹¹

Joseph Smith and a committee of churchmen made an inspection of the Iowa area adjacent to Nauvoo on April 25, 1839. The purpose of this tour was to find a suitable area for the Saints to settle.¹² Twenty thousand acres of the Iowa half-breed tract was purchased for the Church on Monday, June 24, 1839, from Dr. Isaac Galland. The purchase included the town of Nashville in Lee County,¹³ and shares of stocks in Dr. Galland's "Half-Breed Land Company" along with an assurance of a guaranteed clear title to the land.¹⁴ Later when Smith realized the Church would not receive a clear title to the land, he admitted the error of purchase made by the Church leadership and asked that no more Saints move to the Iowa settlement. Those Mormons already settled in Iowa were asked to return to the Illinois settlement.¹⁵

In the meantime, Illinois purchases had commenced on Wednesday, May 1, 1839, in Hancock County. The first

¹¹Ibid., p. 328.

¹²Ibid., p. 336.

¹³Ibid., p. 378.

¹⁴Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 36.

¹⁵Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 5, p. 334. The Iowa Galland purchase was paid for by the transfer of Missouri properties that had to be abandoned by the Mormons in their 1838 expulsion from the state of Missouri.

purchase was a farm held by Hugh White and called the White purchase. The land was located a mile south of the proposed town of Commerce. Joseph Smith, in conjunction with a committee acting for the General Church, paid five thousand dollars for the farm that was supposedly one hundred thirty-five acres in size.¹⁶ However, research has indicated that the farm was only one hundred twenty-three and four tenths acres.¹⁷ The purchase was to be deeded to Alanson Ripley, a member of the purchasing committee. However, Sidney Rigdon, a member of the First Presidency as well as a member of the purchase committee, felt that no member of the committee should hold the property. The land was then deeded to George W. Robinson, Rigdon's son-in-law. Concurrently the Church purchased forty-seven acres on the west side of the White purchase from Dr. Galland for nine thousand dollars.¹⁸ Dr. Galland had purchased the tract from White in 1837 for two thousand dollars. The land was said to have had a hotel standing on it, but nothing can be found to denote its state of usability. The Illinois Galland purchase was also deeded to Robinson who was to hold the titles until the individual purchases were completely

¹⁶Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 342.

¹⁷David E. Miller, "Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on the History of Nauvoo" (University of Utah: Report for The National Park Service, 1963), p. 47.

¹⁸Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 3, p. 324.

paid. The titles were then to be turned back to the Church leadership.¹⁹

There must have been some legal entanglements in the first purchase transaction, because on July 14, 1841, White again sold his property to the Church. This time the land was deeded to Robert B. Thompson, Joseph Smith's personal secretary, and on October 5, 1841, the purchase was signed over to Joseph Smith as the Trustee-in-trust.²⁰

No notice can be found of a formal approval being given for the purchase of the two Illinois properties, as was customary in these matters. For instance, the Iowa purchase received official approval at a General Conference of the Church held in Quincy, Illinois on May 4, 1839.²¹ Then at a later conference which was called to approve the Illinois settlement for stakehood, seemingly no formal vote for approval was given in respect to the action taken by Joseph Smith and the committee regarding the Illinois purchases.²²

The next property contracted by the Church was a sizable financial commitment. There are questions as to the

¹⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 35.

²⁰Hancock County, Hancock County Records, Deed Book K, pp. 159-161.

²¹Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 3, p. 345.

²²Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 12. Stakehood means to have a large number of the Saints living in a certain area with a required number of high priesthood officials in charge.

actual amount paid for this real estate. Three sums have been given by the following authorities: Dr. Robert B. Flanders argued fourteen thousand five hundred dollars;²³ Dr. David E. Miller claimed one hundred ten thousand dollars;²⁴ and various earlier writers said the total was fifty-three thousand five hundred.²⁵ The amount which the Church had to pay for the property remained secondary in nature, because the Church was unable to pay the price regardless of the amount.

The Hotchkiss purchase was owned by Horace R. Hotchkiss and two other partners, Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Gillet. Hotchkiss lived in New Haven, Connecticut,²⁶ and Gillet lived near Springfield, Illinois,²⁷ but no mention has been made of the abode of Tuttle. He probably lived in the East, however, because of his apparent close contact with Hotchkiss. Smith stated the Hotchkiss purchase "includes all the land lying north of the White purchase to the river and thence on the river south, including the best steamboat landing, but is the most sickly part of Nauvoo." ²⁸

²³Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 42.

²⁴Miller, "Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on Nauvoo", p. 47.

²⁵Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 42.

²⁶Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, pp. 406-407.

²⁷Ibid., p. 101.

²⁸Ibid., p. 408.

Eventually the swamps that were believed to be the source of the sickness were remedied by a drainage ditch built near the base of the bluffs.²⁹

On August 12, 1839, the Hotchkiss' four hundred acres were acquired by Joseph and Hyrum Smith and Sidney Rigdon.³⁰ Later, on July 7, 1843, the property was officially signed over to Joseph Smith as the Trustee-in-trust.³¹ The original arrangement called for Hotchkiss and Company to hold the actual deeds until final payment was made, but the Church could have immediate possession of the land with the right to resell.³² The precedent set in the White purchase called for the signers to hold the note until payment was made in full before officially signing them over to the Trustee-in-trust.

The purchase of the Hotchkiss property was not completed with the arrangements just described. It became evident that an eighty-nine and one-half acre section of the purchase was owned jointly by Hotchkiss and White. In order to include this portion, Joseph Smith paid White one

²⁹Flanders, "Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi", p. 40.

³⁰Miller, "Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on the History of Nauvoo," p. 47.

³¹Hancock County, Hancock County Records, Deed Book G, p. 199.

³²Flanders: Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 42.

thousand dollars above the original Hotchkiss purchase price.³³

"The Hotchkiss purchase forced Smith and the Church into the real-estate business on a large scale."³⁴ Lots carved from the purchase were priced by the Nauvoo High Council at an average of five hundred dollars each (the normal size of a lot was one acre) with prices being flexible between two hundred dollars and eight hundred dollars.³⁵ One thousand dollars was obtained for some of the choice unimproved lots.³⁶ The sale of the lots was slow as shown by a letter sent by Hyrum to Joseph in Washington, D.C. stating that barely enough land had been sold to pay some wages for land surveying and for payment of

³³Miller, "Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on Nauvoo", p. 47. Flanders contends the amount was two thousand dollars and was paid to a Hugo White and Williams White. According to Hyrum Smith's letter to Joseph Smith found on p. 51, Vol. 4 of Smith's history, the amount was one thousand dollars to a William White. In Hancock County Records, Deed Book H, p. 511, Joseph Smith paid two thousand dollars to a William White for the south half of the northeast quarter of Section Number Two in Township 6 north and Range 9 of the 4th Principal Meridian.

³⁴Flanders. Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 42.

³⁵Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, p. 17.

³⁶Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 120.

a few debts.³⁷ Later, however, land sales did increase with the rapid influx of converts and Eastern Mormons.

The exact size of the Nauvoo population has been one of conflicting estimations. The general agreement among Nauvoo historians is that contemporary Mormon and non-Mormon accounts overestimated the population of the city. Commerce had very few people when the Mormons converted it to Nauvoo. Smith reported:

When I made the purchase of White and Galland there was one stone house, three frame houses, and two block houses, which constituted the whole city of Commerce. Between Commerce and Mr. Davidson Hibbard's there was one stone house and three log houses, including the one that I live in, and these were all the houses in this vicinity, and the place was literally a wilderness.³⁸

The growth of Nauvoo was rapid and by 1845 the Illinois state census listed the population at eleven thousand fifty-seven.³⁹ This is the most accurate account available. It does not account, however, for the Mormons living around Nauvoo or in Iowa who looked to Nauvoo as the center of their religious gathering.

³⁷Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, p. 51. Smith was in Washington, D. C. seeking redress from the Congress and President Van Buren for the Mormons' loss at the hands of the mob in Missouri. He was not successful.

³⁸Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 375.

³⁹David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, Nauvoo: City of Joseph (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1974), p. 72.

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon moved into two houses available on the church property and others began the construction of log homes. Later, frame houses and then homes of locally made brick were constructed.⁴⁰ Many of these brick dwellings still exist and are being restored by both the major branches of the Latter Day Saint movement. The frame home of the Prophet (the second home, called The Mansion) and the majority of the brick homes in Nauvoo followed the New England Federalist style.

Financial Role of Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith had additional temporal concerns besides finding housing for his family. He was also the major financial agent of the Mormon church.

Smith's role in the Mormon Church's financial situation had always been assumed by him before the Nauvoo settlement. On October 20, 1839, he was officially made treasurer of the Church by the Nauvoo High Council. James Mulholland was made sub-treasurer and clerk for the land contract. Henry G. Sherwood would "set the price upon, exhibit, contract, and sell town lots in Nauvoo when needed and report his activities to Presidents Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith for their approval."⁴¹ Joseph Smith soon became tired of the

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 77.

⁴¹Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, p. 17.

burden he carried as the chief land agent. On June 18, 1840, he addressed a memorial to the High Council, reminding them that he had been responsible for the original land purchase, had started the settlement and was a representative of the Saints at large. Now he found it necessary to attend to the spiritual welfare of the Saints, translate the recently purchased Egyptian records, finish his rendition of the Bible and wait upon the Lord for new Revelations. In order for him to accomplish all of the above, he felt it necessary to be relieved of his financial appointments. He suggested that H. G. Sherwood be appointed to take his place. Smith also requested financial aid for himself and his family.⁴²

On June 20, 1840, the Council appointed H. G. Sherwood as clerk for the land business and placed Alanson Ripley in charge of obtaining all the needs of the Prophet.⁴³ Since this action would not eliminate Joseph Smith's financial duties, the matter was again brought up at the meeting of the High Council on Friday, July 3, 1840. The Council explained that because Joseph Smith was the one responsible for the payment of the debts on the city plot, they knew of no way in which they could relieve him of the responsibility; therefore he would have to continue in that

⁴²Ibid., pp. 136-137.

⁴³Ibid., p. 138.

capacity, but he would receive as many clerks as necessary to aid his efforts.⁴⁴

Smith now sought additional aid in the selling of the properties. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, recently returned from missionary activities, held a special conference on Monday, August 16, 1841, at which time Joseph Smith asked them to take their place next to him in settling the business of the Church. They would also assist in settling the increasing number of immigrants and at the same time have an opportunity of providing for their own families.

Smith would then have more released time to devote to his translating.⁴⁵

The Church had always followed a policy of opposition to profiteers and speculators. Joseph Smith had asked the Quorum of Twelve to aid in protecting the new arrivals from land speculators. They went on record as being opposed to speculators and ordered that all those that were guilty to be cut off from the Church.⁴⁶ Joseph Smith claimed in the December 20, 1843, issue of the Nauvoo Neighbor that if people would purchase from him as the Trustee-in-trust, the

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 144-145.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 402-404. The Quorum consisted of 12 men and was the highest ranking group after the First Presidency. Their functions were administrative and missionary.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 403-404.

buyer would be aiding the liquidation of the Church's debts and the Nauvoo House. At this time the Church was being accused of land speculating, and the Quorum of the Twelve went on record defending Smith's sales and personal integrity in the land dealings.⁴⁷

By this time the Church started to receive land sales competition from private holdings, Mormon and non-Mormon, in the upper section of Nauvoo that was concentrated around the Temple. The growth of the second commercial area on the "hill" interfered with Joseph Smith's own selling of the Hotchkiss purchase, the Illinois Galland and the White lands. But Smith's efforts to halt this growth failed because the upper area was a healthier section and the Temple was a natural attraction for the new arrivals.⁴⁸ The city council did pass an ordinance requiring a license to open a new business, but pressures from the owners of the bluff property forced its repeal in May, 1842, and the growth of the "hill" continued.⁴⁹

The original plot of Nauvoo was drawn around the plots of Commerce and Commerce City. On Monday, March 1, 1841, at Smith's recommendation, the City Council ordered the two

⁴⁷Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 136.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 188-189.

⁴⁹Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 263.

communities to conform with the design of the rest of Nauvoo.⁵⁰ The plan called for the city to be divided into square blocks with each block being four acres. Each block was then divided into four equal lots of one acre.⁵¹ Joseph Smith, however, was willing to sell fractional lots either because of the demand or in order to increase the value of the remaining portion.⁵² The only blocks that did not conform with the rest were blocks number Seventy, One Hundred Three and One Hundred Four. Block number Seventy had a lot numbered Five in the center of it that contained the grave of George Y. Citler. Block number One Hundred Three entered into the dimensions of block number One Hundred Four in order to allow for the grave site of Ann Wilson. This change had to be made or Durphy Street would have gone over the Wilson grave. Both of the graves were later removed, and the lots were reverted to their proper dimensions. The fee for surveying these lots was reported to be two dollars, and the cost of filing the plat, on September 3, 1839, was twenty-five cents. The lots were to be limited to one house per lot and the house was to be

⁵⁰Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, p. 307.

⁵¹Miller, "Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on Nauvoo." p. 55.

⁵²Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 120.

twenty-five feet from the street.⁵³ The Saints were also asked to plant trees, fruit vines, flower beds and gardens in order to supply both beauty to the city and food to the owner.⁵⁴ The lot and building requirements were seemingly quite advanced for the 1840's.

There can be no doubt that an attempt was being made to build a better community. Inept handling of the land purchase, however, resulted in confusion, conflict and suspicion among the hierarchy of the Church.

The land transactions were not the only direct economic investments by the Church authorities, and were not the only ones which suffered financial ills. In addition to great dreams of heavenly service, the Saints also possessed grandiose ideas of worldly achievements. The most obvious of these endeavors were the Temple and the Nauvoo House. The Church did, however, have other small investments in industry and transportation.

One of the smaller investments was a cooperative venture started on March 10, 1841, called the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Association.⁵⁵ The stock limitation was first set at one hundred thousand dollars with shares being sold at fifty dollars each. The First

⁵³Miller, "Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on Nauvoo." p. 55.

⁵⁴Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 53.

⁵⁵Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 2, p. 519.

Presidency of the Church (Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Rigdon and William Law) was appointed to head the sale of stock with twenty trustees elected annually to be in charge of the association.⁵⁶ The progress of the new association was slow at first because of the limited number in Nauvoo who could afford to buy the stock. Also by 1842 and 1843 the state of Illinois was attempting to remove the Nauvoo Charter because of Nauvoo's alleged misuse of its corporate powers. Thus, those Mormons who had money feared that the Illinois Legislature might cause them to lose their capital. They would then experience another setback like the one suffered in Missouri. The first major project of the Agriculture and Manufacturing Association was a pottery factory. The land was purchased and a building almost completely built. Skilled workers (probably British immigrants) were ready to begin work. But the building was never completed because of the lack of funds and the Whig party's attempts to remove the Nauvoo Charter.⁵⁷

The next business venture attempted by the Association was planned for Joseph Smith's personal benefit. It also had the support of the city council. The project was a power dam and boat docks on the Mississippi⁵⁸ extending

⁵⁶Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 148.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Halford, "Nauvoo--The City Beautiful," p. 321.

from the Nauvoo shoreline to an island approximately in the middle of the river.⁵⁹ After Joseph Smith's death, the Association was reorganized on October 9, 1844, under the leadership of John Taylor.⁶⁰ The July 15, 1844, issue of the Times and Seasons claimed that one hundred thousand dollars had been raised in England for the dam project. No mention can be found of the English funds reaching Nauvoo or what became of them with the ending of the project. The dam went the same route as the pottery factory because the Mormons left Nauvoo before the project passed the dream stage.

The Mormons often showed an interest in the river, its use and control, but showed little interest in the improvement of the road system either in Nauvoo or the surrounding county. The city led by Smith had made allowance for wide streets to handle the future traffic. All streets were forty-nine and one-half feet wide except for the two main streets which were slightly wider to handle commercial traffic.⁶¹ Because the streets were unsurfaced, however, wagons and teams could not use them during periods of heavy rain or snow. Many homeowners

⁵⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 152. This island no longer exists because the Keokuk Dam, which was erected further down the river, caused the island to be covered.

⁶⁰Halford, "Nauvoo--The City Beautiful," p. 321.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 32.

attempted to keep the section in front of their homes in good repair, and the Nauvoo City Charter required three day's work per man every year for general road and bridge repair. There is evidence that in 1843 two men were given a punishment of six months road repair work for a robbery conviction.⁶²

Nauvoo, like most western settlements, had a variety of problems other than poor roads. Mail service to and from the western settlements was expected to be a problem. The mail service in Nauvoo became an unusual source of problems. The neighboring town of Warsaw had a Mormon as their first mail carrier, and he was accused of robbing the mail.⁶³ This was not the only time the mail came to be a bone of contention, because a later postmaster, Sidney Rigdon, a member of the First Presidency, was accused of opening the mail and of robbery by Joseph Smith. Smith sent a letter to the United States Senator R. M. Young asking for Rigdon's removal from the post and, of course, offering his services to the government as the next postmaster of Nauvoo.⁶⁴

Most of the mail and commercial goods were shipped by water rather than the overland route because the river was a

⁶²Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 40.

⁶³Ruth Cory, "Warsaw and Fort Edwards on the Mississippi," Illinois State Historical Society, Vol. 37, (Springfield: Illinois Historical Library), p. 205.

⁶⁴Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 2, pp. 266-267.

less arduous journey, and as a general rule water travel was cheaper in the early commercial trade. The Mississippi River dominated the site of Nauvoo and was looked upon as a source of possible profit for the new settlement. The river became a very useful tool for the Mormons because it brought in needed building materials, trade, business and the Mormons' most useful commodity, converts.

Ferry services between Nauvoo and Montrose, Iowa, the city's nearest neighbor across the River, did present problems. The ferry landing was the scene of many fights, robberies and costly delays.⁶⁵ The High Council of the Church voted on October 20, 1839, to disassociate (remove from church membership) anyone who robbed or injured any person at the ferry landings. During this same meeting, the High Council voted to repair the Church's Horse Boat with money from the sale of city lots in Nauvoo. D. C. Davis was elected master of the ferry boat for the next year at thirty dollars a month.⁶⁶ A week later the High Council voted to pay Vinson Knight one hundred and fifty dollars for the Montrose landing of the ferry service.⁶⁷ The Church then

⁶⁵Halford, "Nauvoo--The City Beautiful," p. 335.

⁶⁶Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint, p. 16. Reta Latimer Halford in her M. A. Thesis, "Nauvoo--The City Beautiful," contends that D. C. Davis was hired as a guard at the ferry landing, but Smith's report in the minutes of the October 20 meeting does not substantiate this claim.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 17.

possessed both landing and the Horse Boat, but there must have been some question about the management of the service because on March 15, 1840, the High Council acted to appoint the First Presidency to superintend the affairs of the ferry between Nauvoo and Montrose.⁶⁸

Joseph Smith became financially involved in two ferry boat deals before his death. The first involved the credit purchase of a steamboat which Smith named Nauvoo. The transaction has become one of mystery because a question has arisen as to whether Smith was able to keep the steamboat or if he eventually lost it. The Federal Government gained a judgment against Smith of five thousand one hundred eighty-four dollars and thirty-one cents on July 11, 1842, and the steamboat would have been the only apparent basis for the suit. Research has failed to determine if the government was able to collect their judgment after his death.⁶⁹ No steamboat Nauvoo was present at the time of Joseph Smith's death; this gives support to the idea that the judgment against Smith was a rent or loan charge made by the Federal Government, and that they had already gained possession of the steamboat.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 95.

⁶⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 161.

Joseph Smith's second ferry boat, the Maid of Iowa, was built by Dan Jones and Levi Moffatt in 1842.⁷⁰ In 1843 Jones was offered a mission to Wales, his native land, and Joseph Smith purchased half interest in the boat for nine thousand three hundred and seventy-five dollars in notes. By April of 1844, the ferry was in debt one thousand seven hundred dollars. Joseph Smith then gave to Jones, his partner, city lots worth one thousand three hundred and twenty-one dollars in order to gain total ownership in the craft. Joseph Smith then assumed all of the debts of the boat, becoming its full owner for a brief two months.⁷¹ It, too, became part of his estate claims.⁷² On May 3, 1843, Mayor Joseph Smith requested that the Maid of Iowa become a ferry service for Nauvoo. On Tuesday, May 9, 1845, a party of over a hundred, including Joseph's family, Sidney Rigdon, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, went aboard the boat for a twelve-hour pleasure excursion. Mayor Smith must have enjoyed the experience because on the 12th of May he purchased half interest in the boat from "Moffatt and Captain Jones."⁷³ When the second half of the boat

⁷⁰Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 293.

⁷¹Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 5, p. 386.

⁷²Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 161.

⁷³Scott, H. Faulring (ed.), An American Prophet's Record (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989) pp. 375-377.

was purchased by Smith, there is no reference to Levi Moffatt being included in the sale. Moffatt's share of the Maid must have been purchased in the first half-interest transaction.

The financial loss experienced by the Maid of Iowa might have been due to Joseph Smith's use of the boat as a source of entertainment. On at least three occasions the Smiths hosted a large gathering with food and music.⁷⁴ On September 30, 1843, Smith went aboard the craft in order to escape the over 100-degree heat in Nauvoo.⁷⁵ The trips that the Maid made to St. Louis to transport converts, to transport Emma Smith and to make purchases in St. Louis would have provided the Maid no income. The boat was also messed into service to haul building materials and people between Nauvoo and Wisconsin. These trips apparently provided no income for the services of the Maid of Iowa. Halford, in her work "Nauvoo--The City Beautiful," maintains the main reason for the financial loss of the Maid of Iowa was its role in the Church's lumbering operation in the Wisconsin Black River area known as the pineries.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Ibid, p. 376, p. 382, p. 397.

⁷⁵Ibid, p. 415.

⁷⁶Halford, "Nauvoo--The City Beautiful," p. 340.

The pineries operation was organized on June 28, 1842, with Ezra Chase as the leader.⁷⁷ Its main objective was to supply the needed lumber for the building of the Temple and the Nauvoo House with the extra lumber being sold to pay for the lumbering expense. After several setbacks caused by weather, Indians and fights with neighboring lumbermen, a large quantity of the sorely needed lumber supplies was produced. The real problem was dispersal and use after arrival in Nauvoo. Smith and others complained that the general building industry was receiving more of the products than the Nauvoo House or the Temple for which they were produced.

George Miller, the Church's Bishop overseeing the lumbering operations, felt that Lyman Wight, a member of the Nauvoo House Committee, almost ruined everything by selling almost all the lumber for his private building concerns which Miller called "speculative business ventures." Wight also lost a trunk of Nauvoo House stock that was never recovered, and Miller said it was because Wight was drunk too often. Joseph Smith did not seem to be too upset with Lyman Wight's problems with the records of the Nauvoo House Committee or with Wight's bouts with alcohol and proposed

⁷⁷Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Vol. 2, p. 187.

Wight return to Wisconsin where he might be free from temptation.⁷⁸

The vast scope of the private building concerns can be shown in two ways. The first was the advertisement placed in the local papers for a million bricks, while gathering lumber, enough for thirty or forty houses, and the ease with which the new converts and immigrants were able to find immediate housing in Nauvoo.⁷⁹ Second was harassment the trade received by the Prophet, Joseph Smith. He felt it was taking the needed workers and materials away from the two main buildings of the city, the Nauvoo House and the Temple.⁸⁰

The Nauvoo House was started as the result of a Revelation allegedly received by Joseph Smith at Nauvoo on January 19, 1841. The Revelation set the price of stock at fifty dollars a share. Named to invest in the project were: Lyman Wight, George Miller, John Snider, Peter Haros, Joseph Smith, Vinson Knight, Hyrum Smith, Isaac Galland, William Marks, Henry G. Sherwood, William Law, and Robert D. Foster. The Nauvoo House was to be a "healthy habitation," a

⁷⁸Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 185.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 157.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 187.

boarding house for strangers who visited the city, and a home for Joseph Smith and his family forever.⁸¹

The odd fact about the Revelation was that an act to incorporate the Nauvoo House Association had already been introduced to the Illinois General Assembly.⁸² The people of Nauvoo must have sensed the weak basis of the Revelation and the purpose of the Nauvoo House, because they failed to build the structure to any livable habitat, while the Temple, also supposedly to have been built by a command Revelation, was placed under the roof and used for a short period before the exodus to Utah. The Nauvoo House would aid Joseph Smith more than anyone else in the city and he was its greatest proponent. After a while he, too, gave up and built his second home and boarding house called the Mansion.⁸³ Smith's pleas for the Nauvoo House never ended and he presented this strong argument--"the building of the Nauvoo House is just as sacred in my view as the Temple. I

⁸¹Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, pp. 274-286. From general information gathered these were the wealthiest men in Nauvoo. Some, like William Law, were recent converts from Canada with a fair amount of cash.

⁸²Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 180.

⁸³Ibid., p. 190.

want the Nauvoo House built. It must be built. Our Salvation depends upon it."⁸⁴

Nauvoo House was originally designed by Joseph Smith and Lucian Woodworth, a Gentile, as the Mormons called a non-Mormon. Woodworth, an architect, also directed the limited construction. The building was to be three stories of brick set over a stone basement and built on an L design. The building was complete only to the second story by the time the work was stopped in March, 1844. After Joseph Smith's death, his wife, Emma, married L. C. Bidamon, who tore down some of the walls and built a moderate sized two-story building.⁸⁵ The inside of the building was not completed at that time. Today the Nauvoo House is available as a dormitory for groups that come to visit Nauvoo.

The failure of the Nauvoo House could be construed as a sign of the times. It displayed the overextension of the Church's finances and the difficulties of competing not only with private interests but also with the major projects being conducted by the Church. The people found themselves confronted with so many demands upon their time and limited personal funds, they had to make a series of decisions as to which revelation, project or urgent need to follow.

⁸⁴Ibid., p., 187. Roberts, the editor of Joseph Smith's history, interjected "as a city" after salvation, but Flanders claims the quotation should read as found in Millennial Star, 20:582, September 11, 1858. This writer agrees with Flanders.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 190.

Probably they chose the ones of most personal interest. The Nauvoo House Revelation came from doubtful origin, was a large expense and took materials away from the Temple that the Saints felt was a blessing for all of them. Furthermore, it benefitted only Joseph Smith and the few workmen who received wages for its construction. It was destined for failure in a nation, state and city where high cost and limited amount of flowing capital limited the life of almost every American, especially the western settlers.

The main competitor of the Nauvoo House was the Temple. The idea of a Temple was, and still is, a mainspring in the Mormon religion. The Saints had already built a Temple in Kirtland, Ohio and had dedicated a Temple lot in Missouri before fleeing to Illinois.⁸⁶ The Mormon religion contended that a Temple could only be built by a direct commandment from God, and the commandment for Nauvoo's Temple was asserted by Smith to have been given on January 19, 1841. It may be pertinent to point out that Nauvoo House Revelation, which some of the Saints took lightly, was given and incorporated as a part of the Temple Revelation. Smith said God wanted a Temple in order to restore the fullness of the priesthood, bring about baptism for the dead, to allow their washings and anointings to be

⁸⁶Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 227; Linn, The Story of the Mormons, pp. 166-167. Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Doctrine and Covenants (Independence: Herald House, 1955), Section 57, p. 132.

acceptable, to allow the Saints the opportunity to prove themselves faithful in all things and to have offices for all the Church officials.⁸⁷

The cornerstone of the Temple was laid at the April Conference of the Church in 1841,⁸⁸ and the following article advertising the dedication services appeared in the April 10, 1846, issue of the Hancock Eagle:

This splendid edifice is now completed, and will be dedicated to the Most High God on Friday, the 1st of May, 1846. The services of the dedication will continue each day at 11 a.m. Tickets may be had at the watch house near the door of the Temple, and also at the office of the Trustee-in-trust at \$1 each.

The design of the Temple, the construction and final project was all Joseph Smith's idea. Elder William Weeks was hired to be the Temple architect, however, Joseph Smith gave all the instructions.⁸⁹ The building was one hundred twenty-eight feet long, eighty-eight feet wide, one hundred sixty-five feet from the ground to the roof.⁹⁰ It was two stories high with a basement. The walls were made from Nauvoo limestone and the stones were smooth blocks from four

⁸⁷Ibid., Section 107, pp. 271-285.

⁸⁸Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, pp. 326-327.

⁸⁹Ibid., Vol., VI, pp. 196-197.

⁹⁰Cecil McGavin, The Nauvoo Temple (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1962), p. 87.

to six feet thick.⁹¹ The limestone used was taken from a quarry along the Mississippi River. The seals between the stones were lead.⁹² The guiding force behind the economics of the Temple construction was the Temple Committee of Elias Higbee, Reynolds Cahoon and Alpheus Cutter. The real power, however, was Joseph Smith because, for all practical purposes, he instructed the committee as to what they should or should not do. In 1843, Hyrum Smith replaced Higbee when the latter died.⁹³

The Temple construction faced numerous delays due to the lack of financial contributions, building supplies and an inconsistent labor force. The constant problem of money shortage was aggravated by the disappearance of money given for building because it was given to persons without proper authority. Nauvoo was now large enough apparently to hide con-artists. A plea for more funds and a general warning about turning them over to proper sources was given by Joseph Smith as part of a Sabbath day message.

In relation to those who give property for the Temple. We want them to bring it to the proper source, and to be careful into whose hands it comes, that it may be entered into the Church books, so that those whose names are found in the

⁹¹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 194.

⁹²Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, pp. 291-292, 297.

⁹³Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 61.

Church books shall have the first claim to receive their endowments in the temple.⁹⁴

Financial contributions to the Temple were not limited to the rich, but involved the poor and the women as well. The plan was to have each woman or poor person give one cent a week or fifty cents a year, and these funds were used to buy the glass and nails needed to further construction. This idea was devised by Hyrum Smith shortly after his appointment to the Temple committee and given at the last conference of the Church before his and his brother's death at Carthage, Illinois.⁹⁵

The Saints were also informed that they would not be able to share in the blessings of the Temple unless they aided in its construction. This rule not only applied to the American membership, but also to the growing flock in England.⁹⁶ Joseph Smith added this order to the quorum of the Twelve his own order that no more Church conferences would be held until they could be held in the Temple and baptism for the dead would be halted until it could be conducted in the Temple.⁹⁷ This order was later evaded by

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 243.

⁹⁵McGavin, The Nauvoo Temple, p. 29. Either Hyrum's math was very poor or he allowed the women to skip a two-week period of saving.

⁹⁶Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, pp. 473-474.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 426.

a hastily constructed baptismal font and a series of special meetings in place of a formal conference.⁹⁸

Temple construction not only called for the giving of money, but the giving of time for manual labor. The city was divided politically into wards, and each ward had a captain in charge of operation. The Church officials decided that each man should give one-tenth of his time in the construction of the Temple. Work was parceled out to different wards on various days in order to insure an even balance of workmen on the scene each day. The ward captains were to keep an accurate account of work completed by each member of his ward which could then be shown to the Temple Committee upon request.⁹⁹ Another method of getting manpower for the Temple construction was assignment of Temple missions to the missionaries of the Church. This meant that instead of travelling to a distant state or nation, the men would be assigned to work a year or two for the Temple.¹⁰⁰

The Temple was not without its share of labor-management problems. In November, 1842, the workers complained that some of their fellow workers were receiving special privileges and others a lesser amount of food

⁹⁸Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 200.

⁹⁹Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 4, p. 517.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 474.

supplies as compensation for their labors. Joseph Smith investigated the accusations and at the same time ordered the members of the Temple Committee to have themselves bonded for twelve thousand dollars.¹⁰¹

Total expenditures by the Church on the Temple is somewhat of a mystery. The amounts given vary from the almost believable to the ridiculous. The building, while taking the funds of the Saints, also joined with the Nauvoo House and several other Church building projects to become the largest method of supplying jobs for the immigrants and food for the labor of the poor and needy.¹⁰² The wages for a skilled stone mason amounted to four dollars a day for a twelve hour day. The salary of a common laborer would obviously be less.¹⁰³

The Temple was left in a state of partial completion when the Mormons that followed Brigham Young left for Utah. It was disfigured by vandals on several occasions and was finally destroyed by fire on the morning of October 9, 1848.¹⁰⁴ Thus came to an end the greatest single physical accomplishment of the Mormons in Illinois.

¹⁰¹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 206.

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 207-208.

¹⁰³McGavin, The Nauvoo Temple, p. 87.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 141.

The problems that brought an end to the Mormon settlement of Nauvoo were, however, not to be their building of a temple but their attempts to construct a political powerhouse.

CHAPTER III
THE POLITICS OF NAUVOO

The City Charter

The Illinois political situation made the Mormons of interest to both Whigs and Democrats. Neither party had the numerical strength to control the state's politics. Both parties, therefore, gave aid to the legislative passage of the Nauvoo charter to gain the Mormon vote. The operation of the Nauvoo city government and court developed into a political problem not previously known in Illinois. The powers granted to the city of Nauvoo came in the form of a city charter granted by the State of Illinois on December 16, 1840.¹ This act of incorporation was enacted during the governorship of Thomas Carlin and received his signature.² Following the achievement of statehood in 1818, Illinois had granted only five city charters prior to the Nauvoo Charter.³

The charter given to Nauvoo was very much like its five predecessors. It was the only one of the six, however, that incorporated directly a part of another city charter. The

¹Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph, pp. 45-46.

²James L. Kimball, Jr., "The Nauvoo Charter: A Reinterpretation," Illinois Historical Society Journal 64 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1971), p. 67.

³Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph, p. 45.

other five charters were all original in their construction. The Nauvoo followed the main ideas of the others but also copied directly from the Springfield Charter. In the Nauvoo Charter, Section Thirteen, there appeared the thirty-nine sections of Article Five of the Springfield Charter.⁴ With this exception duly noted the Nauvoo Charter is much like those of Chicago, Alton, Galena, Springfield and Quincy.⁵

The opposition the Mormons experienced against their charter lies in the interpretation applied to the charter by the Mormon leadership. The charter wording invited this possibility when it allowed the Nauvoo city government to pass laws as long as they were not in conflict with the United States constitution or the Illinois constitution. This meant that laws could be passed that possibly were not in line with state statutes but not in violation of the state constitution, thus opening the way to allow the Mormons to build Nauvoo a state within a state.⁶

The main ideas of the Nauvoo Charter were compiled by a committee of Mormon leaders, the credit for its genius being claimed by Joseph Smith and a recent convert John C. Bennett. Smith seems to have been very impressed with Bennett who had risen quickly in Illinois political and

⁴Kimball, "The Nauvoo Charter: A Reinterpretation", p. 45.

⁵Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph, p. 45.

⁶Kimball, "The Nauvoo Charter: A Reinterpretation", p. 67.

military offices. Bennett became the first mayor of Nauvoo, second in command of the Nauvoo military, claimed to be a medical doctor and held the title of Quartermaster General of the State of Illinois.⁷ Bennett had a practical background in acquiring charters having been successful in obtaining a charter in 1837 for a military group known as the "Invincible Dragoons" and an educational institution, the Fairfield Institute. Both groups were located in Fairfield, Wayne County, Illinois.⁸

Bennett's contributions to Nauvoo also included the discovery of limestone deposits which were later used on the Nauvoo Temple. Bennett is also credited with introducing freemasonry into Nauvoo with results that affected Mormon terminology. Last, but not least, of his contributions was his personal encouragement of the cultivation of tomatoes, believed by many to be poisonous and were nicknamed loveapples.⁹

John C. Bennett had a rapid fall from power amid rumors of a forgotten wife in Ohio, questionable relationships with ladies in Nauvoo and the charge of threatening the life of Joseph Smith, Jr. The alleged threat came on the occasion

⁷Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, p. 460.

⁸Kimball, "The Nauvoo Charter: A Reinterpretation", p. 77.

⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, pp. 247-248.

of practice maneuvers of the Nauvoo Legion, the city military organization. The charges against Bennett occurred when Smith felt Bennett purposely placed his safety in question. Bennett soon resigned as mayor of Nauvoo and left under the pressure of these moral and civil accusations. In 1842 Bennett wrote an anti-Mormon work entitled The History of the Saints, or an Expose' of Joe Smith and the Mormons. This is an interesting, if not ironic twist of fate, that the man to be of such early importance to the legal creation of Nauvoo should become its first great critic.

The charter did contain the basic powers also granted in the other city charters with some interesting additions. It allowed the creation of an independent military organization, a city university and an independent judicial system. There were no residency requirements for holding public office.¹⁰

The elimination of residence requirements allowed Smith, returning missionaries and other recent arrivals to be eligible to hold office. The charter was also silent on the question of citizenship allowing converts from England and Canada to be elected to a city office. The most notable examples were Wilson Law from Canada and John Taylor from

¹⁰Kimball, "The Nauvoo Charter: A Reinterpretation", pp. 74-75.

England. Both of these men were elected to the city council of Nauvoo without being citizens of the United States.¹¹

What was to become of the most controversial of the powers granted by the charter were centered around the Nauvoo judicial system. The Mormons used the court to free Joseph Smith from legal summons served by county and state officers. The actual Nauvoo judicial system appears to be an excellent method of meeting a city's judicial problems. The judiciary had as its principle judge the mayor of the city of Nauvoo. Each of the aldermen acted as associate justices. The defendant had the right to appeal to the municipal court which consisted of the mayor and all of the aldermen. The court was able to hear cases of civil and criminal violations of state law and held exclusive jurisdiction over all cases arising from the powers of the Nauvoo charter. This meant that any case under the special powers of the Nauvoo charter could be heard in two Nauvoo courts before going to the state court system.¹²

The Nauvoo court system under Section seventeen of the Charter had the power to issue writs of habeas corpus. The question of the use of the writs of habeas corpus by Joseph Smith and the Nauvoo government became a major legal confrontation between the city and the powers of the states of Illinois and Missouri. In Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The

¹¹Ibid., pp. 70-71.

¹²Ibid., pp. 73-74.

City of Joseph, they claim that Alton had the exact same power but the way the Mormons used it made it controversial.¹³ Smith was acutely aware of the significance of the writs in regard to his personal safety. There were several attempts to extradite Smith back to Missouri to stand trial for treason. These attempts failed because of the issuance of a writ in Nauvoo and several state courts.¹⁴

The City Government

The Nauvoo city government, as mandated by the charter, consisted of a mayor and a city council. The council included two aldermen and four councilmen from each of the city's wards. The city council established other city officers such as surveyor, weigher and sealer, market master, high constables, and coroner. The salaries paid by the city were in line with the wages of one or two dollars a day for skilled labor. The mayor's salary was five hundred dollars per year with three dollars per day as he performed his judicial duties. The council members were paid one dollar per each day the council was in session.¹⁵

¹³Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph, p. 49.

¹⁴Kimball, "The Nauvoo Charter: A Reinterpretation," p. 74. Kimball claims that Alton and Chicago had powers similar to Nauvoo but not worded exactly like Nauvoo's; Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph, p. 49.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 54-55.

The first mayor of Nauvoo was John C. Bennett with the prophet, Joseph Smith, serving as one of the council members. Joseph Smith later became mayor pro tempore and became full mayor in the wake of Bennett's resignation on May 17, 1842. This made Smith the city's chief religious and civil leader.

Besides holding that top municipal job, the Mormon prophet was Justice of the Peace, Lieutenant-General in the Nauvoo Legion, and Chief Justice of the Nauvoo Municipal Court. He was also the town's leading merchant, real estate agent, banker and university regent in addition to being president of the church.¹⁶

The amount of income Smith received from these positions is the subject of much speculation. He was always borrowing money, he tried to sell as many town lots as possible for his personal needs, and he died leaving his wife in debt.

The Nauvoo city council passed a variety of laws which were a reflection of its growth and its pursuit to establish a theocracy. Some of the city ordinances enacted concerned the development of the Nauvoo Legion, the Nauvoo University, new ward divisions and freedom of religion. Because of governmental and mob action against them, the Mormons had a very strong belief in the right of freedom of religion. They were going to look to the national and not the state government for help.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 54.

Other laws dealt with boarding houses, vagrants, profanity, houses of infamy which operated formally and informally, sewage, the sale of spirituous liquors, and laws for the protection and control of children and dogs. The council also passed laws concerning marriage. While there seems to have been no license requirement to marry, the council did establish an age requirement. Nauvoo girls of fourteen and boys of seventeen were allowed to marry without parental consent. On February 8, 1844, the council fined two Negro men for trying to marry white women.¹⁷

The Nauvoo Legion

Prior to the Nauvoo experience the Mormons had found themselves victims of violent reprisals. The possibility of having a protective militia controlled by them was of great interest to the Mormons. The legal basis for the establishment of the Nauvoo Legion was in the twenty-fifth section of the city charter.

The Legion was not to be a county or a state agency but solely that of the city of Nauvoo. The title of legion was unusual at this point in American history. In 1792 the United States Army used the term but it was discarded by legislative action in 1796. The term legion and the basic organization of the body was begun by John C. Bennett. He

¹⁷Ibid., p. 55-63.

claimed the Legion was patterned after the Legions of Rome.¹⁸

The officers of the Nauvoo Legion received their commissions from the governor of Illinois. Joseph Smith, the commanding officer of the Legion, was granted the rank of lieutenant general. This appears to have been the only time this rank was given to anyone between George Washington and U. S. Grant.¹⁹ The remainder of the Legion's staff was representative of the time period with the exception of authoritative court martial.

The court martial consisted of officers appointed under the authority of the twenty fifth section of the Nauvoo charter. The city council, on February 3, 1841, created the formal organization of the Nauvoo Legion and the court martial.

Sec. 1. Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Nauvoo, that the Inhabitants of the City of Nauvoo, and such citizens of Hancock County as may unite by voluntary Enrollment, be and they are hereby organized into a body of independent Military Men, to be called the "Nauvoo Legion:", as contemplated in the 25th Section of "An act to incorporate the City of Nauvoo", approved December 16th, 1840.

Sec. 2. The Legion shall be, and is hereby divided into two Cohorts; the Horse Troops to constitute the first Cohort, & the foot Troops to constitute the second Cohort.

Sec. 3. The General officers of the Legion shall consist of a Lieutenant General, as the Chief Commanding & reviewing officer, & president of the

¹⁸John Sweeney, Jr., "A History of the Nauvoo Legion in Illinois" (Master's Thesis: Brigham Young University, 1974), p. 8.

¹⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 110.

Court Martial & Legion; a major General, as the second in Command of the Legion, the Secretary of the Court Martial & Legion, & Adjutant & Inspector General; a Brigadier General, as the commander of the first Cohort; & Brigadier General, as Commander of the second Cohort.

Sec. 4. The Staff of the Lieutenant General shall consist of two principal Aids de Camp, with the rank of Colonels of Cavalry, & a guard of twelve Aids de Camp, with the rank of Captains of Infantry & a drill officer with the rank of Colonel of Dragoons, who shall likewise be the Chief officer of the Guard.

Sec. 5. The Staff of the Major General shall consist of an Adjutant, a Surgeon in Chief, a Coronet, a Quarter Master, a Pay Master, a Commissary, & a Chaplain, with the rank of Colonels of Infantry; surgeon for each Cohort, a Quarter Master Sergeant, Sergeant Major, & Chief Musician, with the rank of Captains in light Infantry, & two Musicians, with the rank of Captains of Infantry.

Sec. 6. The Staff of each Brigadier General shall consist of one Aid de Camp with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of Infantry, provided that the said Brigadiers shall have access to the Staff of the Major General, when not otherwise in Service.

Sec. 7. No officer shall hereafter be elected by the various Companies of the Legion, except upon the nomination of the Court Martial to nominate at least two Candidates for each vacant officer, whenever such vacancies occur.

Sec. 8. The Court Martial shall fill and supply all offices ranking between Captains & Brigadier General by granting brevet Commissions to the most worthy Company officers of the Line, who shall thereafter take the rank, & Command according to the date of their Brevets: provided that their original place in the Line shall not thereby be vacated.

Sec. 9. The Court Martial, consisting of all the Military officers, Commissioned or entitled to Commissions, within the limits of the City Corporation, shall meet at the office of Joseph Smith, on Thursday, the 4th day of February, 1841, at 10 o'clock A.M. & there proceed to elect the general officers of the Legion, as contemplated in the 3rd Section of this Ordinance.

Sec. 10. The Court Martial shall adopt for the Legion, as nearly as may be, & so far as applicable, the discipline, drill, uniform, rules, & regulations of the United States Army.

Sec. 11. This Ordinance shall take effect & be in force from & after its Passage.

Passed February 3rd, 1841.

John C. Bennett, Mayor
James Sloan, Recorder²⁰

Other city ordinances were passed for the Legion that required all white men between eighteen and forty-five to enlist, established three annual parade dates and set fines for the absenteeism of enlisted men and officers.²¹

The Nauvoo Legion court martial operated with authority in three separate areas. The first was as judicial body, acting as judge and/or jury, in cases of any breach of military conduct. Secondly, the court acted as a legislative body with the power to create and pass laws. These laws established the military code of the Legion. The third power of the court took on the executive function of deciding the military promotions of the Legion. The court met at least thirty-three times during the four years the Legion existed in Nauvoo. The court was apparently able to exercise considerable power due to the lackadaisical construction of the Illinois military code. The state revised the code in 1845 perhaps as a result of the Nauvoo Legion experience.²²

²⁰Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph, pp. 95-96.

²¹Ibid., p. 96.

²²Sweeney, "A History of the Nauvoo Legion in Illinois," pp. 13-17.

The Nauvoo Legion was to protect the city of Nauvoo and its citizens from external enemies that had in their recent past in Missouri taken their lives and property. The saints felt they could no longer trust a state government to protect them. The Legion was also to enforce the laws of the city council and to serve as an attraction at ceremonial functions. The Legion was well equipped for parade duty and came complete with a small brass band.²³ The Legion, along with the brass band, was used the day the church official (with Joseph Smith in his general's uniform) laid the cornerstone of the Nauvoo Temple.²⁴

The events of this day, in April of 1841, must have been very exciting.²⁵ The Nauvoo Legion was joined by two volunteer companies from the Iowa Territory, making a total of sixteen military companies on review. Cannons were fired to announce the arrival of the four top ranking officers and later when the ladies of Nauvoo made a presentation of an American flag made of silk the cannons were fired again.²⁶

The Nauvoo Legion eventually lost its military independence and its issue of military equipment. The

²³Ibid., p. 38. The band was authorized by the court martial of February 20, 1841. Edward P. Duzette was placed in charge to organize a group of under twenty.

²⁴Ibid., p. 41.

²⁵Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 111.

²⁶Miller and Miller, Nauvoo: The City of Joseph, p. 98.

equipment had been issued by the state of Illinois and it was recalled in 1844 following an incident in Nauvoo that involved the Legion. The event that altered not only the status of the Nauvoo Legion but doomed the Nauvoo Charter and the leadership of the Mormon church was the Expositor affair.²⁷ The Expositor was a newspaper published by several disenchanted leaders of the Church. The mayor and the city council ordered its destruction and the job fell to the Nauvoo Legion.²⁸

This marked the beginning of the final days of Joseph Smith, the Nauvoo gathering and the existence of the Legion in Nauvoo as well. The Legion like so many other well intended possibilities of the Nauvoo Era failed to achieve its goal and had a major adverse effect among the non-Mormon populace. The building of the Prophet's Army in one of God's Holy Places did not do away with all of mankind's lowly problems, such as poverty.

The Problem of Poverty

The final insurmountable financial problem of the Mormon Church and the city of Nauvoo was the care of the poor and needy. The Prophet often wanted the Church to

²⁷Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, pp. 752-752.

²⁸George R. Gayler, "The 'Expositor' Affair: Prelude to the Downfall of Joseph Smith," Northwest Missouri State College Studies Vol. 25 (Maryville: February, 1966), pp. 5-10.

prepare an inheritance for the poor, widows and orphans. Joseph Smith, with the aid of his wife, Emma, organized the "Ladies Relief Society of the City of Nauvoo" on Thursday, March 24, 1842, and the group played a very active part in the care of the poor and the sick. The youth of Nauvoo were also organized to aid the poor because of official concern about the conduct of the young people. The youth organization was known as the "Young Gentlemen and Young Ladies Relief Society." Their first project was to build a home for a lame English convert.²⁹

The problems of the poor were indeed a large concern because most of the converts and immigrants were of the poorer class. Many of the Eastern Saints of means did not come to Nauvoo, because the rich feared the loss of their goods in another failure of the gathering. Because of this situation the Church's funds were used to make land payments and for building and were not available to aid the poor. Those that did have money pretended to be poor in order to protect their investment and to keep from having to give it all to the Church in the form of contributions or tithes.³⁰

The general class of people converted in England and brought to America often added to the economic problems of Nauvoo rather than healing them. In a letter to his wife, a

²⁹Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 303.

³⁰Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 145.

missionary in England by the name of Orson Hyde described the British converts as being "extremely poor, most of them not having a change of clothes decent to be baptized in."³¹ The converts often came to Nauvoo with nothing and they had even borrowed their passage money from the Church officials.³² One can only suppose this loan was repaid by labor on the Church's buildings. The overall class of people, Mormon and non-Mormon, who entered Nauvoo must have been of some concern to Church officials because they had to make public statements against thievery and robbery.³³

The available sources of information on the question of Nauvoo's finances leave a large question concerning the class structure of the Saints. The studies often point to the shortages of funds among the people and the Church itself. There are reports about the high cost of land and buildings and the great length of time and suffering which it took on the part of the common man to acquire a home, farm or property. It would seem that the hierarchy of the church had few problems in the building of new homes or in owning large amounts of property, while the large masses of the Saints lived a life of hand to mouth existence. This statement could be questioned because Joseph Smith and a few of the Church leaders filed for bankruptcy. In the case of

³¹Linn, The Story of the Mormons, p. 256.

³²Ibid., p. 233.

³³Ibid., p. 359.

Joseph Smith most of his holdings and those given to his wife and children were transferred back to the Church before the filing was initiated. Therefore, his filing had no effect on his official capacity as Trustee-in-trust. After his removal from the church, J. C. Bennett claimed Smith was a millionaire, and another estimate claims Smith was worth \$200,000. Flanders, however, contends Smith's assets were of uncertain value, and his wife was burdened with debts.³⁴

No true estimate of Joseph Smith's worth will ever be known until a detailed study of Smith's estate can be made. Joseph Smith was the best example of the Mormon hierarchy who put the investments of the Church and their own private investments under the same title as Church business. The wealth of the Mormon leadership pales in comparison to the debts the Mormon Church owed and even greater by the debt accumulated by the State of Illinois during this era.

³⁴Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 178.

CHAPTER IV
POLITICAL AND ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENTS
1826-1840

Illinois: Political 1826-1840

Illinois became the twenty-first state of the Union in December of 1818. Statehood was granted by the United States Congress even though the required population number of forty thousand people was only thirty-four thousand six hundred twenty.¹ The new Illinois state constitution had a difficult creation due to the pressures of pro- and anti-slavery factions. The problem was solved by what became known as the Kaskaskia Compromise. The compromise allowed the original French settlers around the Kaskaskia area to maintain their slaves and indentured servants on the status quo basis. The other indentured servants in the state were to work out their time of service but no new indentured servants or slaves could be brought into the state. The compromise was viewed as a victory for the anti-slavery forces.²

The first capital of Illinois was Kaskaskia, a city later to be lost to the changing course of the Mississippi River. When the new government convened in Kaskaskia it met

¹Robert P. Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), p. 102.

²Ibid., pp. 102-103.

in a stucco and brick house which the state rented for four dollars a day.³

In 1820 the town of Vandalia became the site of the second capital of Illinois. The location of the second capital was chosen out of the wilderness by a scouting party consisting of members of the Illinois legislature. The state government commissioned the building of a double storied structure which was to serve as the capital building. The Legislature met in the new building for the first time on December 4, 1820.

The new site soon proved a failure in meeting the space and comfort needs of the government. When the edifice showed structural defects, many governmental officials felt the state had wasted the five thousand dollars construction cost.⁴ The present capital of Illinois, Springfield, assumed that posture after a fire destroyed the capital building in Vandalia, then the replacement structure collapsed and the third building again failed to provide the needed space.⁵ The town of Springfield, which boasted a population of eleven hundred inhabitants, sweetened the move by donating the town square and pledging a fifty thousand dollar contribution. The state government started full

³Ibid., p. 117.

⁴Ibid., pp. 119-120.

⁵James T. Hickey, Abraham Lincoln Chronology (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1965), p. 6.

operation in Springfield in 1839 meeting in a church building.⁶

Illinois: Economic 1826-1840

The most prominent economic undertaking during this early era in Illinois was internal improvements. The movement began in 1837 and was the result of pressures supplied by three separate interest groups. The first interest group was located in southern Illinois. The internal improvement known as the Illinois and Michigan canal was bringing financial and population growth to the northern portion of the state. The southern Illinois inhabitants wanted some type of a major project to advance their welfare. The second pressure group consisted of various towns throughout the state that felt cheated by the new capital being located in Springfield. These towns wanted an equal chance at economic growth with new roads or railroad connections. The third group were the land speculators operating in Illinois. It is obvious that any type of improvement would stimulate land sales and increase their profit margin.⁷

It was really Ohio that started the internal improvements movement in the Middle West. This was due to

⁶Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State, pp. 208-210.

⁷Theodore Calvin Pease, The Frontier State: 1818-1848 (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1919) p. 194.

its connection to the successful Erie Canal. Ohio's attempts to build canals and railroads left the state in debt over fifteen million dollars and with a very weak financial system. Indiana started a program that would cost thirteen million dollars, one-sixth the value of total wealth of the state, and ended up with a mixture of uncompleted roads, less than two hundred miles of canals of little service, and few miles of poorly-built railroads. The investigations made in 1840 showed much of the money had been spent on worthless experiments and large amounts had been deposited in the pockets of unscrupulous politicians.⁸

The reckless attitude toward improvements was fostered by the policies of the administration of President Andrew Jackson. The President had gone on record with his opposition to internal improvements with the veto of the Maysville Turnpike Bill in 1830. This veto may have been more of a veto of Jackson's political foe, Henry Clay, than a vote on internal improvements.

Jackson's administration not only did away with the national debt but was faced with a financial surplus of thirty-six million dollars by 1836. The Federal government started to distribute this surplus among the states. The distribution of Federal funds, the large deposits of Federal money in state banks and the purchase of state bonds by English investors. The English investors bought bonds

⁸Billington, Western Expansion, pp. 342-344.

issued by the state, not knowing the states did not have to honor their creditors. English investments had reached one hundred seventy-four million dollars by 1837. America in 1836 had purchased over twenty million dollars of British imports.⁹

The internal improvements fiasco started in Illinois with passage of legislation introduced by Stephen A. Douglas. The original program introduced by Douglas was intended to protect the Chicago area from being bypassed by the proposed railroad line sought by a group of promoters from Cairo, Illinois. The Cairo group forwarded a plan to have a railroad run the center of the state between Cairo and Galena (a prosperous lead-mining area) in the northwest corner of the state. This line would bypass the growing Chicago. Douglas was able to keep Chicago the growth center of northern Illinois and the railroad did run from Cairo to Galena and Chicago but the building of it was conducted by a group of financiers from the East.¹⁰ Two other railroads were proposed for towns near Nauvoo. Warsaw, the center of an anti-Mormon group, was to be connected to the central Illinois rail system at Bloomington via Peoria. The second city near Nauvoo scheduled to become a rail terminus was Quincy. The city had remained an important trade and legal

⁹Ibid, pp. 364-365.

¹⁰Ibid, p. 394; Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State, p. 200.

center for Mormon business. Quincy was to be connected with the central Illinois (later to be named the Illinois Central Railroad) via Springfield to Decatur.¹¹ There was no early plan to build a railroad to Nauvoo because most of these proposals were operative prior to the arrival of the Mormons at Nauvoo and later the state's financial problems would not have allowed for additional railroad lines to be started. Illinois was following a pattern of improvements just like ones started by Pennsylvania and Indiana.¹² The improvement bill was a very aggressive financial plan. The final version passed on February 27, 1837 included the following expenditures:

Improvement of the Wabash, Illinois, and Rock rivers, \$100,000 each; the Little Wabash and Kaskaskia rivers, \$50,000 each; total for rivers	\$ 400,000
For the improvement of the Great Western Mail Route	250,000
On Railroads: from Cairo to Galena	3,500,000
Alton to Mt. Carmel, 1,600,000; Northern Cross Railroad, 1,800,000	3,400,000
A branch of the Central Road to Terre Haute	650,000
Peoria to Warsaw, 700,000; Alton to Central Railroad, 600,000	1,300,000
Belleville to Mt. Carmel	150,000
Bloomington to Mackinaw town	350,000
To counties in lieu of railroads or canals	200,000
	<u>\$10,200,000</u> ¹³

¹¹Ibid, pp. 200-201.

¹²John Moses, Illinois Historical and Statistical (Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1889), p. 410.

¹³Ibid., p. 411.

The first hint of future problems of the improvement movement came when the banks of the United States suspended specie payments. The governor of Illinois moved for a repeal of the improvement commitment but the legislature tabled the motion with a fifty-three to thirty-four vote.¹⁴ The financial crisis received additional fuel at the last legislative session held in Vandalia. The legislature voted an additional eight hundred thousand dollars for internal improvements. This session acted favorably on a motion presented by Abraham Lincoln to have the state purchase the remaining twenty million acres of public land at twenty five cents per acre from the United States government.¹⁵

The financial predicament of the state became more acute when banks in Philadelphia and New York handling Illinois bonds became insolvent. When the state debt reached over thirteen million dollars in the fall of 1839 a special session of the legislature was called to deal with the situation. The improvement program was halted at this session. The state was able to clear its debts with revenue from the Illinois-Michigan canal and the Illinois Central Railroad. The Illinois Central was a private business venture that had started as a state-owned project and ended

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 414-415

¹⁵Ibid., p. 428.

up securing land grants to aid the private business railroad.¹⁶

The only positive result of these financial problems was the passage of the Independent Treasury proposal. The unpleasant result was the Panic of 1837. This economic deterrent to sound growth and finances was still existent when the Mormons started settling in Illinois. The nation and some Englishmen learned a hard lesson. The truly hard lessons the Mormons were to learn were just beginning and Illinois was becoming of age politically.

Illinois: Political 1840-1844

The settlement of Illinois changed as a result of two events. The first was the Black Hawk Indian Wars. The movement of the army and many volunteers into Northern Illinois to fight the Sac-Fox Indians created interest in the area for speculation and settlement. The state had traditionally been settled in the Southern wooded areas. The early American settlers felt land was only good for farming that could grow tall trees. Few of the early settlers of Illinois knew of the richness of the Northern plains and woods.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 430-436.

¹⁷Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State, p. 152.

The second event to alter immigrant patterns was the completion of the Erie Canal. This opened the Great Lakes and the area around Chicago to a different variety of immigrants. It began with a larger influx of northern (Yankee) newcomers as well as aliens. This also caused a boom for the northern land speculators.¹⁸

The Illinois political parties were nearly equal in membership and both sought new voters whenever possible. The elections between 1840 and 1844 were lively affairs with northern "newcomers" vs. southern "oldtimers" and the question of the legality of alien participation in the elective process. The political waters were further clouded with the Mormon and anti-Mormon vote.

The first problem, the Yankee and Southern vote, had much to do with the changing economic, social, and political patterns. Southern Illinois had been settled mainly by southerners. Now with the new steamships on the Great Lakes and knowledge of the rich northern lands, political and economic interests were moving north. This trend is clearly illustrated in the northern movement of the three Illinois state capitals. The social and economic interests of the Yankee newcomers were sometimes not acceptable to the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 154 and William Vipond Pooley, "The Yankees Arrive," The Prairie State: Colonial Years to 1860, ed. Robert P. Sutton (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 243-245; William Vipond Pooley, The Settlement of Illinois from 1830 to 1850 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1908), p. 55.

Southern inhabitants. This is illustrated by the conflicts within the state over slavery, business interests, and the Northerners' increased interest in education.¹⁹ The Chicago area rapidly became a major area for land speculators. By the year 1836 downtown lots had increased in value by five hundred percent to a price of two hundred fifty dollars. The riverfront lots were selling for three thousand five hundred dollars.²⁰

The second political controversy, the alien vote question, resulted from an apparent loophole in the Illinois constitution. The Illinois constitution of 1818 was still in effect, and it was not specific on voter requirements. In order to vote in Illinois a voter had to be a white male, at least twenty-one, had lived in Illinois for at least six months prior to the election, and he could vote only one time in each election. The constitution was silent on the question of United States citizenship as a criterion for voting.²¹

The question of alien voting went to court as a result of a lawsuit brought by Horace Houghton against an election judge named Thomas Spraggins. The case centered around the

¹⁹Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State, p. 222.

²⁰Ibid., p. 158.

²¹Arnold Shankman, "Partisan Conflicts, 1839-1841 and the Illinois Constitution," Journal of Illinois State Historical Society Vol. 63 No. 4 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1970), p. 352.

fact that Thomas Spraggins had allowed Jeremiah Kyle, an unnaturalized Irishman, to vote in an election on August 6, 1838. The case was first heard in the circuit court of Justice Daniel Stone in Galena, Illinois.²²

The Galena alien case had heavy political overtones. The Whig party had been growing in numbers in the Northern portions of Illinois. If the alien vote, of which the Democratic party received ninety percent, could be eliminated, the Whigs felt their party would sweep the approaching 1840 election. The political plot was further revealed with the knowledge that the plaintiff, defendant and judge in the Galena case were all Whig party members. The Illinois Supreme Court to whom the case was to be appealed had a membership of three Whig justices and only one justice who identified with the Democratic party. The expected Whig outcome was political mastery of Illinois.²³

The political plan was upset when the defendant, Thomas Spraggins, chose as his lawyer Stephen A. Douglas, a rising

²²Ibid., pp. 356-357; Frank E. Stevens, "Life of Douglas," Journal of Illinois State Historical Society Vol. 63 No. 4 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1970), pp. 333-334.

²³John Francis Snyder, M. D., Adam W. Snyder, and His Period in Illinois History, 1817-1842 (Virginia, Illinois: E. Needham, 1906), pp. 345-348; Frank E. Stevens, "Life of Douglas," Journal of Illinois State Historical Society, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1923, p. 334; Arnold Shankman, "Partisan Conflicts, 1839-1841 and the Illinois Constitution," Journal of Illinois State Historical Society, (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1970, pp. 345-358.

power in the Illinois Democratic party. The plan received its death blow when the Illinois Supreme Court accepted the legal presentation of Stephen A. Douglas and failed to decide against the right of aliens to vote in Illinois elections. The Galena case hurt the cause of Whig party even more as they became known as the party which was anti-alien and anti-Catholic. Most of the aliens at this time were adherents of the Roman Catholic faith. In the election of 1840 William H. Harrison won the United States presidency for the Whig party. Harrison's loss in Illinois by less than two thousand votes was mainly attributed to the alien vote which went to the Democratic party in 1840.²⁴

Illinois during this time period became home to aliens from a variety of nations, but the two dominant groups were the Irish and the Germans. The Irish came to America in large numbers as contract laborers and many moved from job to job. The construction of the Illinois-Michigan Canal attracted large numbers of Irish to the Chicago area. There were as many Irish in Chicago as there were in the rest of the state. The Irish also became targets for the anti-Catholic forces and the prejudices of the nativists movements.

The Germans who entered Illinois were usually better educated and better financed than most immigrants during this time period. Most of the German immigrants settled in

²⁴Ibid., pp. 355-356.

southwestern Illinois, near St. Louis, Missouri. St. Clair County, with Belleville as its county seat, became the center of German settlement in Illinois. In 1840 St. Clair County had the largest number of alien voters in the Illinois elections.²⁵

The alien vote question also indirectly called attention to the need for a reorganization of the Illinois court system. This was a bitter political situation with the Democrats leading the cause of reorganization and the Whigs leading the failing effort to maintain the status quo. The Whigs must have been trying to maintain as many office holders as they could by keeping the Democratic legislature from reappointing the court system. These problems all were to lead to the logical conclusion that the 1818 Illinois Constitution, the one which had allowed for the powerful Nauvoo city charter, was in desperate need of revision.²⁶

The political forces in Illinois had become more divided by the completion of Andrew Jackson's second term as president of the United States. The State's party lines and platforms were starting to conform to a national two-party system. The prominent Illinois historian Theodore Calvin Pease summarized the situation in these terms:

Out of the presidential contest in 1835-1836 emerged the forms of the Whig and Democratic

²⁵Ibid., pp. 354-366.

²⁶Pease, The Frontier State: 1818-1848, p. 236.

parties: out of the struggle over the subtreasury and the specie circular in 1837-1839 came a close alignment of the parties on party measures. Between 1835 and 1839 the doctrine of the necessity of party regularity was forced on the democratic party, and that party became a closely organized body with accepted principles. No longer could a man be saved politically by the name of Jackson unless he did the works of Jackson.²⁷

Into this situation of growing party regularity in Illinois politics came the Mormons. Many of the Mormons did vote under the constitutional six months' requirement, and some were elected to city offices without being citizens of the United States.

The political parties were not counting on block voting from religious groups prior to the Mormon's arrival. But from the point of entry to the time of exodus, the Mormon use of the block vote was expected by both parties and also by the Mormons. The question of separation of church and state played to a background of a tremendous increase in the membership of several religious denominations. The Methodists grew from an enrollment of six thousand in 1830 to thirty thousand by 1840, giving them first place in memberships in Illinois. The Baptists grew from twenty-six hundred in 1830 to twelve thousand in 1840 and to twenty-two thousand by 1850.²⁸ Illinois was in an era of religious awareness as well as a flowering of political

²⁷Ibid., pp. 414-415.

²⁸Samuel W. Taylor, The Kingdom or Nothing: The Life of John Taylor, Militant Mormon (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 42-43.

sophistication. Why then did the Mormons become religiously and politically alienated from the rest of the state?

In order to answer the above questions, scholarship leads to the thesis that the religious peculiarities of the Mormons served as a two-edged sword. One edge drove a separation between the Saints and other religious adherents. The other edge cut the political powers of Illinois to the point that they accused the Mormons of political heresy.

The Mormons arrived in Illinois, mainly in the city of Quincy, after being expelled from the state of Missouri. The ruthless removal resulted from the orders of Governor Lillburn Boggs. Boggs, a resident of Independence, Missouri, and a large land holder, placed Colonel Thomas Pitcher in charge of the removal. Pitcher had previously signed a petition demanding the removal of the Mormons.²⁹ The actions of Missouri were later defended before the United States Congress by the United States Senator from Missouri Thomas Hart Benton, who, like Boggs, was a large landholder in Independence.³⁰ Senator Benton had come to Missouri as a result of his flight from the state of Tennessee. The event that prompted his removal from Tennessee was a gun battle with Andrew Jackson that had resulted in the future president being wounded. This

²⁹Samuel W. Taylor, Nightfall at Nauvoo (New York: Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 324.

³⁰Robert V. Remini, The Election of Andrew Jackson (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1963), p. 20.

incident of 1813 in Nashville did not, however, keep Benton from becoming a strong supporter of Andrew Jackson in his bid for the presidency in 1824 and during his tenure as president from 1828-1836.³¹

In the elections of 1838 the Mormon vote was sought after by both parties. By the 1840 election, Mormon-Gentile relations became strained. The political events of 1840 tend to prove the ideas presented by Dr. George R. Gayler. Dr. Gayler expressed the following thesis:

The distrust and hate which came to the inhabitants of Nauvoo can be traced to the Mormon's attitudes and actions in local and national politics, more than to talk of polygamy or their economic and religious views.³²

The Illinois Democratic party was counting on Stephen A. Douglas, lawyer, judge, and Secretary of State, to secure the Mormon vote for the party. The leaders of both the Democrats and the Whigs looked to the sixteen thousand Mormon voters as the balance of power in the approaching Illinois elections of 1840. The Mormons, meanwhile, tried to gather all of the political favors they could and still did not endorse a political party.³³ It

³¹Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 184-185.

³²George R. Gayler, "The Mormons and Politics in Illinois: 1839-1844," Journal of Illinois Historical Society Vol. 40 No.1 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1956), p. 48.

³³Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 218.

appears that Douglas was personally out for the Mormon vote as a springboard into a United States congressional career.³⁴

The problem of the Mormon vote was not easily solved by Douglas because the Whigs were also very active in seeking that vote. It should be noted that Stephen Douglas was aided in the passage of the Nauvoo city charter by the Whig state senator from the District in which Nauvoo was located. The senator was Sidney H. Little from McDonough County who was reported to have acted strongly for John C. Bennett to get the Nauvoo city charter passed in the Illinois Senate.³⁵ The Mormons were also still painfully aware of the fact their enemies in Missouri were members of the Democratic party.

The Mormons had also felt rejected by the party of Andrew Jackson when in October of 1839 several of the Mormon leaders went to Washington to seek redress for their losses in the flight from Missouri. Prior to this trip Joseph Smith had written the newspaper known as the Quincy Whig. In this communication, Smith claimed the church had a nonpartisan stand in the area of politics and that the Mormons had been equally treated by both of the major parties in Illinois.³⁶ While the Mormon group was in

³⁴Stevens, "Life of Douglas," pp. 339-340.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 340-343.

³⁶Ibid., p. 340.

Washington they visited with President Martin Van Buren and Senator John C. Calhoun, the United States Senator from South Carolina.³⁷ Senator Calhoun had just returned to the Democratic party and must have been viewed as a powerful contact.³⁸

When Smith returned to Illinois he soon made everyone aware of his support for William Henry Harrison and the Whig party in the approaching election of 1840. In the October 17, 1840, issue of the Quincy Whig newspaper, Smith was quoted as stating the following in regard to President Martin Van Buren, "He is not fit as my dog, for the chair of state." The neutral policy of the church in national and state politics had come to an end.³⁹

The question that arose was what exactly was the role the Whig party activities might have played as background motivation for Smith's vocal attack on Van Buren's character. The rest of the nation's voters seemed to have liked the Whigs' show of rallies and free hard cider. The Whigs in 1840 had followed the hoopla example of the Jacksonian Democrats in the election of 1828 much of which

³⁷Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Vol. 3, p. 355.

³⁸Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy (New York: Harper and Row, 1984) p. 438.

³⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 219.

Martin Van Buren had started.⁴⁰ The fatal blunder of the National Democrats had been their reference to William Henry Harrison as a log cabin and hard cider candidate. The Whigs were inspired by this to form a winning image.

By the rarest stroke of political genius they took Harrison, a man, good, pious, well-meaning, but one who had never displayed brilliant ability either in politics or in war and represented him as a man of a stature comparable to the heroes of the Revolution, a man whose political virtues would bring back the golden age of the past. The veteran of the Revolution was told that Harrison had received his first commission from the hands of George Washington. The farmer of the west was reminded that in a double sense he owed his farm to the man who had at once secured the passage of the law for the sale of small tracts and had protected the frontier from the Indians. As monster rallies were held on the old battlefields of the west, now centers of a teeming population, the sentimental appeal for the man whose active life had spanned this marvelous progress, who had represented the whole Northwest Territory in congress and who had been the backwoods governor of what were now three prosperous states was well-nigh irresistible.⁴¹

The Whig rallies attracted large crowds in Illinois and served as common ground for those with dreams that the political virtues of old might return. Rallies were held at McDonough with three thousand present, Galena with two thousand eight hundred twenty-six, Carlinville with three thousand and the greatest of them all in Springfield, the state capital, with fifteen thousand present. The Whig party, however, failed to carry their candidate in Illinois.

⁴⁰Remini, The Election of Andrew Jackson, pp. 185-193.

⁴¹Pease, The Frontier State: 1818-1848, pp. 268-269.

They blamed their close defeat to fraudulent ballots made in the area around the canal between the Illinois River and Lake Michigan.⁴² It should be noted that the Whigs did not place any fault on the questionable alien vote which was allowed in this election. As previously established this vote also went mainly to the Democrats.

In the long run the victory was pyrrhic for the national Whig party.

The Whigs did well to rejoice while they might for one of the most ironical instances of retributive justice in politics that history affords was about to overtake them. They had by the nomination of Harrison and Tyler sought to gather together the various elements that had in ten years past split off from the Jacksonian party. They had, therefore, made no attempt to formulate a national platform of principles which would have to hold bank and tariff whigs side by side with Virginia abstractionists like Tyler who prided themselves on their votes for the force bill. When the aged Harrison sank into the grave a month after inauguration, almost with his last breath, so the democrats believed, protesting against the policy of removals forced upon him in violation of his pledges, the whigs were face to face with a man on whose loyalty they had no hold. The party platform had been indefinite on the political issues. True in Illinois, they had argued for a national bank, but they did not stand firmly arrayed for it, contenting themselves with finding fault with their opponents rather than proposing measures of their own. Therefore they could not justly hold Tyler bound to the execution of their program.⁴³

The Illinois Democrats were able to achieve their victory through party organization and apparently doing an

⁴²Ibid., p. 270.

⁴³Ibid., p. 271.

outstanding job of keeping the main issues before the voters. The Democrats also enjoyed, for perhaps the last time, the absence of problem issues such as slavery and the protective tariff. The future of the Democratic party in Illinois and the rest of the nation was starting to change.

The democratic party in Illinois had scarcely completed its physical growth before its deterioration began. It had achieved unity and coherence and had become a distinct entity; but meanwhile in the union at large the party was rapidly changing; old rallying cries were forgotten, and other hitherto comparatively unimportant were stressed. The bank and the tariff sank to subordinate places, and slavery and its protection became the exemplification and end of states rights doctrine. The party was becoming less and less western and more and more southern. Its members in Illinois, rallying behind the old party name, were slow to see that nationally in its ideals and ends the party was not what it had been. The overthrow of the party in the election of 1840 marked the beginning of the end of the old democracy in the nation; and though they were still victorious in Illinois the democrats were soon to perceive that a change in their national relations had taken place.⁴⁴

The Democrats seemed to be aware of the Mormon vote going to the Whigs but they continued their quest to gather the Saints under their political banner. The politics of Illinois and the nation were starting to change and so were the events within the Mormon movement. By the election of 1844 the Mormon prophet would announce his presidential candidacy and die by foul deeds within Hancock County.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 265.

CHAPTER V

ILLINOIS POLITICAL AND JUDICIAL HISTORY 1839-1842

The Democratic party in Illinois had to overcome a major national set back in the 1840 Whig victory of William Henry Harrison. The party did, however, understand they were in control of Illinois politics for the next two years. With this prospect they looked for ways to enhance their own well-being. The opportunity presented itself in the form of a court revision plan.

The court revision came as the result of two controversial cases decided by the Illinois court systems. The first case, referred to as the Field Case, resulted from a poorly written 1818 Illinois constitution. The office of Secretary of State in Illinois had been held from 1828 to 1839 by a Whig named Alexander P. Field. Field had been a strong supporter of Andrew Jackson, but now, as a Whig, did not fit with the plans of the Governor, Thomas Carlin, a member of the Democratic party.

Governor Carlin presented the name of John A. McClernand to the Illinois Senate to be appointed to the office of Illinois Secretary of State. The Illinois Senate refused to confirm the appointment. When the state

legislature adjourned, Governor Carlin appointed and commissioned McClernand as the new Secretary of State.¹

Field refused to vacate the office of Secretary of State and McClernand entered a lawsuit in order to secure the office. The case was first heard in the Illinois second circuit court of the Honorable Sidney Breese in May of 1839. The constitutional questions to be decided were: 1. Did the governor have the power to remove a cabinet member? 2. Was this the power left to the legislature or was the office appointed for life?²

Judge Breese, a Democrat, decided in favor of McClernand. It was the judge's opinion that the governor had the power, without senatorial advice and consent, to remove a member of the executive whose tenure was not clearly defined by the state constitution.³

The Illinois Supreme Court reversed the Breese decision. The Illinois Supreme Court had at this time four members. Two members voted to reverse the circuit court decision, one voted to approve the lower decision and the

¹John Moses, Illinois, Historical and Statistical (Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1889) p. 443.

²John W. McNulty, "Sidney Breese, The Illinois Circuit Judge, 1835-1841," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Vol. 62 No. 2 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1969), p. 184.

³Ibid., p. 185.

fourth member gave no opinion because he was a relative of Mr. McClelland.⁴

This decision was not popular, especially with the Illinois Democrats. Governor Carlin called a special session of the legislature which convened in November of 1839. The main purpose of the called session was to receive the Senate's approval of Stephen A. Douglas' appointment to the office of Illinois Secretary of State. The Democratic controlled Senate approved the appointment and later, when Douglas vacated the post, the Democrats again approved the Governor's request to place Lyman Trumbull as the state's Secretary of State.⁵

The second case that actually forced the issue of the court revision was the alien voting case. The case was a Whig attempt to reduce the growing alien vote that was mainly supporting the Democratic party. The Whigs failed to achieve their goal; however, the Democrats decided not to allow time for a second case. The tide turned on December 10, 1840, when Illinois state Senator Adam W. Snyder introduced a bill to reorganize the Illinois judiciary.⁶ The ripples caused by these court cases, the judicial changes, and the Mormon city charter washed ashore a new constitution for the state of Illinois.

⁴Pease, The Frontier State: 1818-1848, p. 279.

⁵Moses, Illinois Historical and Statistical, p. 444.

⁶Ibid., p. 445.

The judicial question, the changing support for the Mormons and support by the Mormons of others can be reflected in the lives of two prominent Illinois statesmen, Adams W. Snyder and Sidney Breese. Mr. Snyder was a veteran of the Black Hawk campaign and married with three small children when he moved his family and successful law practice from Vandalia, in the malarial American Bottoms, to Belleville, the county seat of St. Clair County. In 1832 Snyder gave nine hundred dollars to a John H. Dennis for a block of land bordered by First Street, Second Street, Spring Street, Richland Street and the creek that was also named Richland.⁷ This section of Belleville was only one block from the public square where then, as today, the county courthouse was located. This area was once owned by a George Blair and then a Canadian-Frenchman named Etienne Pensoneau who sold part of his land to Governor Edwards. Governor Edwards moved to Belleville from Edwardsville, Illinois, a place named for him.⁸

⁷Snyder, Adam W. Snyder, And His Period in Illinois History, 1817-1842, p. 151. The author of this study spent his first seventeen years in this neighborhood and twice had his home flooded by Richland Creek in 1946 and 1957.

⁸Ibid., p. 159. Etienne Pensoneau's descendant, Taylor Pensoneau, was a high school friend of this author and a younger brother, Terry Pensoneau, was one of the early losses in Vietnam. Adam Snyder's wife's sister married a Pensoneau and bought her town lot from the first permanent German settler, Conrad Bornman.

Adam W. Snyder was a long-time member of the Illinois senate. In 1832 he was placed on the Judiciary Committee⁹ and was chairperson of that committee when he introduced the judicial reform bill in 1840.¹⁰ Snyder became the leading lawyer in Belleville because of his ability to speak German. He entered into a law partnership with a young German immigrant, Gustavus Koerner, who was later to become lieutenant governor of Illinois. Their practice was housed in a two-room brick building on the public square built by Mr. Conrad Bornman.¹¹ Only death was able to rob the governorship from Adam W. Snyder in the 1842 election. His unexpected departure changed the leadership of Illinois to a man more unfriendly to the cause of the Mormons, Judge Thomas Ford.¹²

Adam Snyder cultivated a friendly relationship with the Mormons when he personally was able to use parliamentary maneuvers to get the Nauvoo city charter passed in the Illinois Senate. He also allowed the members of the Illinois house to use the same motion to finish out full legislative approval of the charter.¹³ This introduction,

⁹Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 348.

¹¹Ibid., p. 159.

¹²Moses, Illinois Historical and Statistical, p. 447.

¹³Snyder, Adams W. Snyder, And His Period In Illinois History, 1817-1842, p. 364.

continued friendship and support of the alien vote made Snyder an important aid to the Mormons. With the dislike of Van Buren weighed against the aid of Stephen A. Douglas and Adam W. Snyder, one should be able to better understand why the Mormons were shifting from the Whig to the Democratic party.

The second figure in the movement for judicial change was Judge Sidney Breese. His life on the bench illustrates the course the Illinois judiciary had taken prior to 1839. The Illinois court system under the 1818 Constitution stated that the justices of the state's Supreme Court were required to serve, or sit, as circuit court judges also until at least the year 1824. This apparently was not viewed as a burden to the justices until 1825. The Illinois General Assembly at that time felt the court litigation was so heavy the judges were not able to function properly. The state was divided into five judicial circuits, each of which had a judge that was selected by the General Assembly. The legislature reversed itself in 1827 by removing the circuit courts and again requiring the Supreme Court judges to take over the additional duties of the circuit court.¹⁴

¹⁴McNulty, "Sidney Breese, The Illinois Circuit Judge, 1835-1842," pp. 170-171.

Party lines became drawn on the judicial question. The Whigs controlled the membership of the Supreme Court with three of the five justices enrolled in their party.¹⁵

The second circuit, over which Breese presided, was the most important in the state embracing the ten most populous counties. Breese was soon impressed with the necessity of moving his residence from outlying Kaskaskia to a more convenient location nearer his circuit duties. Consequently, in November, 1835, he moved from his favorite Kaskaskia, and settled at a place known as Mound Farm overlooking the village of Carlyle, in Clinton County. After purchasing land for a home and farm, he became a serious farmer when not riding the circuit.¹⁶

The life of Judge Breese is summarized by John Moses in the following manner:

Sidney Breese was born in Whitesborough, Oneida County, New York, July 15, 1800, and graduated from Union College in 1818. Soon afterward he immigrated to Illinois, arriving in Kaskaskia, December 24 of that year, where he read law with E. K. Kane. Previously to his election as senator he had served as postmaster at Kaskaskia, as state's attorney, appointed by President Adams, as a lieutenant-colonel in the Black-Hawk War, and as a judge of the circuit and supreme courts. He had also been an unsuccessful candidate for the legislature and congress. He was married at Kaskaskia in 1823, to Eliza, daughter of William Morrison. He was a close student, and had evinced conspicuous ability as a lawyer and judge.¹⁷

The decisions of Judge Breese springboarded him into the greatest of Illinois current problems, the Mormons and

¹⁵Pease, The Frontier State: 1818-1848, p. 281.

¹⁶McNulty, "Sidney Breese, The Illinois Circuit Judge 1835-1841," p. 172.

¹⁷Moses, Illinois Historical and Statistical, pp. 455-456.

Field case. In 1839 in Shelby County, Illinois, there was mob violence against the Mormons. When Judge Breese's traveling circuit court arrived, the Mormons sought warrants for the arrest of the leaders of the mob. Judge Breese issued fifteen warrants and requested the colonel of the local militia, James W. Vaughn, to serve the warrants. Vaughn called out his regiment but many refused to obey his orders. The militia was forced to retreat before a numerically superior force but the show of strength by the court and the militia brought order once more to the county. The Mormons were now protected for a few more years in Shelby County thanks to Breese. Breese's actions also illustrated his personal high standards and respect for constitutional guarantee because he could have committed political suicide:

Breese's forthright intervention on behalf of the constitutional rights of the Mormons demonstrated his high sense of duty and judicial responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in the face of intense popular feeling. His course of action seems even more courageous when it is considered that Breese, who had attached his political star to the Democratic party, appeared to be giving aid and comfort--in heavily Democratic Shelby County--to a minority that had been inclined to favor the Whigs.¹⁸

The second judicial controversy, which made Breese a popular political possibility, was the Field case. Breese delivered an elaborately written legal opinion in favor of

¹⁸McNulty, "Sidney Breese, The Illinois Circuit Judge, 1835-1841," p. 182.

the governor's right to remove an appointed member of the executive department. This case was the first time the question of legislative power versus executive power with the judicial branch arbitrating the constitutional question had occurred in Illinois. The Whig controlled state Supreme Court reversed Judge Breese's decision. The reversal caused the Democratic party to increase in voter strength and the party became more determined to end the Whig control of the Illinois Supreme Court.¹⁹ "The end" came on December 10, 1840, when state Senator Adam W. Snyder introduced the bill to revise the Illinois judicial system. This revision was to do away, one more time, with the circuit court system, but add five additional Supreme Court justices and divide the state into nine judicial districts. On February 1, 1841, the bill passed both Houses of the Illinois legislature but the Democrats had been unable to get all of their members to vote for the measure.²⁰ The move was designed to give the Democratic party control and it received an unexpected bonus when Judge Smith, under heavy media attack, resigned his Supreme Court judgeship.²¹ Among the newly appointed Supreme Court judges were Stephen

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 184-185.

²⁰Moses, Illinois Historical and Statistical, p. 445.

²¹Ibid., pp. 281-282.

A. Douglas, Sidney Breese and Thomas Ford, who would be elected governor in 1842.²²

These new justices were men of ability and character who proved themselves in later political events. These events also forced the major issue of the era, constitutional reform. In 1848 Illinois would finally write a new constitution after thirty years of trying to interpret their original document. The lives of Adam W. Snyder and Sidney Breese also illustrate how many state figures were involved with the Mormons. Their lives also demonstrated the steady population movement of southern Illinois into central and northern Illinois that was developing during this time period.

Few events involving men and politics are free from hints of scandal; so it was with the vote for the judicial reform bill. The Illinois house needed forty-six votes to pass the measure. The needed forty-sixth vote came from a Mr. Ebenezer Peck. Peck had previously voted against the bill but changed his vote. He was not a popular person in the legislature and his future looked dim until it was announced he was to become the clerk of the enlarged Supreme Court.²³ History in its own way repeats itself in the deeds of men.

²²McNulty, "Sidney Breese, The Illinois Circuit Judge, 1825-1841", pp. 185-186.

²³Shankman, "Partisan Conflicts, 1839-1841 and the Illinois Constitution," p. 363.

Breese and Snyder were important political and judicial figures in the Nauvoo period of Mormon history. The Mormons were, however, not just interested in Nauvoo but were working for new members outside of Illinois and even outside of the country. One of the interesting places the Mormons went was the state of Tennessee.

CHAPTER VI
FROM NAUVOO TO TENNESSEE

Early Mormon Visits to Tennessee

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon) was still headquartered in Kirtland, Ohio in June of 1831 when the Church officially sent its first missionaries into the South. These missionaries were taking an indirect route through the upper South on their way to the new Mormon settlements in western Missouri.

The first branch (congregation) in the South was established by Luke S. Johnson and Seymour Brunson in Cabell County, Virginia in 1832 (this is now part of West Virginia).¹ In September of 1834, two Mormon Elders (members of the higher priesthood referred to as the Melchizedek order), David W. Patten and Warren Parrish, were sent to Tennessee by the Mormon authorities in Ohio to conduct missionary activities.²

Elders Patten and Parrish centered their early activities in Paris, Henry County, Tennessee. Within a three-month period from October, 1834 to January of 1835, they had baptized approximately twenty people, had also performed healings and had on several occasions foretold

¹LaMar C. Berrett, "History of the Southern Missions: 1831-1861" (M.S. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960), p. 47 and p. 51.

²Ibid., p. 62.

future events. The two elders organized the first branch of the Mormon Church in Tennessee in Paris in Henry County. The activities of these two missionaries also reached into Benton and Humphreys counties, but no formal branches were started in these counties.³ Elder Patten returned to the church's headquarters in Kirtland, Ohio in January, 1835.⁴ In February, 1835 he was ordained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.⁵

In March of 1835 another Mormon missionary entered Tennessee via the city of Memphis after covering a circuit of six hundred fifty-six miles in Arkansas Territory. The new missionary was a priest (the order referred to as the Aaronic order) by the name of Wilford Woodruff. He was very young in age and appearance and his clothes were in rags. He had to deliver a sermon for his supper and lodging at an inn owned by Mr. Josiah Jackson in Memphis since Mr. Jackson took Woodruff to be a traveling cotton picker rather than a preacher. Woodruff then traveled to Benton County and at the home of Joseph Frey, a recent convert, met Warren Parrish, the other missionary still in Tennessee.⁶

Parrish and Woodruff traveled in the West Tennessee area and on occasions went into southern Kentucky. In three

³Ibid., pp. 63-64.

⁴Ibid., p. 63.

⁵Ibid., p. 84.

⁶Ibid., pp. 83-84.

months the two missionaries had added another twenty converts to the Mormon faith. On April 21, 1835 they performed a healing of a Mrs. Copeland in Paris, Tennessee.⁷ This is the first known contact with the Copeland family of which there is any historical record. The Copelands were to play an unusual role in the Mormon story in Tennessee and in the national presidential bid to be made nine years later by Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.

The Copeland Family

When the Americans launched their infant Republic having no thought of political parties, they never suspected that the selection of a vice-president would grow into a crucial political event. The problem surfaced in the elections of 1796 and 1800. The Twelfth amendment to the constitution gave specific relief to these early problems. However, some things just will not rest and the vice-presidency continued to demand national attention. In our own times another constitutional amendment, the Twenty-fifth, gave further refinement to the role of the vice-presidential powers and constitutional duties.

The selection of the proper candidate for the vice-president has grown into a major political and conventional issue in the recent elections. The office of vice-president of the United States has been referred to by a variety of

⁷Ibid., pp. 85-86.

titles, a few positive in content, and an even more numerous selections of negative statements. One of the more truthful adjectives applied to the person holding the office of vice-president is the idiom, the forgotten man. Forgotten, that is as long as the president did not die. If someone holding the office fades in historical remembrance, what even greater ignominious fate awaits those who are part of a losing ticket. The pages of history have become even more bereft of names of people such as Colonel Solomon Copeland, who was offered an opportunity to pursue the vice-presidency but rejected the challenge. Copeland did so in 1844.

The presidential election of 1844 was won by James K. Polk of Tennessee and his vice-president George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania. Dallas received the vice-presidential nomination after Silas Wright of New York, a Van Burenite and an anti-slavery man, declined the nomination. Polk's Democratic ticket defeated the Whigs represented by Henry Clay from Kentucky and his vice-presidential candidate Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey.

The surviving third party candidate in the 1844 campaign under the Liberty Party label. The Liberty Party was basically a moderate anti-slavery organization. The ticket was led by James G. Birney, a former slave owner from Kentucky, and Thomas Morriss from Ohio as the vice-presidential hopeful. The Liberty Party had been credited with stealing enough votes in New York State from the Whig

ticket as to cause the Whigs to lose the electoral vote in New York and this led to the Whig defeat in the electoral college count in 1845.⁸ The Liberty Party had centered their leadership in Ohio in order to escape the more radical influence of Liberty Party leader William Lloyd Garrison in the East.⁹

In 1844 Solomon Copeland, a resident of Paris, Henry County, Tennessee, rejected an offer to campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States on the Mormon ticket. The candidate for the presidency on the Mormon ticket was, of course, Joseph Smith, Jr., President, Prophet, Seer and Revelator of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The candidate was at the time the leading resident of Nauvoo, Illinois. Smith was the mayor of Nauvoo, the General of the Nauvoo legion and the Chief Magistrate of the city judicial system as well as head of the Mormon Church.

General Joseph Smith, Jr. (the title he used during the campaign) first offered his vice-presidency to a James Arlington Bennett of New York. Bennett had to be ruled out because he was not a natural born citizen having been born in Ireland.¹⁰ Mr. Bennett was a lawyer who later wrote a news article that recommended that Smith and the Mormons

⁸Ibid., p. 190.

⁹Ibid., p. 182.

¹⁰Donna Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon (Midvale: Signature Books, 1977) p. 377.

move to Oregon and there establish themselves as an independent nation.¹¹ Bennett had previously written Smith that he was considering running for the governorship of Illinois.¹² This can only be interpreted as a plan on the part of J. A. Bennett to move from New York to Nauvoo and enter Illinois politics and with the Mormon vote move into the Governor's mansion. Bennett had been a friend of the Mormons for some time and was a recent convert having been baptized by Brigham Young in New York. He felt he would be Smith's right hand man in Illinois.¹³

Colonel Solomon Copeland was the son of Colonel Stephen Copeland and a mother whose name has been lost. Mrs. Copeland was, however, the important mother of eight children: Martin Y., Thompson G., John L., Martha, William B., Stephen, Jr., Joseph, and Solomon. Solomon apparently was named in honor of his father's brother of the same Christian name.¹⁴

Copeland originally came from Jefferson County in North Carolina. He was a descendant of one of the old families of North Carolina who entered Tennessee in the early spring

¹¹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 288.

¹²"Letter to Joseph Smith from James Arrington Bennett," Nauvoo Neighbor, 6 December 1843.

¹³Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, pp. 653-654.

¹⁴Robert M. Copeland, Notes and Records on Copeland Family (Ormond Beach, Florida) 1973.

of 1799. Stephen Copeland came by way of Kingston and found a suitable place in what is today Overton County, Tennessee. There he planted the first corn grown by white men in the area of Overton County.

Colonel Copeland was accompanied on this first venture into Tennessee by his son Joseph. Joseph Copeland was nicknamed Big Jo because of his unusually large size and his feats of physical strength.¹⁵ Big Jo must have been a prolific hunter as well, because he has been given credit for killing sixty-two bears in one season.¹⁶

While Stephen and Big Jo Copeland were in the Overton County area they made friends with the Cherokee Chief Nettle Carrier and spent a great deal of time in his camp. Nettle Carrier in 1813 became one of the chiefs who allowed the early American turnpike to enter Indian lands. After properly cultivating their corn crop and trading with the Indians, the Copeland father and son then returned to Jefferson County to gather up the rest of the family and move them to Tennessee.¹⁷

After the Copeland family arrived in Overton County, Tennessee in the Fall of 1799, the Copelands were blessed with the birth of a baby. Solomon Copeland was the first

¹⁵Albert V. Goodpasture, Overton County Address (Livingston, Tennessee, 1877: Reprint ed., Nashville, Tennessee: B. C. Goodpasture, 1954) pp. 6-7.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 6-7.

white child born in Overton County.¹⁸ The birth of Solomon most likely took place during the Winter of 1799-1800 or the Spring of 1800, but, whatever the exact birth date, Solomon Copeland's entry into this world was a historic event in Overton County.

No historical records of the childhood of Solomon have been located. However, as a young man on the frontier he followed the military precedent of his father. In the time period prior to 1830 young Solomon may have belonged to the military, but on May 14, 1830, at the age of 29 or 30, he became a commissioned officer. Solomon was a resident of Humphreys County according to the 1830 United States Census and was given the commission of Colonel Commandant of the 116th Regiment in Humphreys County.¹⁹

Solomon later moved to Henry County, Tennessee and became a representative of the ninth civil representative district in the Tennessee General Assembly. Colonel Copeland, as a member of the Democratic Party, served as a representative in the Twenty-fourth General Assembly which met in Nashville between 1841 and 1843. He had already been elected the Henry County surveyor in July of 1839. In addition to this, Colonel Solomon Copeland was the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁹State of Tennessee, Governor's Commission Book, Nashville: 1827-1832, p. 113.

Administrator of Estates and a member of the County Court Commission.²⁰

Solomon Copeland chose as his bride Miss Sarah Tippet, the daughter of Erasmus Lee Tippet and Lucy Bireling Tippet.²¹ The marriage license was issued in Roane County, Tennessee on July 21, 1819. On the same date Solomon and a James Tippet entered into a one thousand two hundred fifty dollar bond to assure that there was no "lawful cause to obstruct a marriage from being solemnized in the county of Roane." The co-signer of this document, James Tippet, must have been the brother of Solomon's new bride.²² There seems to be no known reason for entering into this bond.

The United States Census of 1830 shows Colonel & Mrs. Solomon Copeland to be the parents of six children. The 1840 United States Census shows Solomon and Sarah to be parents of ten children. In a genealogical study of the Copeland Family by Robert M. Copeland the ten children

²⁰Biographical Directory of The Tennessee General Assembly, Volume 1, 1796-1861. Nashville: Tennessee Library and the Tennessee Historical Commission, 1975, pp. 166-167.

²¹Copeland, Notes and Records on the Copeland Family, Ormond Beach, Florida. Mr. Robert M. Copeland was the grandson of Francis Marion Copeland and Elizabeth Venable Woodson. He was the great-grandson of Colonel Solomon Copeland. Materials supplied by Robert M. Copeland's widow, Mrs. Winifred L. Copeland.

²²Roane County, Roane County Record and Deed Book, Document 42, July 12, 1819.

listed were: Francis Marion, Jasper, Rhoda, Eliza, Margaret, Clementine, Caroline, Van Buren, Commodore and an unknown female. The names certainly reflect the popular name trends of the day and most certainly reflect the Colonel's commitment to the Democratic Party, naming a son Van Buren.

The Vice-Presidency Offer

Earlier in this study the first known contact between the Mormons and the Copelands was reported to be on April 21, 1835. This was the reported healing of a Mrs. Copeland of Henry County. Later in June of 1835 the Mormon Missionary Wilford Woodruff (who later became the President of the Utah Mormons under whose leadership the Utah faction ended their practice of polygamy in 1890)²³ visited a member of the Mormon Church in Henry County named Louis Copeland. Louis Copeland is reported to have lived in Henry County about ten miles outside of Paris.²⁴ The only problem with this report is that no Louis Copeland could be located in the 1830, 1840 or 1850 United States Census reports for Tennessee. In Robert M. Copeland's incomplete study there appears no entry of a Louis or Robert Copeland. It is possible that a mistake could have been made by the

²³Roger D. Launius, Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988) p. 266.

²⁴Berrett, "History of the Southern Mission: 1831-1836," p. 87.

census takers in 1830 and by 1840 he may have passed away or moved. However, studies of the land holdings in Henry County between 1822 and 1860 show no record of a Louis or Robert Copeland buying or selling property. There also is no record of a Louis or Robert Copeland in the United States Census reports of Murray County, Kentucky during this time period. Murray County, Kentucky is directly above Henry County, Tennessee.

Another reference to a Louis and a Robert Copeland is made in LaMar Bennett's missionary study where the two Copelands had been baptized as Mormons outside of Paris, Tennessee at the Academy (a school). These Copelands were Mormons and were members of the group that met at the Academy. This was part of an official report at the Mormon's 1836 Tennessee and Kentucky Conference which was held at Damonds Creek, Calloway County, Kentucky.²⁵

On the tenth of September, 1830, the obviously prosperous Solomon Copeland, of Humphreys County, purchased five hundred acres in Henry County, Tennessee, for seven thousand eight hundred dollars in cash. The land was purchased from a Mr. Henry Brown but was not registered in the Henry County records until the tenth of August in 1832. The five hundred acres, which became the location of the home of Solomon, was in the twelfth surveyors district of

²⁵Ibid., p. 8.

Henry County.²⁶ In the 1836 Henry County Tax Payers Record, Solomon Copeland is listed as the owner of five hundred acres and five slaves in the Sixteenth Civil District of Henry County. Solomon's wealth came partly as a result of large land grants given to him while as resident of Humphreys County.²⁷

As a result of these records there can be no question as to where Colonel Copeland lived and that the Mormon Elders were going to meet near his home at the Sulfur Wells Academy, which is no longer in existence. The Henry County record also makes reference to a John and Moses Copeland in the same civil district as Solomon. These men, who owned no property, may have been Solomon's son John, or both could have been his nephews.

The speculative conclusion about Robert and Louis Copeland, listed in records of Mormon Convention, is their names may have been an error in the report. It may also be possible these two (Robert and Louis) went with others from Tennessee and Kentucky to live in Nauvoo and were no connection to Solomon Copeland.

The only question still not known at this writing is why or how the Colonel fell into economic hard times. What were the debts that forced him to sell his properties and

²⁶Henry County, Tennessee Deed Book D, p. 83.

²⁷Robert M. Copeland to W. O. Inman, 5 December 1973.

move to Arkansas? These economic factors seem to be victory for Cleo.

It must be assumed that the Mrs. Copeland healed in 1835 must have been the wife of Solomon. The Copeland family was most likely assisting the Mormon Missionaries. This idea is presented because on February 26, 1836, a conference was held of the seven Tennessee and Kentucky branches in the home of Lewis Clapp in Calloway County, Kentucky. When the conference concluded Elders Cathcort, Boydston, Smoot, Woodruff and Wells agreed "to meet at the Academy near Col. Copeland's Tennessee on the 3rd of April 1836".²⁸

This could not have been any other Colonel Copeland than Solomon. He lived outside of Paris near an old Academy (school) and a sulfur well, which was regarded as a local landmark. This area, including the well, is now under water due to the TVA project that created Kentucky Lake in the 1930's.

Colonel Copeland must have been offered the vice-presidency because he had befriended the Mormons, he was a military figure, a proven political success and a Southerner that possibly would balance the ticket. There is no record of the Colonel becoming a Mormon and his direct descendants are not affiliated with any of the Mormon organizations.

²⁸Ibid., p. 103.

Colonel Copeland bought and sold tracts of land and slaves in Henry County. It would appear that he fell into financial problems, around 1842 and gave power of attorney to his son, Francis M. Copeland, on May 17, 1843. The Colonel's holdings were distributed over several counties because the power of attorney was conveyed for Henry, Benton, Carroll, and Lauderdale Counties.²⁹ In 1842 Colonel Copeland issued several deeds of trust against his property to protect his creditors.³⁰

The financial problems of Solomon Copeland may have contributed strongly to his rejection of the vice-presidential offer. It was previously noted, also, that the Colonel was a devoted member of the Democratic Party and may have been politically offended by this unusual third party enterprise. The offer may have also been rejected by the possibility of ill health of the Colonel. The Colonel moved from Tennessee to Arkansas and died intestate while not a resident of Tennessee.³¹

The exact date of Solomon Copeland's death is not known and his place of burial is still a mystery. The only possible clue is the research conducted in 1973 by Solomon's great-grandson, Robert M. Copeland. Robert Copeland, using

²⁹Henry County, Henry County Deed Book G, p. 527.

³⁰W. O. Inman to Robert M. Copeland, 7 March 1975.

³¹Henry County, Henry County Court Records, Number 14, p. 310.

notes in a family Bible, tried to locate the grave of a child of his grandfather, Tennessee Jane Copeland, who died on March 6, 1846 in IZARD (present day Stone County), Arkansas. It was in this area also that Solomon's widow, Sarah, lived in for a few years before her death. Robert was able to find his grandfather's grave in a graveyard known as Wargh's located on private land but apparently the site where Sarah and Solomon are buried will never be known for sure. Robert Copeland felt it was on private land known as Rossin. The owner had destroyed the tombstones and returned the land to cultivation. Robert did find the graves of some of the other Copelands buried in Independence County, Arkansas.³²

The events of this world and the decision of men shall never cease to amaze and confuse. The Mormon leader, Joseph Smith, Jr., not only decided to run for the highest office in the land but sought out a running mate he had never met and probably only received a brief report on from missionaries that knew him on a limited basis. Both men had financial problems, but this did not seem to act as a deterrent to Smith as it might have possibly done for Copeland. Copeland had a strong party loyalty and Smith had a record of being attracted to the highest bidder. Copeland seemed to be a well respected member of the Tennessee community and Smith had a large and growing faction seeking

³²Robert M. Copeland to W. O. Inman, 5 December 1973.

to end his very existence. Political foes of General Smith were now willing to do whatever was needed to halt the Mormon's power.

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CHAPTER VII

NAUVOO MORMONS: THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The National Political Situation 1840-1844

The presidency of Martin Van Buren came to an end in March of 1841, and it is generally believed today that the failures of this administration were not necessarily the fault of Van Buren. The Panic of 1837 and the other currency problems during Van Buren's term were the result of events begun during the two White House terms completed by Andrew Jackson. The election of 1840, famous as the Log Cabin and Hard Cider election, clearly allowed the Whig party greater exposure. The Whigs also had a military hero, William Henry Harrison, at the head of their ticket. Harrison was also to be endorsed by the Anti-Masonic Party. The party grew in the state of New York out of the killing of William Morgan, who reportedly revealed the Masonic secret orders. The fact that Van Buren was from New York and a Mason probably added emphasis to the party's endorsement of Harrison.

The modern era of politics seems dull in comparison to the events of the election of 1840. The Democrats were so diverse in feelings about the re-nomination of Van Buren, they adjourned their convention without giving him a vice-presidential running mate. Van Buren's vice-president in his 1837-1841 term was Colonel Richard M. Johnson of

Kentucky. He carried a reputation of being personally unkempt and awkward in his behavior. He also became more suspect when Amos Kendall, also from Kentucky and a former member of President Andrew Jackson's Kitchen Cabinet,¹ wrote to Van Buren confirming Johnson's personal physical involvement with an attractive nineteen-year-old slave girl. It was also reported he had sold this young lady's older sister because of her failure to be true to him.²

Colonel Johnson's activities cost him the support of the Democratic Party. Andrew Jackson was opposed to Johnson and wanted James K. Polk, the current governor of Tennessee, to become the vice-presidential nominee. Jackson wanted Polk's nomination in order to combat the growing forces of "Bell, White and Co." in Tennessee. With Polk in the vice-presidency, his political power could control the anti-Jackson Tennesseans. Jackson especially wanted the downfall of Hugh Lawson White.³ The convention, however, left Van Buren without a running mate and apparently expected each state to vote for its own favorite-son candidate. Colonel Johnson, not to be outdone, carried out a vigorous personal

¹Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson and The Course of American Freedom, 1822-1832 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1981) p. 127.

²Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945) p. 297.

³Robert V. Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833-1845 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1984) p. 464.

campaign. The Colonel boasted that "he had been born in a cane brake and cradled in a sap trough, tearing open his shirt to show his scars of war and delivering rambling and incoherent addresses."⁴

The election results of the 1840 presidential election were a great disappointment to the Democrats. This was especially true in the case of the Tennessee hero, Andrew Jackson. Ex-president Jackson feared the Whig victory would take away the contributions of his two terms at the helm of the growing nation. The Hero was concerned with the return of the so called money powers and replacement of the new Independent Treasury with a new national bank which were the main ideas Jackson had fought against during his presidency. Jackson's fears, however, did not come true.⁵

The election results of 1840 were quite exciting in terms of voter interest and active participation. In 1840, 80.2 percent of those eligible voted. President William Henry Harrison received 52.9 percent of these votes and captured the electoral vote in nineteen states for a total of two hundred thirty-four electoral votes as compared to defeated Martin Van Buren's 46.8 percent of the vote and sixty electoral votes from the seven states he carried. The remaining .3 percent of votes went to a third party candidate, James Birney, of the Liberty Party. In the House

⁴Schlesinger, The Age of Jackson, p. 297.

⁵Ibid., p. 471.

of Representatives, the count was one hundred thirty-three seats for the Whigs and only one hundred three for the Democrats. In the United States Senate the Whigs controlled twenty-eight seats.⁶ It appeared as if the Whigs were in control at last; however, the untimely death of President Harrison, followed by the betrayal of the party by Harrison's successor, Vice President John Tyler, allowed the Whig plurality to wane. This accents how shallow were the roots of budding politics.

The Illinois press kept a close watch on the development of President Tyler's administration. The Belleville Advocate expressed in articles on April 25, March 15 and 29, and June 26, 1841 the hope that Tyler's strict interpretation of constitutional powers might direct him to oppose a new national bank. The other papers in the state reacted in the full spectrum from approval to complete fear that the nation was destroyed. In the fall of 1841 the Illinois Democratic county meetings condemned the Whig controlled United States Congress for the repeal of the subtreasury and the increased tariff. These same Democrats, however, did give full praise to President Tyler for his veto of the bank.⁷

The Whig Party (ca. 1834-1855) was organized to oppose the leadership of Andrew Jackson and the Democratic Party.

⁶Ibid., p. 470.

⁷Pease, The Frontier State, p. 273.

The National leaders of the Whig Party were: Henry Clay from Kentucky; Daniel Webster from Massachusetts; William Henry Harrison, a transplant from Virginia to Ohio; and Hugh Lawson White from Tennessee. In 1838 some of the political leaders, Henry Clay, Martin Van Buren, and John C. Calhoun, would be contacted by the Mormon leader Joseph Smith with reference to their position on the Mormon attempt to recover physical and financial losses they suffered at the hands of the Missourians.

Henry Clay had expected to proceed in 1841 with his political program known as the American System. The death of President Harrison was very untimely for Clay's plans. President Tyler's veto of the national bank and his stand in opposition to the protective tariff issue were destructive to Clay's attempt to pass his American System. The fallout between the two Whig leaders became so complete that at the end of the special called session of Congress in May of 1841, Clay and other Whigs declared President Tyler no longer a member of the Whig party.⁸

To illustrate their sincerity Tyler's cabinet resigned except for Secretary of State Daniel Webster. Webster would stay in office until 1843 and was able to make a positive contribution with the 1842 Webster-Ashburton Treaty. Tyler had a continuing problem with his cabinet, and he would make

⁸Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833-1845, p. 477.

a total of twenty-two cabinet appointments, more than any other one-term president.⁹ Martin Van Buren, his predecessor, had the majority of his appointees serve all four years with only a total of eleven appointments to fill the seven cabinet posts. President James K. Polk, who followed Tyler into the White House, made only ten cabinet appointments to the same seven offices. Some of Tyler's replacement appointees were members of the Democratic Party.¹⁰

Prior to the Whig's internal catastrophe, the party machinery had initiated a move to convert Southern voters to their cause. The idea they proposed was that the hard economic times for those engaged in agriculture was due to the Jacksonian policy of specie currency. This expensive policy possibly caused England to purchase East India cotton. The Whig's claim implied that the specie question would give a favorable rate of international monetary exchange to foreign grown cotton. In 1840, of the ninety-five million dollars of agriculture exports, sixty-four million of the exports was Southern cotton, which made it the major export crop.¹¹

⁹David C. Whitney, The American Presidents (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978) p. 98.

¹⁰John M. Blum, et al., The National Experience, Seventh Edition (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1989) pp. 870-873.

¹¹Cole, Handbook of American History, p. 102.

The cotton question did not make much progress against the Southern Democrats and the party remained strong at the national level. The Illinois Democrats were not the only ones conveying messages of congratulations to President Tyler. In Tennessee Andrew Jackson sent his personal thanks to President Tyler. President, General and Hero Andrew Jackson now was given a new title by the Democratic Party leadership, the Sage. The Sage had openly predicted that Tyler would veto the bank bill. Tyler had been a Democrat in the past and had not previously supported the ideas of Henry Clay. A group of congressional Whigs felt that Clay was the cause of the bank veto so they presented a second bank bill without Clay's authorship. Tyler vetoed this one also. There was evidence that with this veto Tyler might have been testing the waters for the possible development of a states' rights party that would back his candidacy for re-election in 1844.¹²

The Sage was still actively following the political movement of the Nation and very interested in its future. During the Presidency of Van Buren, Jackson received long detailed letters from the White House that assured him of Van Buren's loyalty and willingness to receive Jackson's advice. Due to the death of Tyler's wife, President Tyler wrote a belated letter to Jackson thanking him for his

¹²Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833-1845, p. 476.

approval of the bank veto and encouraging the Sage to write about any subject he felt was a concern for the Republic.¹³ Shortly after this letter to Jackson, President Tyler and some guests were on a cruise on the Potomac River aboard the new steam-powered gunboat, the Princeton, when one of its guns exploded killing two of Tyler's cabinet members, Secretary of State Able B. Upshur and Secretary of the Navy, Thomas W. Gilmer. The explosion also killed several other guests including a wealthy New Yorker, David Gardiner. The President, afterwards, personally carried Gardiner's daughter, Julia, off the Princeton to a rescue vessel. Four months later the fifty-four year old President Tyler married the twenty-three year old socialite and made her the First Lady at the White House. This May-December marriage proved to be a long and happy one producing seven children. Tyler would live to be seventy-one years old and die in Richmond, Virginia. His death occurred the night before he was to attend the opening of the Confederate States of America's Congress, to which he had been elected a representative from Virginia.¹⁴

Among the many political figures writing to Jackson was the former Governor of Tennessee and then the President of Texas, Samuel Houston. The Nauvoo Mormons would also make contact with Houston's Lone Star Republic seeking

¹³Ibid., p. 481.

¹⁴Whitney, The American Presidents, pp. 99-100.

permission to establish a religious settlement in exchange for aid against Mexico in the event of a second Texas-Mexican war. Houston had written Jackson seeking his aid and advice concerning the question of the United States' annexing Texas. This annexation would be accomplished by the end of Tyler's Presidency.

Martin Van Buren came to visit the Sage to gather aid and advice for his bid to receive the Democratic nomination in the 1844 presidential election. The visit was a pleasant one even with Jackson's deteriorating physical health. Jackson was also under financial stress at this time because of the foolish spending of his thirty-three year old adopted son.¹⁵ Jackson's son will later lose the family plantation, the Hermitage, due to his continued inability to manage the family fortune.¹⁶

After leaving the Hero in Tennessee Van Buren stopped in Kentucky and paid his respects to Henry Clay. Clay had already resigned his seat in the United States Senate and the Great Compromiser was starting his bid for the 1844 presidency. Even this old foe of Jackson's seemed to express concern for the General's health.

The leaders in the race for the presidency were starting their final ploys for their respective party's

¹⁵Remini, Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833-1845, p. 485.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 477.

nomination for the executive chair. Henry Clay became the Whig nominee and the former governor of Tennessee, James K. Polk, would become the Democratic dark horse at the Baltimore Convention in May of 1844. Polk was the candidate receiving support from Andrew Jackson after Martin Van Buren made public his opposition to the annexation of Texas. Andrew Jackson also had a key role in convincing President John Tyler to withdraw and not form a third party.¹⁷ There were, however, other third nominees in this race including James A. Birney of the Liberty Party and General Joseph Smith, Jr., of the Mormon Party.

President Tyler had not completed his Presidential term when in August of 1844 he announced his decision not to seek re-election. During his lame duck tenure he signed the joint resolution of Congress annexing Texas. On his last day in office he signed the legislation making Florida our twenty-seventh state. On this same day he vetoed legislation concerning the building of some revenue cutters (small armed boats) and on the same day Congress overrode the veto with their two-thirds vote. This was the first time that a presidential veto had been overridden.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 502-505.

¹⁸Whitney, The American Presidents, p. 99.

Illinois Political Events 1842-1844

The approaching elections of 1842 were destined to change the fate of the Illinois Mormons. The electorate around Hancock County, the county in which Nauvoo was located, were becoming more anti-Mormon and, in the state at large, being known as a pro-Mormon political figure was not advantageous. The leading seat in the political race in 1842 was for the governor's chair. The Whig party in Illinois had to realize their national victory had gone sour with the death of William Henry Harrison and Vice-President John Tyler's refusal to honor the party's platform. On the state level, the party still had not organized itself into a convention system like the Democrats.

In 1840 Thomas Carlin, a Democrat born in Kentucky, was elected the governor of Illinois. The state was dealing with a series of serious problems including a large debt due to internal improvement expenditures and the still-existing alien vote question. Of course the Mormon question was becoming larger with each election due to their growing voter strength. By switching between the Whig and Democratic candidates, the Mormons were making their political situation even more explosive. The greatest danger they were facing was the loss of the Nauvoo Charter. The Mormons assumed the Nauvoo Charter gave them power which would allow them to act without state limitations. The military strength of the Nauvoo Legion theoretically rivaled

that of the Illinois State Militia, and this Mormon strength posed a threat to the area surrounding Hancock County. The original settlers felt they had been pushed out of any political power due to the numbers of the Mormons and their use of the Nauvoo Charter.

The Nauvoo Charter question followed on the tail of unexpected candidate changes in the Democratic Party. The Democrats were going to run State Senator Adam W. Snyder from Belleville, St. Clair County. Senator Snyder had risen in power in his party in some measure because of his work as chairperson of the Judicial Committee.¹⁹

The Democratic selection of Adam W. Snyder produced an interior power struggle. In the person of Snyder, the party had a popular leader but the northern members of the organization questioned his commitment to the canal (a project to connect Lake Michigan and the Illinois River via a canal through the then small town of Chicago). Mr. Snyder was also a southern Illinois candidate during a period of growing northern Illinois strength.

Senator Snyder had been credited with helping the Democrats get the Alien vote and working with the new Mormon residents to get the original Nauvoo Charter passed. The measures were passed without a roll call vote in either house of the Illinois Legislature because no one wanted to

¹⁹Snyder, Adam W. Snyder and His Period in Illinois History, p. 348.

be on record as having supported the measure, according to Adam W. Snyder's son and biographer.²⁰

Senator Snyder's nomination was assured when he came out in favor of the canal. The canal was the main project outside of the railroads that was of concern to the residents of northern Illinois. Snyder seemed to be the perfect candidate. He had worked for the party, was from the southern part of the state and supported the Northern canal project. At the 1841 Democratic Convention he was nominated on the first ballot with one hundred forty-eight votes to eleven of his only challenger, K. M. Alexander, who really had not been nominated. On the fourth ballot John Moore was chosen to run for lieutenant governor. Unfortunately, this friend of the Mormons became ill in February of 1842 and by April he was too ill to campaign and on May 14, 1842, Senator Snyder died.²¹

The Democrats then looked for leadership to Judge Sidney Breese, who had ruled in his court in favor of the Mormons, and John Reynolds, who like Snyder, came from Belleville and was the owner of the powerful Belleville Advocate newspaper.²² Reynolds and Snyder both resided in Belleville, both were democrats, and rivals for popular

²⁰Ibid., pp. 362-365.

²¹Pease, The Frontier State: 1818-1848, pp. 286-287; Moses Illinois: Historical and Statistical, p. 447. Moses claims Moore's nomination came on the fifth ballot.

²²Ibid., pp. 287-288.

favor. Being generally aspirants for the same place, they were very much in each other's way; an antagonism which continued for many years.²³

John Reynolds had held positions on the State Court and was the Governor of Illinois. Governor Reynolds possessed a fine physique, having been in his youth an accomplished athlete. He had a long face, a high forehead, and large eyes, singularly expressive. He was sociable, yet temperate, fond of gossip though kindly. If in the attainment of his political ambition he was selfish and grasping, enforcing despotic obedience among his followers, he did not materially depart from the example of other successful politicians of his day and age.²⁴ Reynolds resigned as Governor in November of 1834 because he had been elected to the United States House of Representatives and served in the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Congress.

Illinois--Historical, Statistical and the Mormons

Governor Reynolds always favored the extreme measures of his party, including the Mexican War, the acquisition of Texas, the conquest of Cuba, and with regard to the Oregon boundary line, 54 degrees 40 feet or fight. While in Congress he rendered himself particularly offensive to John Quincy Adams, who, in his diary, stigmatizes him as "coarse,

²³Ibid, p. 382.

²⁴Ibid, p. 385.

vulgar, ignorant, and knavish"--a description by which "the old ranger" would hardly have recognized himself.

The governor had his own newspaper in Belleville and his own chairman of public meetings, who invariably decided in his favor according to previous training; and no matter how strongly the sense of the meeting was against him, as it sometimes proved to be, the proceedings were invariably published as he wanted them to appear. He would have been the admiration, as he was the prototype--of the present ward committeeman, who so "fixes" the judges of the primaries, who on their part so manipulate "the returns" as that the will of the committee is expressed, rather than that of the voters.

Notwithstanding his emphatic denunciation of the nullification theories of Calhoun in 1832, in 1858, he had become a pronounced advocate of the doctrine of "state-rights," and in 1860 was chosen a delegate to the Charleston convention as a representative of the anti-Douglas democrats. He never admired Judge Douglas, and would not admit that he was a great man, "except in small things." When the rebellion was imminent, he not only wrote to Governor Smith of Virginia sustaining the South, but also to Jefferson Davis, advising a resort to arms for the disruption of the Union. He lived long enough, however--until May, 1865--to witness the downfall of the confederacy,

and the disappointment of his expectation regarding the results of rebellion.

In the later years of his life he devoted himself to the writing of a "Pioneer History of Illinois"--a work of rare merit and interest.²⁵

Reynolds left the U. S. Congress in 1843 and by 1846 was returned to the Illinois Legislature and in 1852 became Speaker of the House.

Perhaps no man better understood the people of Illinois from 1818 to 1848 than did Governor John Reynolds. He was a close observer of their needs, wishes, and tastes, and was accordingly able to adopt a policy which commanded popular support and approval.

To use his own expression, there were but few offices in sight which he did not "go for;" and while not invariably successful, no public man of his day received a more generous support, or more acceptably served the people in a greater diversity of fields. He was quick to discern on which side of every vital issue stood the common people, to which he appealed and the champion of whose interests he always assumed to be. In his relations to other public men of his time he seems unconsciously to have adopted and made his own the suggestion offered by William Wirt to Governor Ninian Edwards--that the triumph of a politician is "to

²⁵Ibid, p. 384.

convert his opposers into instruments for his own higher elevation."

As a speaker he was not fluent and made no pretensions to oratory, yet he always managed to interest and influence large audiences, because he had carefully studied their peculiarities no less than their wants and sectional predilections. Although a good Greek, Latin, and French scholar, knowing the contempt of the early settlers for "book larnin'," he was careful to avoid anything like a parade of higher education, employing the homely language of the common people in conversation, and affecting an ignorance which was wholly feigned.²⁶ The duties of a Congressman kept Reynolds from giving full effort to a governor's race in 1841.

The newspapers of the Democrats entered into the struggle to replace Snyder. The May 27, 1841, issue of the Illinois State Register came out in favor of Judge Thomas Ford, who also had strong support of the northern Illinois Democrats. The Chicago American newspaper charged that the meeting in Springfield that nominated Ford did not have any proper northern Illinois representation. Breese formally supported Ford and Reynolds was unable to gather any state wide or broad support.²⁷

²⁶Ibid, p. 383.

²⁷Ibid., p. 288.

The Whigs' gubernatorial candidate in 1842 was the ex-governor (1834-1838) Joseph Duncan. Duncan presented a good record on questions such as banking, internal improvements and the Chicago canal.²⁸ He became the Whig candidate by consent without any convention being called. His main attack on the Democrats was their friendly attitude towards the Mormons and the aliens' gathering at Nauvoo. The death of Adam W. Snyder made Duncan's attack weak because Judge Ford had never been in the legislature and had no previous ties to the Mormons.

The Whig candidate for lieutenant governor was William H. Henderson. This political hopeful was born in Kentucky in 1793 and moved to Tennessee after the War of 1812. In Tennessee, Henderson held several offices and was a member of the State Senate. He moved to Illinois in 1836 where he held membership in the Illinois House of Representatives, representing three different counties and then moved to Iowa in 1845.²⁹

The Democratic winner of the office of Lieutenant Governor was John Moore. Senator Moore was born in Lincolnshire, England, but was very loyal to his adopted country. When he completed his term he became the organizer and Lieutenant Colonel of the Illinois Fourth Regiment. The Regiment and Colonel Moore served with distinction in the

²⁸Pease, The Frontier State: 1818-1848, p. 285.

²⁹Moses, Illinois: Historical and Statistical, p. 447.

Mexican War. With the conclusion of the war, Moore had a long tenure as the Illinois State Treasurer.³⁰

Thomas Ford was elected Illinois Governor in 1842 by a vote of forty-six thousand nine hundred and one as compared to Duncan's thirty-eight thousand five hundred eighty-four. In this 1842 election the Democrats carried the seat by the largest majority they had achieved to that date. The forty-two-year-old Thomas Ford seemed to be off to a well-supported start. The newly elected governor was a man that fulfilled the requirements of the northern political interest. However, he was an unusual candidate:

Gov. Ford, with his half-brother George Forquer, had been a resident of the State since childhood. His widowed mother, a woman of heroic character, whose husband, Robert Ford, had been killed by the Indians, removed from Pennsylvania at first to the west side of the Mississippi, but soon after, in 1805, to Monroe County, Illinois. The governor was low in stature and slender in person, with thin features, deep-set grey eyes, and an aquiline nose which had a twist to one side.

Though small physically he was large mentally. Unlike the most of his predecessors he was noted neither for athletic accomplishments nor for military achievements, although he served creditably in the Black-Hawk War. He had studied law thoroughly under Daniel P. Cook, and to excel as a lawyer had been his highest ambition, to attain this end he had devoted all his time and talents. As a judge his decisions were noted for their justice and impartiality. He had never aspired to distinction as a public speaker, nor did he possess those qualities which render a candidate personally popular. In fact, if left to secure his own election by the stereotyped methods of politicians, he would never have been the choice of

³⁰Ibid., p. 449.

his party for governor, nor, indeed, for any other elective office.³¹

Governor Ford in the later years of his life wrote a history of Illinois. The historical enterprise was undertaken mainly to aid in the meeting of his sinking financial situation. Ford's book was very critical of the Mormons and of his fellow political figures. Ford had expressed the opinion that Adam W. Snyder could have never been elected because of his service to the Mormons and alien voters. He also felt Snyder's personal abilities were not strong enough to defeat an able political figure like Ex-Governor Duncan. Ford promoted the idea that Snyder's death saved the Democratic Party in Illinois. His negative views on Snyder expressed in his historical writings were answered by Snyder's son in the following manner:

In this way the mistakes of historians, or their random guesses, or reckless assertions, are often copied by subsequent writers who will not give the time or study to verify or correct them, but blindly reissue them as historical facts. Gov. Ford's book will always retain its high rank in historic literature, though its excellence is in places marred by his severe censures, his harsh and sometimes unjust criticisms, and occasional ambiguous remarks which must charitably be attributed to his soured, morbid temper of mind when he wrote it, consequent upon his blighted ambition and wrecked fortunes.³²

³¹Ibid., pp. 448-449.

³²Snyder, Adam W. Snyder and His Period in Illinois History, p. 418.

At the start of the Ford administration (1842-1846) the great concern was the debt of the state. The state had incurred most of the debt in its rash program of internal improvements and losses due to the National Bank of 1837. The State Bank and the Shawneetown Bank had suffered crashes. Farmers were able to sell very little of their produce for cash and a crude system of barter was an everyday business affair. Newspapers were full of bankruptcy notices and, when large items were sold, they had to be sold on long-term credit.³³ With these economic facts in mind, the Mormons with their lack of specie and inability to meet their payments were just typical of Illinois in general. The Mormons with their quick growth, large land purchases and lack of cash flow or funds seemed to mirror the Illinois financial situation. It was also during this same time period that Colonel Solomon Copeland was starting to experience financial difficulties in Tennessee.

The Mormons that had supported the Whigs in 1840 now gave full support to the Democrats in 1841-42. Joseph Smith, on December 20, 1841, using his military title, issued this political statement about the anticipated election:

STATE GUBERNATORIAL CONVENTION

City of Nauvoo, Illinois, December 20th, A. D.
1841.

³³Gregg, History of Hancock County, Illinois, p. 283.

To my friends in Illinois:

The Gubernatorial Convention of the State of Illinois have nominated Colonel Adam W. Snyder for Governor, and Colonel John Moore for Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Illinois -- election to take place in August next. Colonel Moore, like Judge Douglass, and Esq. Warren, was an intimate friend of General Bennett long before that gentleman became a member of our community; and General Bennett informs us that no men were more efficient in assisting him to procure our great chartered privileges than were Colonel Snyder, and Colonel Moore. They are sterling men, and friends of equal rights - opposed to the oppressor's grasp, and the tyrant's rod. With such men at the head of our State Government we have nothing to fear. In the next canvass we shall be influenced by no party consideration - and no Carthaginian coalescence of collusion, with our people, will be suffered to affect, or operate against, General Bennett or any other of our tried friends already semi-officially in the field; so the partizans in this county who expect to divide the friends of humanity and equal rights will find themselves mistaken - we care not a fig for Whig or Democrat: they are both alike to us; but we shall go for our friends, OUR TRIED FRIENDS, and the cause of human liberty which is the cause of God. We are aware that "divide and conquer" is the watch-word with many, but with us it cannot be done-we love liberty too well - we have suffered too much to be easily duped-we have no cat's-paws amongst us. We voted for General Harrison because we loved him - he was a gallant officer and a tried statesman; but this is no reason why we should always be governed by his friends - he is now DEAD, and all of his friends are not ours. We claim the privileges of freemen, and shall act accordingly. Douglass is a Master Spirit, and his friends are our friends - we are willing to cast our banners on the air, and fight by his side in the cause of humanity, and equal rights - the cause of liberty and the law. Snyder, and Moore, are his friends - they are ours. These men are free from the prejudices and superstitions of the age, and such men we love, and such men will ever receive our support, be their political predilections what they may. Snyder and Moore, are known to be our friends; their friendship is vouched for by those whom we have tried. We will

never be justly charged with the sin of ingrati-
tude--they have served us, and we will serve them.
JOSEPH SMITH.
Lieutenant-General of the Nauvoo Legion.³⁴

The Mormons in the 1842 gubernatorial race had been ready to support their friend Adam Snyder until his untimely death. The fact that the new Democratic candidate was of an unknown quality did not stop the Mormon prophet from issuing a proclamation in favor of the Democratic nominees. These regular Democrats won not only the governorship but, in the counties where large numbers of Mormons resided, they defeated their Whig, anti-Mormon and independent candidates by majorities of eight hundred to one thousand votes.

Hancock County, Illinois was carried by the Democratic slate in 1842. The victorious County officers were:

State Senator - Jacob Cunningham Davis
Representatives - Thomas H. Owen
 William Smith
Sheriff - William H. Backenstos
County Commissioner - John T. Bartlett
School Commissioner - Franklin J. Bartlett
Coroner - George W. Stigall³⁵

The only member of this elected group of officials that was a Mormon was William Smith, the brother of Joseph Smith. William had been the editor of a Nauvoo newspaper named the WASP. It started as a newspaper to answer the anti-Mormon press but it proved to be a false start. John Taylor was

³⁴Times and Seasons, 1 January, 1842.

³⁵Gregg, History of Hancock County, Illinois, p. 283.

assigned to help William Smith edit the WASP and when the state representative position opened it seemed an excellent opportunity to redirect the activities of William Smith. John Taylor became editorial assistant to Joseph Smith on the Times and Seasons and the WASP soon changed names to The Neighbor.³⁶ The sole purpose of the original WASP was to combat the anti-Mormon Warsaw Signal edited by Thomas Sharp.³⁷ The name change was to help make the paper less antagonistic and more of a weekly production of news and information.

Following the elections a new series of attacks on the Nauvoo City Charter ensued. Were the continuing attacks due to the unusual religion of the Mormons? Recent studies on this question follow the basic concepts presented by Dr. George R. Gayler. Many complex factors were related to the rise and fall of the Mormon community at Nauvoo, Illinois, in the 1840's. The American frontier, thought tolerant in many respects, was often intolerant toward newfangled ideas which tended to upset the social, economic, and political equilibrium. Mormonism did just that. The abolitionist attitudes of the Mormons were unpopular in a period when the movement, even in northern states such as Illinois, had not achieved widespread acceptance. The people of Illinois

³⁶Terence A. Tanner, "The Mormon Press in Nauvoo, 1839-1846," Western Illinois Regional Studies 11, 2 (Macomb: Western Illinois, 1988), pp. 16-18.

³⁷Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 307.

resented the ways of the Mormons, their haughtiness as a "chosen people" and their living and working as an independent unit. It was therefore not primarily the religious beliefs of the Latter-Day Saints that appeared so obnoxious in the eyes of the Illinois citizens. The frontier was a fertile area for new religions, and unorthodox beliefs and emotionalism in religion were the order of the day. "It was a poor prophet who could not gain a few converts, whatever he taught; and an unstatesmanlike one who could not build them into a new church." Religion often became the excuse, not the reason, for gentile attacks.³⁸

The Democrats had been aided by the Mormon voters, however. Outside of the immediate Mormon districts the Illinois political figures did not wish to be tied directly to the Mormons. The Whigs now wished to punish the Mormons for deserting their candidates.

Stories of polygamy, the one aspect of Mormonism that even today is most stereotyped with it by outsiders, plus rumors of theft which though not without foundation were violently exaggerated, added to the unpopularity and ultimate fall of the Mormon "Zion" at Nauvoo. Equally distasteful to Illinois gentiles were the charters handed over to the Nauvoo inhabitants. The attitude of the acquiescent state legislature in toadying to the Mormons

³⁸Gayler, "The 'Exposition' Affair," p. 3.

aroused the resentment of many non-Mormons and unleashed a flood of abusive attacks by the Whig partisan newspapers, especially the notoriously anti-Mormon Sagamo Journal of Springfield, the Warsaw Signal and the Quincy Whig. Yet polygamy, Mormon thievery, and the city charters, unpopular as they were in non-Mormon circles, could possibly have been tolerated had Joseph Smith either remained aloof from politics altogether, or had he chosen a wise and consistent course in his political activity. An even more intelligent policy would have been for the Mormon Prophet to have confined his activity to the religious sphere, but unfortunately this was not the case.

One thing that the frontiersmen would not tolerate was the great force that an independent body such as the Mormons had when voting as a unit. This was especially exasperating to the original Illinois settlers as it seemed to indicate that their Mormon neighbors were following the political dictates of one man. The fact that the Mormons chose to throw their weight to the Democrats infuriated the Whigs, whose press maintained continual attacks against the inhabitants of Nauvoo.³⁹

The political activities of the Mormons and their leadership is to be the major cause of the fall of the Nauvoo gathering. The state legislature could no longer

³⁹Ibid, p. 4.

overlook the problem and the misuse of power by the Latter Day Saints.

In both houses of the Illinois Legislature William Smith and Thomas Owen tried to delay a full house vote on the Charter by having the Charter bill referred to what they considered safe committees. Several newspapers tried to keep this issue before the public and to pressure the two houses into taking final action.⁴⁰ The House introduced and passed a bill to repeal certain sections of the Nauvoo Charter on March 3, 1843.⁴¹

The older residents and non-Mormons of southern Hancock and northern Adams counties in Illinois also had petitioned this session (1842-43) of the Illinois Legislature to establish them as the new county of Marquette. This measure was passed by the House of Representatives on February 3, 1844, but was rejected in the Illinois Senate.⁴²

The formal political attack on the Nauvoo Charter started in the Illinois Legislature during the winter session of 1842-43. The February 10, 1843, issue of the Illinois State Register, a Springfield publication, reported the winter very wet and many of the legislators ill. The representatives from Hancock County that were going to try

⁴⁰Jo Ann Barnett Shipps, "The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1965), pp. 114-115.

⁴¹Illinois State Register, March 10, 1843.

⁴²Ibid., p. 115.

and save the ill-fated charter were William Smith, brother of the Mormon Prophet, and Thomas H. Owens.

One of the reasons for renewed interest in the power of the Nauvoo Charter and the strength of the Nauvoo Legion was the new expose' of John C. Bennett. This former mayor of Nauvoo, second in leadership over the Legion and trusted advisor to the Mormon Prophet now claimed to be telling all of the Mormons' evils. Bennett left Nauvoo after his questionable moral activities and an alleged attempt to have General Joseph Smith killed by accident on the drill field during a Nauvoo Legion outing.⁴³ Before leaving Nauvoo, he had made a confession of his immorality to Hyrum Smith and the Prophet. This confession and the interview between them was published in the official paper of the latter Day Saints, the Times and Seasons.⁴⁴ The Times and Seasons by this time was under the official editorship of Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith.

The Times and Seasons was the official voice of the Latter Day Saints and had little news of the events of the outside world. It was a Mormon paper for Mormon readers. The paper had started as a private enterprise under the ownership of Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith. Both of these men born in 1816 wished to become successful

⁴³Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 263.

⁴⁴Times and Seasons, 1 August 1842.

printers. Using the printing press given to them by the Mormon church, which had been buried for safety in Missouri, and borrowing a total of one hundred dollars, they began their joint effort. Fifty of the one hundred dollars they borrowed came from Dr. Isaac Galland, the land speculator that sold Smith and the Church land in the half-breed tract in Iowa.⁴⁵

After several setbacks with bad press and wet newsprint, the two printers were on their way to realize their goal. In fact, business became so good they divided the partnership with Don Carlos Smith operating the newspaper and Ebenezer Robinson running the job printing office. Fate now moved on the operation of the Times and Seasons with the untimely death of Don Carlos Smith on August 7, 1841. Robert B. Thompson took Don Carlos' job but he died in the same month as Don Carlos.⁴⁶ Also dying during that month were Joseph Smith, Sr., Joseph and Emma's baby, fifteen-month-old Don Carlos Smith⁴⁷ and a son of Hyrum Smith.⁴⁸ It may be of interest to note that the Times and Seasons carried reports of the deaths, poems, and

⁴⁵Tanner, "The Mormon Press in Nauvoo, 1839-1846," pp. 6-8.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁴⁷Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 54.

⁴⁸Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippet Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), p. 102.

coverage of the funeral of Don Carlos Smith and notice of young Don Carlos' death but nothing on the death of the Prophet's father or nephew.

The surprise events of the Time and Seasons continued to occur. The Church's Council of Twelve Apostles expressed displeasure with the operations of the paper. The Twelve, with new administrative powers, felt the Church's newspaper should be owned by the church.

A minor conflict in Church policy resulted in the Quorum of Twelve taking over the privately operated Times and Seasons newspaper from Ebenezer Robinson. They offered to buy Robinson's business or they would publish another paper for the Church which would be in competition with the Times and Seasons. Additional pressure was put on Robinson when the Nauvoo State High Council on January 17, 1842, voted unanimously not to allow Robinson to publish the next edition of the Book of Mormon or any other church publications.⁴⁹

Robinson was in doubt as to what steps to take, but Joseph Smith solved the dilemma by claiming a Revelation was given to him on January 28, 1842, that ordered the Twelve to take over the newspaper. Robinson sold the press, building and all his supplies for a reported six thousand six hundred dollars of which he returned four thousand five hundred

⁴⁹Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Vol. 2, pp. 553-557.

sixty-one dollars and ninety-one cents to the Church in the form of a Temple donation.⁵⁰ This was a spectacular show of faith in an organization and in a Prophet that had just removed the man from his very profitable business. Robinson's profit would appear to be two thousand thirty-eight dollars and nine cents. The church had given him the press and a borrowed hundred dollars started the presses. The cost of the building and the new equipment for binding would be the only sizable loss for Robinson. Robinson also wrote a "Valedictory" in the Tuesday, February 15, 1842, issue of the Times and Seasons. In his Valedictory he expressed assurance in the editorship of President Joseph Smith and his assistant, Elder John Taylor. It may be of interest to point out that Smith's revelation concerning the Times and Seasons was never published in that medium. It was, however, published in the Nineteenth Volume of the Millennial Star which was a Mormon newspaper in England.

The church's takeover of the Times and Seasons must be viewed as a continuing centralization of power.⁵¹ It may have also been dangerous to leave the ownership and editorial powers of the official Mormon press in the hands of someone opposed to plural marriage.⁵² Joseph Smith

⁵⁰Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 251.

⁵¹Ibid, p. 251.

⁵²Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, p. 158.

must have still trusted Ebenezer Robinson because he allowed him to operate the Mansion House (Smith's large home) as a hotel.⁵³ Robinson was later sent to aid Sidney Rigdon in a printing enterprise in Philadelphia reportedly because his wife was relating Joseph Smith's activities with another woman to Emma Smith.⁵⁴ The irony of this occurs in 1888 when Robinson, a member of the new Reorganized Latter Day Saint organization led by Joseph Smith III, fell under pressure because of his insistence that Joseph Smith, Jr. had been a polygamist.⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid, pp. 171-172.

⁵⁴Ibid, p. 178.

⁵⁵Launius, Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet, p. 207 and p. 276.

CHAPTER VIII

JOSEPH SMITH: NAUVOO FUGITIVE

Pre Nauvoo Events

Independence, Jackson County, Missouri was the site Joseph Smith claimed to be the chosen gathering place for the Mormons during the early years of the Church. In 1826 Abraham McClellan and Lilburn Boggs convinced the Missouri legislature to create the county. McClellan had been a successful business man in Tennessee but sold out to go west for new economic adventures.¹ Boggs later became the Governor of Missouri who drove the Mormons out of Missouri. The first settlers of Independence were the Walkers from Roane County, Tennessee.² Joseph Walker became the first sheriff of Independence. He was a twenty-year-old veteran of the War of 1812 when he and the Walker clan came to western Missouri in 1819.³

Joseph Walker was the brother-in-law of McClellan,⁴ and the two frontiersmen had the new county of Jackson named in honor of their famous Tennessee general.⁵ Walker left

¹Bil Gilbert, Westering Man: The Life of Joseph Walker, p. 87.

²Ibid., p. 102.

³Ibid., p. 4.

⁴Ibid., p. 87.

⁵Ibid., p. 89.

Independence before the trouble with the Mormons made Jackson County a war zone.

A year after he left office the community had its first murder, and after that, a quasi-religious war between the Mormons and the Scotch-Irish. The former were brutalized and thrown out of the county but gained some measure of revenge by later shooting--not fatally--Lilburn Boggs in the head. (The animosity which commenced in Jackson County continued as the frontier moved west. In Utah the Mormons used the epithet "Missouri puke" to describe not only residents of that state but, in general, the Scotch-Irish from the southern Appalachians).⁶

The author of Westering Man: The Life of Joseph Walker, Bil Gilbert, contends that the Scotch-Irish who came to America were so socially downtrodden they were classified as "disposable people." This may add to the understanding of the quick hostility of the Missourians toward the Mormons.

...the lowlands Scots--the Scotch-Irish, as they came to be known in North America. Admittedly they were not as skilled, industrious or orderly as the Germans, but they were thought to be very hardy, and they were then perhaps the most disposable people in all of Christendom.⁷

When Governor Boggs of Missouri ordered the removal of or extermination of the Mormons in his state, most of the Saints fled to Illinois. Many of the leaders and men were taken prisoner which worked an even greater hardship on the women and children left behind.

⁶Ibid., p. 92.

⁷Ibid., p. 16.

On November 2 [1838] in a drenching rain, Joseph, Hyrum, Parley Pratt and the other Mormon leaders were taken to the public square, where covered wagons were standing ready to carry them to Independence. After much pleading, they were permitted to go to their homes under heavy guard to collect clothing and say a brief goodbye to their families.

Joseph found his wife and children in tears, believing he had been shot. His request to see them alone for a few minutes was denied. Who could realize his feelings, he wrote, to be torn away from them, to leave them among "monsters in the shape of men", not knowing if their needs would be supplied. Joseph said that his little boy was clinging to him when a trooper thrust the child away with his sword, saying, "God damn you get away you little rascal or I will run you through."

Parley Pratt found his wife sick with fever, with her three-month-old baby at her breast and her little daughter of five standing helplessly by. At the foot of the same bed lay a woman in labor, who had been driven from her house. Hyrum Smith's wife was also pregnant and near confinement.⁸

Many of the families that parted at this time never expected to see each other again.

Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, and others were taken to the city of Independence and finally transferred to Richmond where a series of court hearings took place. Many of the Mormons were turned loose or set free on bail. Joseph and Hyrum Smith and four others were ordered to Liberty jail to be held there until they could be tried for treason and murder. Sidney Rigdon was released because of illness and the court's acceptance of his daughter's testimony on the witness stand. Several months later on April 6, 1839, Joseph and the others were to be transported

⁸Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 242.

to Daviess County for a trial. On April 9, they were able to get a change of venue to Boone County.

It was on the road to Boone County that the sheriff in charge of the trip allowed the men to go free telling them he had been ordered to do so. With the horses given them by the sheriff, the Mormons traveled quickly to join their families in Quincy, Illinois.⁹

This brief account of Joseph's departure from Missouri is presented so that the attempts to extradite the Prophet back to Missouri are understandable. The political events, the use of the Nauvoo Court and growing anti-Mormonism all culminate in the death of Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum, in Illinois.

Missouri's First Attempt

Nauvoo, in 1841 was a growing city. In April of that year the cornerstones for the Temple were laid.¹⁰ The population was steadily increasing. The population was counted as four thousand when the Nauvoo city Charter was passed¹¹ and if popular statistics are correct, the city gained an additional five thousand residents in 1841. At least one thousand four hundred of these new arrivals came by way of Liverpool, England. Thus the Mormons were not

⁹Ibid., pp. 244-255; Times and Seasons, 1 July, 1843. (Account written by Hyrum Smith).

¹⁰Times and Seasons, 15 April, 1841.

¹¹Illinois State Register, 11 December, 1840.

only increasing in numerical strength but in the number of aliens as well.¹² The Illinois Democratic party believed the Mormons statewide to number nearly sixteen thousand. The leaders of both parties felt the Mormons controlled the balance of power between the Whigs and Democrats in the state.¹³

The city of Nauvoo was visited in April of 1841 by Judge Steven A. Douglas¹⁴ and Cyrus Walker. The two men had great political ambitions and felt they needed to court the Mormon vote. Douglas had specifically chosen the judicial appointment for the Fifth District. This included Quincy, Nauvoo and counties in which the majority of the Mormons resided. It was Douglas' plan to secure the Mormon vote to start a congressional career. Judge Douglas invited, at a later date, Joseph Smith to have his court hearing on the legality of a Missouri warrant in his court at Monmouth. Judge Douglas had already appointed Dr. John C. Bennett as a Master in Chancer in an effort to gain the Mormon's friendship.¹⁵

¹²Shipps, The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years, p. 84.

¹³Stevens, "Life of Douglas," p. 339; Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 56. This number (16,000) was also given by Governor Thomas Ford in his History of Illinois and most secondary sources adopted this count.

¹⁴After being elected Secretary of State, S. A. Douglass started to drop the last s from his name.

¹⁵Stevens, "Life of Douglas," p. 342. This appointment was made prior to the removal of Bennett from Nauvoo.

Smith reported the visit of these two politicians with a letter published in the May 15, 1841, issue of the Times and Seasons.

I wish, through the medium of your paper, to make known that, on Sunday last, I had the honor of receiving a visit from the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, Justice of the Supreme Court, and Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit ... and Cyrus Walker, Esq. of Macomb, who expressed great pleasure in visiting our city, and were astonished at the improvements which were made. They were officially introduced to the congregation who had assembled on the meeting ground, by the mayor; and they ... addressed the assembly.

Judge Douglas expressed his satisfaction of what he had seen and heard respecting our people, and took that opportunity of returning thanks to the citizens of Nauvoo, for conferring upon him the freedom of the city; stating that he was not aware of rendering us any service sufficiently important to deserve such marked honor; and likewise spoke in high terms of our location and the improvements we had made, and that our enterprise and industry were highly creditable to us, indeed....

Judge Douglas has ever proved himself friendly to this people, and interested himself to obtain for us our several charters, holding at that time the office of Secretary of State.

Mr. Walker also rank high.... How different their conduct from that of the official characters... of Missouri, whose minds were prejudiced to such an extent that, instead of mingling in our midst and ascertaining for themselves our character, kept entirely aloof, but were ready, at all times, to listen to those who had "the poison of adders under their tongues," and who sought our overthrow....

What make [their] visit more pleasing is the fact that Messrs. Douglas and Walker have long been held in high estimation as politicians, being champions of the two great parties that exist in the state; but laying aside all party strife, like brothers, citizens, and friends, they mingle with us, mutually disposed to extend us that courtesy, respect, and friendship, which I hope we shall ever be proud to reciprocate.

While Smith was becoming friendly with some of the Illinois politicians, he was a continuing source of irritation to the Missourians. Smith and some of the Mormon leaders had gone to Washington, D. C. to seek financial redress for the losses the Saints had due to the state of Missouri. While in Washington Smith and his delegation were able to meet with President Van Buren and others of importance but they were not able to gain any satisfaction of their cause.¹⁶

This trip to Washington inspired former Governor Boggs of Missouri to press for the return of Smith to face Missouri justice. Governor Reynolds of Missouri signed the legal papers to have Smith returned to his state and Governor Carlin of Illinois issued a writ for Joseph's arrest. In September of 1840 a sheriff appeared in Nauvoo to arrest Joseph Smith but the Prophet went into hiding until it appeared the danger was over. Smith then secured a personal body guard to protect himself from the Missouri sheriffs.¹⁷

The Mormon president must have felt the danger from Missouri had lessened because on June 4, 1841, he was in Quincy without his body guards. He took advantage of the

¹⁶Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Vol. 2, pp. 376-378 and pp. 406-422.

¹⁷Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith The Mormon Prophet, p. 272.

opportunity to visit Governor Carlin at his home in Quincy. The Governor reportedly was courteous to Smith but later sent a posse to place him in custody.¹⁸

Governor Carlin was not convinced of Smith's political importance and had Sheriff King of Adams county to serve the old writ left over from the September attempt to arrest Smith. When Smith arrived in Quincy, he obtained a writ of habeas corpus and Judge Douglas announced he would rule on the writ in three days at the regular session of his District Circuit Court in Monmouth.¹⁹

It did not take long for the local political figures to hear of Smith's problem and they rushed to his aid. Governor Carlin must have underestimated Smith's importance at this juncture because six prominent lawyers were present to represent him in Judge Douglas' courtroom.

The roster of lawyers for Smith's defense at the hearing is a clear indication that political leaders in the western part of the state did not agree with the Governor. They knew that the Mormon prophet controlled the votes of the majority of the people in Hancock County, and apparently they helped to gain Smith's favor by rescuing him from the long arm of Missouri justice. At any rate, when the hearing opened, Sidney H. Little, State Senator from Hancock and McDonough counties; Cyrus Walker, Congressional Representative in the 27th and 28th Congresses at Washington; Archibald Williams, State Senator from Adams County; Orville H. Browning, State Representative and personal friend of Abraham Lincoln; Charles A. Warren, Master-in Chancery at Quincy, and James H. Ralston,

¹⁸Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, pp. 288-289.

¹⁹Shippo, "The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years," p. 85.

State Senator from Adams County all stood ready to plead the prophet's cause.

The summary of Smith's defense was given by O. H. Browning. The speaking abilities of Browning were well known but his remarks in the defense of Smith and the passion of his convictions impressed many who heard him on this occasion. Browning closed with a strong emotional appeal.

Great God! Have I not seen it? Yes, my eyes have beheld the blood stained traces of innocent women and children, in the drear winter, who had travelled hundreds of miles barefoot, through frost and snow, to seek a refuge from their savage pursuers. Twas a scene of horror sufficient to enlist sympathy from an adamant heart. And shall this unfortunate man, whom their fury has seen proper to select for sacrifice, be driven into such a savage band, and none dare to enlist in the cause of justice? If there was no other voice under heaven ever to be heard in this cause, gladly would I stand alone, and proudly spend my latest breath in defence of an oppressed American citizen.²⁰

Browning was a man of strong convictions in other social problems or needs. He was the main force responsible for the start of a school in Illinois for the deaf and for tax supported education with local control.²¹ It almost seems impossible that Mr. Browning was able to make such an emotional appeal in the defense of Joseph Smith in 1841 and then in 1844 he defended the men charged with Smith's murder. Smith had even sought Browning's help just a few

²⁰Times and Seasons, 15 June, 1841.

²¹Pease, The Frontier State, p. 431.

hours prior to his murder. Perhaps the fact that Browning, at thirty-nine, was viewed as one of the heads of the Whig Party in Illinois may have colored his changing opinion of Smith.²²

Judge Douglas, as was his judicial style, moved quickly with a decision in favor of Joseph Smith. The Judge felt that because the writ had been served once and returned to the governor, it was therefore fulfilled and legally dead.²³ Joseph was saved from Missouri and had many of the local political forces on his side.

The Shooting of Lilburn W. Boggs

Every major office holder, such as a president or governor, leaves to history one or more major happenings that he/she is remembered by. The next governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, took office in 1842, and is remembered for paying off the large debt the state of Illinois owed. The irony of this was that Governor Ford would become insolvent for the rest of his life after leaving the gubernatorial mansion. Governor Ford is also remembered in Illinois history as the governor during the Mormon era.

²²Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, Carthage Conspiracy (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 81.

²³Stevens, "Life of Douglas," p. 342.

Lilburn Boggs, the governor of Missouri, was historically linked to the Mormon forced removal, and is also remembered as a continuing source of troubles for the Mormons in Illinois. On May 6, 1842, in Independence, an unknown assassin shot the former governor Boggs through a window. Four of the six balls (the weapon was a handgun referred to as a pepperbox and it fired six balls at once) hitting Boggs twice in the left lobe of his brain and once in the neck and the fourth passing through the neck and out the roof of his mouth. At the time of the shooting, Boggs was caring for two of his ten children he had by his second wife. The man accused of this crime but later found not guilty by a Missouri Court was Joseph Smith's bodyguard, Porter Rockwell.²⁴

The Boggs affair in Missouri caused Joseph Smith to go into hiding and introduced the questionable use of the power of habeas corpus by the Nauvoo City Court. Governor Thomas Reynolds of Missouri issued a warrant for the arrest and extradition of Joseph Smith for being an accessory to the attempted murder of Boggs. It also declared him to be a fugitive from justice. Governor Reynolds had been upset for some time that Smith had escaped Missouri justice and now the attempted murder of his popular predecessor further

²⁴George R. Gayler, "The Attempts of Missouri to Extradite Joseph Smith, 1841-1843," Northwest Missouri State College Studies Volume 19, pp. 8-9; Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 309.

motivated him to call for Smith's return to Missouri. The Governor of Illinois, Thomas Carlin, allowed the writ to be served on Smith in Illinois. As a result of this, Smith went into hiding to avoid what he felt was an illegal arrest and his sure death in Missouri.²⁵

The Prophet hid around the city of Nauvoo and even spent time in his own home which was equipped with a secret chamber when the house was built. He traveled mainly at night often using a small boat on the Mississippi River.²⁶ Smith was also concerned during this time with his wife's health which periodically kept her bedridden.²⁷

After Joseph had hidden out over a period of four months a decision was made to allow the question to go before the Federal District Court in Springfield. There are several reasons why this decision was reached, but the most important one was Illinois had a new governor, Thomas Ford. The new governor had expressed his opinion that the documents for Smith's arrest were illegal.²⁸ This viewpoint that Brodie attributes to Governor Ford should have been actually credited to the United States attorney

²⁵Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith The Mormon Prophet, pp. 323-327; Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, pp. 311-315.

²⁶Ibid., p. 312.

²⁷Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, p. 132.

²⁸Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, p. 327.

for Illinois, Justin Butterfield. In Donna Hill's Joseph Smith The First Mormon the presentation of Butterfield's correspondence does seem to give overwhelming support to it being Butterfield.²⁹

On December 26, 1842, Smith surrendered himself officially to his Mormon brothers who were to accompany him to Springfield. The group included Wilson Law, his brother Hyrum and an armed bodyguard.³⁰ On this same day he returned to his home to find his wife, Emma, sick and having just given birth to a son who did not survive.³¹

The Springfield-bound group of Mormons left Nauvoo on Tuesday the 27th of December and the weather was cold and travel difficult. The group spent the first night with Samuel Smith, the brother of the Prophet, in Plymouth. The next day there was an added hardship of heavy snow. After only traveling about twenty miles the group spent the night in Rushville at Stevenson's tavern. Thursday, the 29th, was extremely cold but the group did cover thirty-two miles. They were denied housing in all the local inns because they were Mormons. The local people had been informed that the Mormons were evil people and the residents of Paris,

²⁹Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 317. Brodie's presentation is without footnotes and presents information without giving credit to her source.

³⁰Ibid., p. 320.

³¹Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Volume 5, p. 209.

Illinois did not want them there overnight. After trying every avenue of pleading their case to escape the fate of spending the night in the out-of-doors, Smith told a tavern owner they would warm themselves by the fire of Paris' burning houses. They were immediately given rooms in the inns and the next morning found the local citizens and the Mormons on friendly terms having spent an evening with both sides extending new friendship.

On their arrival in Springfield on the thirtieth of December, Smith met with the Federal District Attorney Justin Butterfield. At this meeting Smith was informed that his case would be heard the next day. This, however, did not prove out because the trial was moved first to Monday then at the request of the prosecutor there was granted a continuance until Wednesday, January 4, 1843.³²

The judge at this trial was Nathaniel Pope who heard the case with a collection of attractive young ladies seated with him. Smith's attorney, Justin Butterfield, turned the situation to his advantage with bows to each subject of his remarks. "It is a momentous occasion in my life to appear before the Pope, in defense of the Prophet of God and in the presence of all these angels." He won the admiration of all in the courtroom.³³ The later decision of Judge Pope was

³²Ibid., pp. 209-216.

³³Davis, The Story of the Church, p. 319.

to release Smith and declare the arrest warrant to be illegal.³⁴

While Smith and associates were in Springfield they met with many of the state's leaders and attempted to improve their image. On Sunday the Mormons Elders did work on this image. The elders that accompanied Smith to Springfield conducted services in the State Representative Hall. In the 11:30 A. M. service, Elder Hyde preached after the Mormons in attendance sang, "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning." A second service was held at 2:30 P. M. with Elder John Taylor preaching.³⁵

The last legal step Smith had to take in Springfield was to have Governor Ford sign the documents that released him from any extradition due to the Boggs shooting. It was at this meeting that Governor Ford tried to give Joseph Smith some very sound advice. The basic idea Ford pressed was for Smith to get out of politics. Smith did not seem to understand the gravity of the governor's concern and replied that the Mormon's block voted to protect themselves, not to gain political favors. The Mormon leader also felt the

³⁴Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Volume 5, p. 232; Times and Seasons, 2 January, 1843.

³⁵Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Volume 5, p. 216. The hymn ("The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning") was written by W. W. Phelps (1792-1872) an early Mormon. This hymn is the favorite of this writer. Elder John Taylor will later be President of the Utah Latter-Day Saints.

Mormons were driven to voting in unison by persecution and not by his personal influence.³⁶ In reviewing the total situation it seems very possible that Governor Ford feared the Mormon political involvement might lead to armed conflict between the Mormons and anti-Mormons. In this respect, he too could claim prophetic status.

It was during this troubled time that Joseph Smith had filed for bankruptcy. However, all problems were forgotten when the little group of Mormons arrived in Nauvoo after a hard trip home through the snow and cold. The happy return was made even better when Joseph and Emma hosted and personally served a large dinner for over seventy people and announced it was their fifteenth wedding anniversary. The growing conflict over the question of plural marriage seemed not to exist this day between Joseph and Emma.³⁷

Another Attempt by Missouri

June of 1843 started off with Joseph becoming part owner of the steamship Maid of Iowa and treating family and friends to a trip to Quincy, complete with a small band.

³⁶Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 322.

³⁷Ibid., p. 322; Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, pp. 133-134. There does not seem to be any mention of what was served to guests at this meal which was served in shifts starting at 2:00 P. M. In general accounts of other meals eaten by Joseph Smith, the actual meat served seem to always be turkey. From this, one can only speculate that the Mormon leader's favorite meat was our national American bird, the turkey.

Later in the month Emma became ill again and the old troubles of Missouri treason charges started all over.

The Smiths, unaware of a threat from Missouri, went to visit Emma's sister in Dixon, Illinois which was several days journey from Nauvoo in Lee County. Judge James Adams, a strong contact the Smiths had made in Springfield, wrote that Governor Ford had to issue a new writ against the Prophet. The writ was to be effective on the seventeenth. This meant Joseph was in eminent danger of being returned to Missouri. Hyrum sent William Clayton and Stephen Markham to warn Joseph. The two loyal followers covered the two hundred twelve miles in just sixty-six hours. They found Joseph on the road to Dixon and he agreed to return to Wasson's (Emma's sister) home and then start for Nauvoo.

Joseph had made a appointment to preach in Dixon on the twenty-third so he sent William Clayton on to Dixon to cancel the appointment and find what news he could of the situation. On the way to Dixon Clayton gave directions to Wasson's house to two men who identified themselves as Mormon elders that needed to speak with the prophet. The two men were in actual fact, Joseph H. Reynolds, sheriff of Jackson County, Missouri and the constable from Carthage, Illinois, Harmon T. Wilson. The two law officers proceeded to the Wassons where they were able to arrest Smith. In the excitement of the moment, Smith ordered Markham to ride to

Dixon and inform the sheriff there that he had been kidnapped.

When they arrived in Dixon the lawmen locked Smith in a room and would allow no one to talk to him. This included two lawyers, residents of Quincy visiting in Dixon, that came in response to Joseph's loud cries for help out the window. The owner of the inn and a growing crowd demanded that the two lawyers have access to the Mormon leaders. After speaking to Smith the lawyers sent for Cyrus H. Walker who happened to be only six miles away campaigning for election to the United States House of Representatives.

Cyrus H. Walker was the Whig party's candidate in the approaching election. Everyone expected the Mormons to vote for the Democrat Joseph P. Hodge. The Democrat candidate even at this early date felt he would win because of the Mormon vote that would be cast on his behalf. This is the reason Walker declined to come to aid the Mormon leader unless Smith promised his vote to the Whig candidate. Joseph Smith gave his word he would vote for Walker and the leading criminal lawyer in the state came to his aid.

Democrats hearing of this incident, including the participation of the Missourians, charged that it was a Whig plot to win the election. It almost presents itself as a confusing "who done it" plot because Markham charged the two law officers in possession of Joseph with threatening their lives and of holding Smith without proper legal authority.

The sheriff of Lee County, therefore, placed Reynolds and Wilson under arrest.

The next day Reynolds and Wilson were able to post bond and travel to Ottawa, Illinois to gain a decision on a writ of habeas corpus issued for them in Dixon. The trip to Ottawa required more than one day's travel so the lawmen and their Mormon prisoners spent the night at Paw Paw Grove, Illinois.³⁸

News traveled quickly and a crowd demanded to see the Mormon leader and hear him speak. The lawmen refused the crowds request and tried to get them to disperse. This failed when they were confronted by a lame elderly old timer who ordered the lawmen to "stand off, you Missouri puke."³⁹ The Mormon leader then treated the crowd to an hour and a half speech and answered their questions concerning marriage. Smith felt his freedom assured from that point on.⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid., pp. 148-149; Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, pp. 325-327; Smith and Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, pp. 656-659; Times and Seasons, 1 July, 1843 and 15 July, 1843, Smith, The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Vol. 5. pp. 421, 431-454.

³⁹Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 327; Smith, The History of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 5, p. 445. The statement of the elderly gentleman was also quoted as: "You damned infernal puke. We'll learn you to come here and interrupt a gentleman."

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 445.

This party consisting of lawmen, lawyers, and varied accused criminals now had to return to Dixon because there was no judge available to them in Ottawa. In the meantime, Hyrum Smith was organizing the Nauvoo men to go to the aid of their leader. Around seventy-five men went by the Mississippi River aboard the Maid of Iowa to intercept the boats headed for Missouri with Joseph Smith on board. Elder Wiford Woodruff (the early missionary to Tennessee) donated a barrel of rifle powder. Brigham Young was able to gather up seven hundred dollars to cover expenses. The money was requested by Wilson Law to insure the coverage of his expenses as the commander of the group.⁴¹

General Wilson Law directed the second group numbering about one hundred seventy-five men as they rode out of Nauvoo in search of their captive leader. The search party was divided into several groups because they did not know what road the lawmen holding Smith had taken. The searchers rode hard and some had to force whiskey down their horses throats to keep them going.⁴²

It was two days later (June 29) the first group of searchers found the missing Smith and his captors. Joseph Smith later wrote that when he saw them (the Law brothers and about sixty Nauvoo men) he was unable to hold back his tears. He said to his captors, "I am not going to Missouri

⁴¹Ibid., p. 447.

⁴²Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, pp. 327-328.

this time!" "These are my boys!" The Law brothers must have been overcome with joy also because they leaped from their horses and kissed and hugged the prophet.

Joseph now suggested the nearest court was not in Quincy but in Nauvoo. The two captors of Smith now showed great fear for their safety, but Joseph assured them they were safe and he was going to be kinder to them than they had been to him. So the unusual group headed for Nauvoo: Joseph Smith, the prisoner of Reynolds and Wilson; Reynolds and Wilson were the prisoners of Campbell, the sheriff of Lee County; Markham, who had charged Reynolds and Wilson; and Joseph's lawyer, Cyrus Walker; the two Law brothers and the sixty Nauvoo rescuers.

The citizens of Nauvoo heard of Joseph Smith's returning to Nauvoo and met him with a band and a large party of carriages. Emma had even sent Joseph's favorite horse, Old Charlie, for him to ride during this welcome home assemblage. The crowd only dispersed after Joseph promised to speak to them that afternoon in the grove. The grove was a shaded area near the Temple which was the site of many Mormon gatherings. Joseph and Emma then fed the mixed up group of captors and prisoners. The Smiths even placed Reynolds and Wilson at the head of the dinner table.

That same afternoon Smith made an address to a crowd that may have numbered ten thousand. He introduced Cyrus

Walker and reported that Walker felt Nauvoo had the right to issue writs of habeas corpus in their city court.⁴³

The next morning the judicial hearing took place. The lengthy testimonies given that day are in both the LDS and RLDS histories as well as the Times and Seasons issues of 1 July, 1843; 15 July, 1843; and 1 August, 1843. The result of the court's decision was the freeing of Joseph Smith, Reynolds, and Wilson. The Mormons also concluded that they were going to elect Cyrus Walker to the United State House of Representatives. Governor Ford of Illinois wrote to Governor Reynolds of Missouri that the state of Illinois had done its duty and justice had been served. His letter also gave an account of all the events discussed in the "Dixon Kidnapping".⁴⁴

A Special Election

The Mormons were not the only ones interested in the approaching special election held on the first Monday in August (seventh) 1843. The election was called to elect representatives in four new United States Congressional Districts established in Illinois due to population growth. The elections would bring the number of United States Representatives from Illinois to seven. The victors in the

⁴³Ibid., p. 328.

⁴⁴Times and Seasons, 15 August, 1843.

August elections would assume their offices the following December.

The Mormons were involved in two of the congressional districts. Nauvoo and Hancock County were in the new Sixth Federal District and neighboring Green County, an area of heavy Mormon population and the City of Quincy, was placed in the Fifth Congressional District.⁴⁵

The race in the Sixth District was between the Whig Cyrus Walker and the Democratic hopeful Joseph P. Hodge. When Cyrus Walker was given the pledge of Joseph Smith's vote, it appeared that he would be the victor in this campaign. The area had also been a strong supporter of the Whig candidates in Illinois elections.

When the Democrat candidate Hodge learned of Walker's inroads of favor from the Nauvoo leadership, he appeared quickly to see what he could do to neutralize Walker's advantage. Hodge, like Walker, acknowledged Nauvoo's ability to make use of writs of habeas corpus in their city courts. Both candidates spent four days in Nauvoo, made several speeches, with Hodge's being of longer duration. Hodge was shown about town and introduced to the citizens by the newly appointed presiding patriarch of the Latter Day Saint Church, Hyrum Smith, the loyal brother of Joseph

⁴⁵Pease, The Frontier State, p. 293.

Smith. The impact of Hodge⁴⁶ spending time with Hyrum Smith is open to speculation due to the approaching unusual turn of events.

Joseph Smith had previously announced that Hyrum would now share in prophetic powers. Hyrum, prior to this time, had never issued any sort of Divinely-inspired discourse. The inspired message Hyrum now presented was that the Saints should vote for Democrat Joseph P. Hodge.

Following Hyrum's announcement, Joseph Smith took the stand and renewed his pledge to vote for Cyrus Walker. He also voiced his friendship with Democratic Governor Thomas Ford and then stated he had never known Hyrum to lie or claim to have a revelation; therefore, the Saints should follow the will of the Lord as revealed to Hyrum.⁴⁷ The defeat of Walker and the Whigs in the Sixth Federal District was now assured due to Hyrum's revelation.

Another possible source of influence on the Hyrum "Revelation" was in the person of a Mr. Backenstos who lived in Hancock County. Jacob B. Backenstos was sent by Stephen A. Douglas to influence the Smiths to vote for the Democratic candidates. The Mormons sent Backenstos to Springfield to ascertain if Governor Ford had plans to send the state militia to arrest Joseph Smith again. Backenstos

⁴⁶Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 235; Faulring, An American Prophet's Record, p. 401.

⁴⁷Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, pp. 333-334; Faulring, An American Prophet's Record, pp. 401-402.

received a letter of assurance from a Democrat close to Governor Ford, Mr. Brayman.⁴⁸ Governor Ford knew nothing of this offer; he was in St. Louis at this time. In all due respects to Ford's political dealings, he would have never agreed to a deal of this nature. Governor Ford felt it was Backenstos' influence that had Hyrum produce a revelation. Ford claims Stephen A. Douglas gave several advantageous appointments to Backenstos as rewards for his loyal service.⁴⁹

Before Backenstos had returned to Nauvoo, Hyrum Smith announced he wished to support Hodge in the election. Hodge had reportedly offered to support Hyrum for a seat in the next state legislature. This announcement was opposed by William Law, one of Joseph's counselors (advisors) in the First Presidency of the Church. William Law later stated that Hyrum's revelation could not be true because Joseph had promised to vote for Walker.⁵⁰ Joseph's announcement for the Mormons to follow Hyrum's advice started a major split between Joseph and William Law and carried the election in the Sixth Congressional District for Hodge.

Joseph's announcement was given the day before the election and many Mormons in the neighboring Fifth District

⁴⁸Stevens, "Life of Douglas," p. 360; Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, pp. 331-333.

⁴⁹Stevens, "Life of Douglas," pp. 359, 364.

⁵⁰Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, pp. 331-332.

still voted Whig because they had not learned of Hyrum's alleged revelation.⁵¹ The election in the Fifth District was between the Democratic victor Stephen A. Douglas and Whig contender Orville H. Browning. Douglas entered this election knowing he planned to gain a seat in the United States Senate in the next Senate race in Illinois.⁵²

What effect the defeat may have had on Orville Browning and his later defense of the assassins of Joseph and Hyrum Smith is open to speculation. Candidates that won and candidates that lost became equally suspicious of the Mormons voting strength and its future direction.

⁵¹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 239.

⁵²Stevens, "Life of Douglas," p. 359.

CHAPTER IX
A CANDIDATE FROM NAUVOO

The Anti-Mormon Party

The growth of Nauvoo's voting strength caused the two major parties to show intense interest in how those votes were cast. Near the end of Nauvoo's power the major parties did not, however, want to have their names connected with the Mormons. The fear of the Mormons' power in local politics caused the formation of an Anti-Mormon party as early as the summer of 1841.¹ The early Anti-Mormon Party experienced limited success at the polls. The organization was fighting not only block vote of the Mormons, but voter loyalty to their political parties.

On June 28, 1841, the Anti-Mormons organized in Carthage, Illinois. The meeting had a two-fold purpose. First, the group needed to prepare a slate of candidates for the approaching August election. The second purpose was to appeal to all non-Mormons to lay aside other party considerations in order to combat the growing Mormon voting strength, not only in Hancock County but the entire state of Illinois. It was at this meeting the term "Anti-Mormon" originated and the groups resolved:

¹Marshall Hamilton, "Strange Bedfellows in Hancock County: The Anti-Mormon Party, 1841-1846," Unpublished paper presented at the Mormon Historical Association, Quincy, Illinois, May 13, 1989, p. 4.

That with the peculiar religious opinions of the people calling themselves Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints, we have nothing to do--being at all times perfectly willing that they should remain in the full possession of all the rights and privileges which our Constitution and laws guarantee and other citizens enjoy.

That in standing up as we do to oppose the influence which these people have obtained and are likely to obtain, in a political capacity, over our fellow citizens and their liberties, we are guided only by a desire to defend ourselves against a despotism, the extent and consequences of which we have no means of ascertaining.²

It was during this period of time that Illinois State Senator Sidney H. Little died. He had helped the Mormons gain their city charter but some of the Anti-Mormons felt Senator Little might have been able to work out problems between the Mormons and the old citizens.³

When an investigation is made into the membership of the Anti-Mormons, the members appear to be educated and respectable citizens of Illinois. In Leonard L. Richards' study, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing," which studied the leadership of the Anti-Abolition Mobs of Jacksonian America, the author contends the Anti-Abolitionists were, in fact, men of property and standing. In the listing of the leadership of the Anti-Mormons are found local and state level politicians and journalistic leaders. These are the men who should have been the leaders in the protection of freedom of religion, freedom of speech and upholders of

²Gregg, History of Hancock County, pp. 276-277.

³Ibid, p. 278.

statutory law. Mr. Richards pointed out in his study that when the Mormons were killed in Missouri, no one rose to their cause.⁴ This bit of history would be repeated in Illinois.

One of the early founders of the Anti-Mormons was Thomas Coke Sharp, a resident of Warsaw, Illinois.⁵ Sharp, a former member of the Whig party, started his life in New Jersey as the son of a Methodist minister. He received formal education at Dickinson College and legal training under Judge Reed in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In 1840 he was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar and moved to Quincy, Illinois,⁶ arriving there in August. The young man had tried to practice law in Quincy but found his loss of hearing an insurmountable distraction in the courtroom. Sharp then turned to his attention to owning and operating a small circulation newspaper in Warsaw. The paper was originally named The Western World, but Sharp renamed it Warsaw Signal.

⁴Leonard L. Richards, Gentlemen of Property and Standing (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 161.

⁵Hamilton, "Strange Bedfellows in Hancock County," p. 5.

⁶Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, Carthage Conspiracy p. 56. and Roger D. Launius, "Anti-Mormonism in Illinois: Thomas C. Sharp's Unfinished History of the Mormon War," Journal of Mormon History Vol. 15 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), p. 28.

It was because he was the part owner and editor of the Warsaw Signal that he was invited to the Nauvoo activities on April 6, 1841. Sharp was a part of the group of local non-Mormons who were special guests to observe the celebration of the laying of the Temple cornerstones. Sharp was seated on the platform with Joseph Smith and was one of the special guests for a turkey dinner. However, on this day Sharp became one of Smith's greatest opponents.⁷ Eventually he would perhaps be one of his assassins.⁸ Sharp's changing attitude during the day was observed by Norton Jacobs (who held Sharp's horse during the activities) and the Prophet's brother, William Smith. The observations of these two men were borne out by the attack Sharp made on Joseph Smith in his next publication of the Warsaw Signal.⁹ Could this have been the result of a young man's jealousy over the power and success of another young man? Sharp had not lived in Warsaw long enough to consider himself to be under the banner of the original residents of Hancock County. In fairness to Sharp, perhaps he feared the power the Mormons had at their disposal. In any case, Sharp and

⁷Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 288; Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, p. 94.

⁸Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, p. 38. The age of Sharp during these events is confused. Oaks and Hill claim Sharp is thirty-one in 1844 and Hill (Donna) claims Sharp is twenty-two in April of 1841. His young age is a point because he is referred to often as "Old Tom Sharp."

⁹Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 288.

his pen released ink-coated hatred on Joseph Smith and started his early attacks on the Mormons by writing his opposition to Judge S. A. Douglas' appointment of J. C. Bennett to the post of Master in Chancery in the Circuit Court. Sharp may have also been the spokesman for a group of investors who lost money on a Mormon settlement called Warren that failed to come into existence. Sharp is also given credit for coining the term "Jack-Mormon" which identified non-Mormons who were friendly to the Mormons.¹⁰

Three other residents of Warsaw were in the early Anti-Mormon group. The first was Thomas Gregg who later wrote the History of Hancock County, Illinois. He bought Sharp's newspaper and then later sold it back to Sharp. Gregg was a strong member of the Whig party and gave limited support to the growing Anti-Mormon hatred.

The second Warsaw citizen was William Roosevelt who was a member of the Whig party. Roosevelt had hopes of a strong political career until he was defeated in his bid for a state senate seat in 1842. Roosevelt was defeated when the Mormon votes went to his Democratic rival Jacob C. Davis.

Davis was the third resident of Warsaw in the anti-Mormon group. Davis had been successful in gaining the Mormon vote but the Democratic party by-passed him in favor of Joseph P. Hodge in the Illinois Sixth Congressional District. Davis felt the Mormons were responsible for his

¹⁰Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, pp. 55-56.

failure to gain the nomination and he became an anti-Mormon. Davis' hatred must have achieved a high level because he is to be charged as one of Joseph and Hyrum's assassins.¹¹

Many of the members of the Anti-Mormon party had been or were Whigs. The group tried very hard to recruit members from both parties. In the July 7, 1841 Warsaw Signal, the Anti-Mormon leadership stated that:

"old party landmarks of Whig and Democrat, so far as it[sic] relates to this country, are now laid aside. The insignia under which you have honestly fought so many well contested battles are now furled together, and a new banner is spread out, upon which you have inscribed the principles of Anti-Mormonism."

The town of Warsaw became the center of anti-Mormonism. Warsaw was not the county seat of Hancock County but the residents had hopes of it becoming the county's major commercial center. In September of 1840 Warsaw had about five hundred people and claimed several stores, two taverns, several warehouses, a printing plant, two steam mills, a lawyer, and two doctors. The town was also located on the Mississippi River opposite the southern terminus of the Des Moines River.¹² Warsaw was also scheduled to become a western branch of the Illinois railroad system.¹³

¹¹Ibid., p. 55.

¹²Launius, "Anti-Mormonism in Illinois," p. 28.

¹³Howard, Illinois: A History of the Prairie State, p. 199.

The major problem that seemed to darken the commercial plans of the citizens of Warsaw was the growing shadow of Nauvoo. The rapid population growth of Nauvoo, its control over county politics and its becoming the local major port for river traffic created a strong sense of intracity rivalry.

In order to recruit members, the Anti-Mormon group had to have goals or causes which would be of interest to prospective members. Marshall Hamilton, in his presentation "Strange Bedfellows in Hancock County," states that the Anti-Mormon groups came together because of five basic reasons. First, the people felt a "general powerlessness" over their situation with the loss of their voting strength, the size of the Illinois state debt and the influx of immigrants. Secondly, Hancock County experienced a growing problem of larceny. The Mormons received increasing blame for this problem.¹⁴ The Mormon leadership did make several official statements about opposition to thieves and posted guards at the ferry landing.¹⁵

Hamilton's third reason for the start of the Anti-Mormon Party was the reaction they had to seeing other politicians seeking the Mormon vote. This political sell-out to the whims of the Mormons did, in effect, cancel the

¹⁴Hamilton, "Strange Bedfellows in Hancock County," pp. 5-8.

¹⁵Times and Seasons, 1 December, 1841.

powers of the Non-Mormons and the "old citizens." The fourth reason proposed by Hamilton was the inconsistency of the Mormon bloc vote. The two main political parties never could count on the Mormon vote towards the 1843-44 elections, they were not sure if they wanted their vote.

The last of Hamilton's proposed causes covered the idea that a lack of communication existed between the two groups. If there had been channels of communication then perhaps a calmer solution could have been reached.¹⁶

The Prophet Seeks a Candidate

The Mormons in 1843 and 1844 were seeking governmental protection and assistance in recovering their financial losses in Missouri. It was to this end that Joseph Smith sent letters of inquiry to the apparent front runners in the approaching 1844 presidential election. Smith's letters went out to John C. Calhoun, Richard M. Johnson, Henry Clay, Lewis Cass and Martin Van Buren.¹⁷ The return correspondence agreed on the point that if the state of Missouri and the Congress of the United States would or could do nothing, then the president would not be able to act against Missouri.

¹⁶Hamilton, "Strange Bedfellows in Hancock County," pp. 9-10.

¹⁷Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 374; Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 6, pp. 64-65.

Smith received a letter on November 2, 1843, from Joseph L. Heywood dated Quincy, October 23, 1843. This letter was an offer to have a Colonel Frierson write a letter to friends of John C. Calhoun in respect to the Mormons' losses in Missouri. Heywood contended that there were "some honorable men in Missouri" that wish to "wipe off the stain that rests upon them, by some just reparation." This letter would also send assurances that the Saints would vote for Calhoun "who, I have no doubt would be preferred by the brethren to Mr. Van Buren."¹⁸

The letter was sent by Colonel Frierson on November 28, 1843 to "that Hon. R. B. Rhett, a representative in the National Congress from South Carolina, and a political friend of John C. Calhoun."¹⁹ Colonel Frierson was a United States surveyor who resided in Quincy. He also took a copy of Joseph's letter (Memorial) to Congress back to Quincy with him to acquire additional endorsements to give it additional attention among the members of Congress. The Colonel wrote his letter to the South Carolina politicians while he was with the Mormon leaders in Nauvoo.²⁰ During this same week, Smith wrote an appeal to the Green Mountain Boys of Vermont (the Prophet was born in Vermont in 1805). Smith hoped the citizens of Vermont would also aid the

¹⁸Ibid, p. 62-63.

¹⁹Ibid, p. 83.

²⁰Ibid, p. 83.

Saints in the struggle to recover Mormon losses in Missouri.²¹ These literary seeds fell on the rocky soil of politics and failed to grow, but did produce the fruits of disappointment.

General Smith for President

Could Joseph Smith Really Be a Candidate for the Presidency?

"I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please," he [Smith] said. "It feels so good not to be trammelled." And for all the tarring and feathering, the arrests, the leg irons, and the threats of death, America had permitted Joseph Smith the liberty of going fast and far. "Who can wonder," wrote Josiah Quincy, "that the chair of the National Executive had its place among the visions of this self-reliant man? He had already traversed the roughest part of the way to that coveted position. Born in the lowest rank of poverty, without book-learning and with the homeliest of all human names, he had made himself at the age of thirty-nine a power upon earth."²²

The letters of reply that Joseph Smith received from the five politicians with presidential inclinations did not contain the positive responses the Prophet had expected. Smith vented some of his disappointment with lengthy letters expressing his scorn for their positions.²³ When the Mormons rejected these candidates, a void was created in the coming election of 1844. The suggestion of a need for a candidate to fill this void was first presented as early as October of 1843. The Mormon press, under the question, "Who

²¹Ibid., pp. 88-93.

²²Brodie, No Man Knows My History, p. 366.

²³Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 375.

shall be our next President?", felt the candidates would be brought to action on the Mormon grievances when they realized the Saints could produce fifty thousand to one hundred thousand votes in the election.²⁴

The Mormons also were being threatened with the loss of the Nauvoo Charter, the growing Anti-Mormon Party and bad press, such as J. C. Bennett's expose' of Joseph Smith. The Illinois Whig and Democratic Parties did not wish to become known as the party of the Mormons, that is, outside of the Mormons' voting territory.

The answer to the Mormons' question of whom to vote for was found in the publication of the Nauvoo Neighbor on February 7, 1844. The paper called for Joseph Smith to be a candidate for the presidency. The idea must have originated with Joseph Smith and passed on to John Taylor, the editor of the Nauvoo Neighbor:

Mobs were rising against the Mormons, as had been the case in Ohio and Missouri. There were robberies, kidnappings, and house-burnings, mostly of Mormon farmers in outlying settlements. The anti-Mormon movement had enlisted powerful support from surrounding counties, who had come together with the resolve that the Mormons must go.

Joseph's solution to this predicament was so unexpected and audacious that John Taylor was sure it had to be inspired by the Lord. No mortal man could have dreamed up so bold a stroke to solve everything with one grand gambit.

Joseph Smith would become a candidate for the presidency of the United States.²⁵

²⁴Times and Seasons, 1 October, 1843.

²⁵Taylor, The Kingdom or Nothing, p. 89.

A positive support of this idea followed quickly in the official Mormon paper, Times and Seasons.²⁶ The idea did seem to present an answer to the Mormon question of who to vote for, but it opened a lengthy list of new questions. Did Smith think he could win? How would the campaign be directed? The greatest question this adventure into national politics would produce was what would be the effect of this nomination on the Mormon church and its president, Joseph Smith?

On the question of Joseph Smith believing he could win the presidency, Mormon historians run the full spectrum of opinion. Robert Bruce Flanders in his work on Nauvoo felt the Mormons were very serious about Smith's candidacy. Flanders noted that the Mormons knew it would be difficult but anything was possible in the views of the Kingdom building Mormons. Donna Hill, author of Joseph Smith the First Mormon, also cited Nauvoo sources that generally felt Smith could and would be elected. Ms. Hill also illustrated that Smith felt he would be elected. In the presentation No Man Knows My History, by Fawn M. Brodie, Ms. Brodie asserts the opinion that General Smith did not think he could win the 1844 election for the White House. Back on the positive side is Klaus Hansen and his articles and book on the political kingdom. Hansen felt the priesthood and the

²⁶Times and Seasons, 15 February, 1844.

Council of Fifty had been organized to pursue a victory in the election.

Joseph Smith had already achieved great success. He had organized a powerful religion and built up several cities, with Nauvoo being the greatest achievement.

By 1843, the city Joseph Smith and his followers had built in a few brief seasons out of swampland was competing in size with Chicago, while the state capital, Springfield, was still a little prairie town without decent sidewalks. That year, 374 missionaries were ordained and converts continued to pour into Nauvoo.

Nauvoo was the busiest city in the state. The day was begun every morning at seven by the ringing of a bell at the temple site, and the streets were soon bustling with workers setting out and with traffic--wagons, carriages and horsemen, and frequently an oxcart with a heavy load of stone for the temple site.

Nauvoo could now boast of an iron foundry, two steam grist and saw mills, a water mill, two stone quarries, a match and powder factory, a pottery and a wagon shop, as well as numerous smaller enterprises, blacksmiths, tailors, milliners, tanners, cobblers and storekeepers.²⁷

By the creation of a Mormon party, votes would be received outside of Illinois and the party could be a real third party in the field of politics on local, regional, and national elections. Both political parties had sought their support. If the Mormons had just wanted to throw their vote away, it could have been cast for some other third party movement. When the Whig and Republican Parties were started during this era of time, they were neither large nor a movement that blanketed the entire nation.

²⁷Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 372.

The personality of Joseph Smith must also enter into the picture. By this time he preferred to be called General Joseph Smith. The General was a man of great activity and drive. The Mormons had always felt with God's aid that all things were possible and if America was the new "chosen land", then what better way to prepare for the second coming than having the Prophet of God in charge of the civil government of the nation.

The new Mormon Party presented its platform by way of a program presented by Joseph Smith. The document was entitled "General Smith's Views On the Government and Policy of the U. S." It was printed in 15 May, 1844 issue of the Times and Seasons. Seven major ideas were presented and are in Smith's platform summarized for this study as follows:

1. National Bank--In the written discourse the idea of a national bank was presented four times. The system would be a central bank with twenty million dollars capital and branches in all the states and territories with each having independent funding of one million dollar. Each branch would be limited to issuing money or loans in amounts equal to what they held in their individual vaults. Smith felt that a bank financed in this manner would end the concept of the banks being brokerages for making profit or money exchanges. The General then proposed his standard salary proposal for the bank directors, two dollars per day of actual work.

2. Slavery--The stand on slavery by General Smith would have to be considered liberal. He felt the Southern people (white) were noble and had fine qualities, but he felt their slaves should be set free. However, the slave owners should be financially compensated for their lost property. The revenue needed to pay for the slaves would come from the sale of public lands and from the decreases of the salaries of members of Congress.

Smith also felt that when the black man started to work for hourly wages it would be a boon for the nation. These ideas on slavery were sometimes presented as individual ideas located in five different parts of General Smith's views.

3. Debtor Prison--General Smith, in his personal experiences had spent some time in jail and felt jails were cold, wet and cruel places. The idea of ending debtor prison was already being pushed at the federal and state level. The General also believed convicts should be educated while in prison and put to work repairing roads and bridges. Capital punishment should only be given out in the case of murder. The states should pardon convicts with the concept of "go, and sin no more."

4. Congress--General Smith felt the sovereign power in the United States was held by the people. The purpose of the government is to serve the people and not just the limited gentry. He felt the government needed to be reformed to save it from further corruption and the greed of the members of Congress. Smith felt the concept of two senators from each state was a good idea, therefore, the House of Representatives should be reduced to two members per one million citizens. This would produce more legislative work for the people. The salaries of all members of Congress were too high, therefore, each member of Congress should receive (except for Sunday) two dollars per day salary plus board. This was, stated Smith, a higher salary than most American farmers received and they live well on that amount of money.

5. Expansion of the United States--The nation did have glory in the past, before Van Buren's term. Because of the actions of Van Buren, the nation was on the wane. The country should, however, take Oregon, which was already in our grasp, annex Texas if the Texans repeated their offer to come to us and take California and the lands between so America could reach from sea to sea. We should offer our hand of friendship to Mexico and Canada and if they wanted to join us, let them come. These new lands and the leadership of the General would return America's glory and pride.

6. God--The nation must turn to God for salvation. The lawyers of America, if they would repent, should be sent out (without pay) to preach

salvation to the poor. This would end the need for a "hireling clergy".

7. Taxes would be reduced by cuts in government expenses. All would be expected to pay their share. In his role as mayor of Nauvoo, Smith followed the practice of forgiving taxes owed by widows and those too poor to pay.²⁸

Sidney Rigdon for Vice-President

The Mormons now had a candidate for the office of president of the United States. In order to complete the ticket a vice-presidential candidate was needed. As previously discussed, the offer went first to James A. Bennett of New York, but he was not a natural-born citizen. Then the offer went to Colonel Solomon Copeland of Paris, Tennessee, who refused the offer. The candidate selected for the position was an even greater surprise than the first two possibilities. General Smith chose as his vice-presidential hopeful, Sidney Rigdon.²⁹

Sidney Rigdon was born in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania on February 19, 1793. His parents would not provide him with a formal education so he made a major self-study of the Bible and history. Rigdon allegedly underwent a character change due to a blow to the head suffered when he fell from a horse. On two occasions, later in his life,

²⁸Smith, The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 6, p. 196.

²⁹Ibid., p. 391.

when beaten and abused by mobs, he suffered temporary insanity.³⁰

Ridgon, a Baptist, had a conversionary experience in 1817, and in 1818 he became a licensed Baptist minister. He studied the ministry in Warren, Ohio under Adamson Bentley for three years. On June 12, 1820, he married Miss Phebe Brooks, the sister of Mrs. Adamson Bentley. Sidney, during this time, became an ordained Baptist minister.³¹

During the next ten years Ridgon studied other religions and was impressed by the community concept of the Shakers and ideas of Alexander Campbell. Campbell and Ridgon carried out personal exchanges of ideas (Campbell belonged to the same Baptist association) and Ridgon and Bentley became converts to Campbell's ideas. It was Campbell who was able to get Ridgon appointed as the minister to the Baptist church in Pittsburgh. Ridgon lost this position when other Baptist ministers charged him with not being "sound in the faith."³²

Ridgon left Pittsburgh and accepted an appointment in Mentor, Ohio. This church was one that was accepting Campbell's concept of a New Testament church. Campbell was later forced out of the Baptist movement and he and his

³⁰Mark K. McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness: Sidney Ridgon, Religious Reformer, 1793-1876. (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1971) p. 15.

³¹Ibid., pp. 15-17.

³²Ibid., pp. 21-23.

followers joined the Disciples of Christ Church. Rigdon did not follow Campbell because he still held the concept of a community gathering in his idea of the New Testament church.³³

When Rigdon made a break with Campbell, his brother-in-law, Adamson Bentley, denounced him and arranged for his wife to be excluded from her father's estate. Rigdon joined with Isaac Morley, Lyman Wight and around one hundred others in a Christian economic settlement. Rigdon never lived with the group but was its religious director. It was at this point that Rigdon was visited by four Mormons, P. P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer and Ziba Peterson.³⁴

Parley Parker Pratt had been converted by Rigdon and became a missionary for the reformed Baptists. Pratt became a Mormon while in New York on a Baptist mission and had returned to tell Rigdon about the new sect.³⁵ After reading the Book of Mormon, Rigdon decided to join the Mormon movement. His wife, the congregation in Mentor and the residents of the Morley-Wight Farm followed his lead and joined the Mormon church.³⁶

Rigdon had a great impact on the early Mormon movement and had significant influence on the development of Mormon

³³Ibid., p. 25.

³⁴Ibid., p. 29.

³⁵Ibid., p. 30.

³⁶Ibid., p. 36.

theology prior to the Nauvoo period.³⁷ In Nauvoo, Rigdon suffered from poor health and he and Smith had a serious conflict of trust. Joseph Smith suffered greatly because of the expose' of John C. Bennett, the man Smith had depended upon in the early development of Nauvoo. After this betrayal Smith became suspicious of others, including Sidney Rigdon.

The division of Smith and Rigdon centered around two events. The minor event was a charge brought by Smith against Rigdon's conduct as the postmaster of Nauvoo. Smith felt his mail was being opened, money removed and some mail withheld from being delivered. Smith even wrote to one of the Illinois United States Senator, R. M. Young, asking for Rigdon's removal. Smith had always wanted the position and offered his services as Rigdon's replacement.³⁸

The major problem between Smith and Rigdon centered on the latter's nineteen year old daughter, Nancy. Mormon historians generally agree that Joseph Smith, during this time, was teaching the concept of celestial marriage. Smith approached Nancy Rigdon with the idea of her becoming one of his plural wives. Nancy reported this to her father and the result was a nasty affair on both sides of the questionable

³⁷Ibid., p. 112.

³⁸Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 257.

activity. The end result was Smith's attempt to have Rigdon removed as one of his counselors.

Smith made a public charge against Rigdon, accusing the latter as a co-conspirator with J. C. Bennett.³⁹ He then moved through the proper channels of the Mormon Church to have Rigdon removed as one of his two counselors (the other was a Canadian Scotsman, William Law). In Smith's role as President of the Latter Day Saint Church he had two personal advisors. These counselors were so important they were considered as part of the Presidency. On August 20, 1842, Sidney Rigdon spoke to a large gathering near the Temple site. His speech was impressive and Hyrum Smith made a series of remarks that were very positive in favor of Rigdon.⁴⁰ The final step in the removal attempt occurred on October 9, 1843, at the semi-annual church conference in Nauvoo. President Joseph Smith listed a series of causes for the removal of Rigdon as his counselor. Rigdon, in a powerful presentation, answered the charges and several others spoke on his behalf and the conference voted to sustain him as Joseph's counselor.⁴¹ Joseph Smith had very few duties for Rigdon after this until he made Rigdon

³⁹McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, pp. 115-120.

⁴⁰Smith, The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 5, pp. 122-124.

⁴¹Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 47 and Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, pp. 259-260; McKiernan, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, pp. 123-124.

his vice presidential candidate. Rigdon continued, however, to be a loyal supporter of Smith and the Mormon movement.

In selecting Rigdon, a strong anti-polygamy force, Smith may have been making preparations for a policy change. Rigdon's selection might have been a sign that Smith was going to end polygamy.

For Time and Eternity

With the advantage of hindsight, the Rigdon problems foreshadow a split in the Mormons inner-circle of leaders. Hyrum Smith was the only one of the leadership group who supported Rigdon and also supported the new regulation on celestial marriage and later earthly polygamy.

Celestial blessings were given for several reasons. First, if the individual or marriage was "sealed" by a temple rite, the individuals would be assured of going to Heaven unless he or she became guilty of shedding innocent blood. The priesthood would be able to progress in greatness in Heaven if properly sealed on earth. A man and wife could also be sealed to each other for "time and eternity." The multi-wife concept began when the priesthood was allowed to have, in the event of the death of their first wife, their second wife sealed to them also. This meant they would have both wives in Heaven. The wives, however, were only allowed to be sealed to one husband.

There are various secondary sources that claim polygamy started in the Mormon church as early as 1831 in Ohio.⁴² The official alleged revelation to have been received by Joseph Smith was presented to the Nauvoo High Council while Joseph was homebound with illness. Hyrum Smith read the revelation to the Nauvoo High Council on August 12, 1843. The Council members became separated into two factions on acceptance and non-acceptance of the concept.⁴³ William Marks, a member of the high council and the Nauvoo State President, later claimed that Joseph Smith told him shortly before his death that polygamy had to be stopped. Marks later became a member of the First Presidency of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.⁴⁴ This anti-polygamy faction of Mormonism accepted Joseph Smith III as their leader along with his mother, Emma Hale Smith Bidamon, in April of 1860.⁴⁵

The historical evidence points to the fact that Joseph Smith, Jr. was the originator of the celestial temple rites and polygamy. Smith did practice polygamy in Nauvoo but in

⁴²Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 146.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 335-336.

⁴⁴Richard P. Howard, "The Changing RLDS Response to Mormon Polygamy: A Preliminary Analysis," The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal Vol. 3 (Lamoni: Graceland College, 1983) p. 15; Alma R. Blair, "RLDS Views of Polygamy: Some Historiographical Notes," The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal Vol. 5 (Lamoni: Graceland College, 1985) p. 20.

⁴⁵Launius, Joseph Smith III, p. 110 and pp. 115-118.

the time period just prior to his death, was preparing to end the practice. In the last years of her earthly existence, Emma Smith told her son, Joseph Smith III, that his father never practiced polygamy and she had been his only wife.⁴⁶ This last interview of Emma Smith has been challenged by many who lived at Nauvoo during this time and later Mormon historians looking at other historical sources. Newell and Avery in their work on Emma Smith, felt this interview to be weak proof because Joseph Smith III's training as a lawyer allowed him to ask questions of his mother which supplied the answers he wanted to receive.

The Mormon leadership living in Nauvoo after the death of Joseph Smith continued to practice polygamy. However, they did not officially acknowledge the practice until 1852 after they had moved west to Utah.⁴⁷

The Council of Fifty

This council, so named because its membership was around fifty, has been the subject of several interpretations as to the reason for its establishment and mission. The Mormon movement for some time had been growing rapidly in membership. Various ideas of expansion were being explored including expansion into Oregon. Smith had written

⁴⁶Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, p. 302.

⁴⁷Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 275.

a letter to President John Tyler and Congress offering free protection on the Oregon Trail by an expanded Nauvoo Legion of one hundred thousand men.⁴⁸ Stephen A. Douglas was gathering reports and copies of John C. Fremont's maps to aid the Mormons' knowledge of the Oregon country.⁴⁹ Douglas may have wanted the Mormons out of Illinois. Mormon representatives were also sent to seek out an agreement with the Republic of Texas. The group wanted to establish an independent state that would aid Texas against any future military action on the part of Mexico.⁵⁰ The Mormons in the Council of Fifty were excited about the progress made with Texas. A treaty was to be drawn up between the government of the Republic of Texas and the Mormons. The question of Texas' annexation was slowed down by the explosion of the U. S. S. Princeton and the death of Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur. (This was the explosion that also killed the father of President Tyler's future bride). The Mormons saw the hand of God stopping the Texas annexation for their benefit.⁵¹ Large settlements of

⁴⁸Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Vol. 6, pp. 281-282.

⁴⁹Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, p. 298.

⁵⁰Ibid, p. 290 and 294; Klaus J. Hanson, Quest for Empire (Michigan State: University Press, 1967) pp. 85-89.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 82-86.

Indians in Texas were reported to be wanting the Mormon missionaries to tell them about their forefathers.⁵²

Did these new projects need a reorganized leadership or a new group to handle the projects? The answer apparently was a new group. The Council of Fifty was formed by Smith over a period of time and at the time of his death numbered fifty-three. The organization was so secret that most of the Mormons in Nauvoo did not know it existed. Conspicuously absent from the Council of Fifty was William Law. The gathering at Nauvoo had lured the successful Canadian businessman. The combination of his business abilities, personal wealth and devotion to the movement allowed William Law upward mobility into the First Presidency in Nauvoo. Law was a counselor to the prophet-president of the Latter Day Saints for two years before he was expelled from the Mormon Church on April 18, 1844.⁵³ Law claimed Smith was a fallen prophet and demanded he publicly repent.⁵⁴

The reasons for William Law's withdrawal built over a period of time. Law objected to Smith's profits on land sold to converts, felt the Nauvoo House should be completed before the Temple in order to have housing for recent arrivals and he objected to the growing lack of democracy in

⁵²Flanders, Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi, pp. 290-291.

⁵³Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Vol. 2, p. 736.

⁵⁴Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 389.

the church and in the city government. Smith reported there was a "Judas in our midst" and hired additional policemen for protection. On two occasions, Law had the police questioned because he felt they were hired to watch him or perhaps kill him. If this growing distrust and improper communication was not enough, the final break occurred when Joseph Smith refused to allow William and Jane Law to have their marriage sealed. Smith claimed the Lord told him William was guilty of adultery and would not allow the sealing. Then Smith reportedly made a plural marriage proposal to William Law's handsome wife, Jane. In Hill's Joseph Smith the First Mormon the suggestion is that Jane proposed to Smith.⁵⁵

The Council of Fifty operated without any control from membership of the Mormon church and the Nauvoo civil government. It had in fact made Joseph Smith the earthly king of the Kingdom of God. This group was to also take an active interest in the election campaign of General Smith for president. Many of its members were sent on election-speaking tours.⁵⁶

General Smith appeared to have a growing fear of being returned to Missouri by the deeds of someone he trusted. Smith's judgement of men had proven weak and he saw problems

⁵⁵Ibid, pp. 388-389.

⁵⁶Klaus J. Hanson, Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History, p. 66 and 74.

where there were none. This may explain why the members of the Council of Fifty had to swear personal loyalty to Smith. General Smith was also pushing his Nauvoo civil and judicial powers to their limits and perhaps beyond in some cases.

After the death of Joseph Smith and the loss of the Nauvoo City Charter, Brigham Young used the Council to run the city and plan the movement to Utah. In Utah the Council continued to function for several years.

With the Council as a first example the Mormons of the Nauvoo Era and their leadership were not typical of Jacksonian America. The council's loyalty to the personal control of Joseph Smith does not reflect the nation's growing interest in self-reliance and expansion of the power of the common man. The Mormons also had an obvious lack of input by the general membership. The ordinary everyday Mormon only voted on a limited basis voicing approval of the actions taken by the leadership. The control of the priesthood over the members of the movement and the members acceptance of the concept of divine leadership were reflected in a closely-led group with limited democratic action.

The Mormon leadership was retained by a limited group of priesthood elects that controlled not only the activities of Nauvoo but also the civil powers of the city as well. The concept of the separation of church and state was not alive in Nauvoo. The growth of a nation under the rule of

the church (Zion) was a major theme in Nauvoo Mormonism. The leaders of the church were also the majority of civil officers. The problem was compounded when some of the Mormons built multiple offices. Joseph Smith was the prime example of this exercise.

Nauvoo during the Mormon Era did not have a local newspaper free from Mormon control. The several newspapers that were started might have been individual enterprise but the control of the Mormon leadership was soon felt. The previous discussion on the Nauvoo Times and Seasons is the classic example of Nauvoo's lack of free press.

Joseph Smith had also tried to utilize the power of the Federal government in controlling the action that states (first Missouri and later Illinois) had taken against himself or the Nauvoo Church. In short, the Mormons were opposed to states rights and pressed for aid of special interest groups. The Mormons had formed the Nauvoo Legion to protect themselves, not to protect Illinois or the National Government because of a sense of duty.

The Mormons were also in favor of a national bank with the power to loan funds to special interest groups such as themselves. All Jacksonians of this era were opposed to a national bank. The Mormons also exhibited a lack of loyalty to Jacksonian America by their seeking out the possibilities of starting an independent nation in Texas or the Oregon Territory. The Mormon leadership felt no sense of

disloyalty to the United States by borrowing a Manifest Destiny to fulfill ecclesiastical goals.

The strange collection of political events in Nauvoo and the role of the church in politics did not seem to dampen the Mormons' desire to elect General Smith to the presidency of the United States.

The Campaign

The immediate task for General Smith was to let the voters of the United States know his platform and his personal qualifications. For this purpose, the Mormons' missionary force was sent forth. General Smith chose as his election campaign manager, John Taylor. This Nauvoo polygamist Mormon was also the editor of the Nauvoo Neighbor and would later be president of the Utah Latter-Day Saints.

General Smith felt that the large number of Mormon priesthood would be a great advantage in his campaign.

If you attempt to accomplish this, you must send every man in the city who is able to speak in public throughout the land to electioneer and make stump speeches, advocate the "Mormon" religion, purity of elections, and call upon the people to stand by the law and put down mobocracy. David Yearsly must go, --Parley P. Pratt to New York, Erastus Snow to Vermont, and Sidney Rigdon to Pennsylvania.

After the April Conference we will have General Conferences all over the nation, and I will attend as many as convenient. Tell the people we have had Whig and Democratic Presidents long enough: we want a President of the United States. If I ever get in the presidential chair, I will protect the people in their rights and liberties. I will not electioneer for myself. Hyrum, Brigham, Parley and Taylor must go. Clayton must go, or he will apostatize. The Whigs are striving for a king

under the garb of Democracy. There is oratory enough in the Church to carry me into the presidential chair the first slide.⁵⁷

The conventions were proposed to meet in various states with a final national convention⁵⁸ later. The first state convention was held in Nauvoo on May 17, 1844, for the state of Illinois. General Uriah Brown was the chairman and Dr. J. Merryweather acted as secretary. Several letters of campaign interest were read and the first deemed to be important was directed to Mr. G. W. Goforth of Mascoutah, St. Clair County, Illinois. From Tennessee, Mr. M. Anderson of Rutherford was a representative at the convention.⁵⁹

On June 8, 1844, General Smith received news of the Democratic Convention results. The Democrats had chosen James K. Polk of Tennessee as their presidential candidate.⁶⁰ The Mormons, however, still continued the campaign with the feeling Joseph would win. In a letter

⁵⁷Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 6, p. 188.

⁵⁸In Donna Hill's work, on Joseph Smith, she reports a national meeting was to be held in New York on July 13, 1844, with Brigham Young in charge of preparations. In the Utah Latter-Day Saints History of the Church the meeting was to be held on that date in Baltimore.

⁵⁹Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, pp. 386-389. Most of these delegates lived in Nauvoo and were former residents of the places they represented. The two areas listed have been previously introduced and will play unusual roles in the campaign.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 430-431.

from Philadelphia Heber C. Kimball wrote to Joseph with the attitude the Mormon ticket would win.⁶¹

Conventions were held in several places throughout the states. A three day conference was held at Dresden, Weakley County, Tennessee. The meeting was held on or before May 25, 1844. The report in the Latter-Day Saints history is that Elder A. O. Smoot was the chairman and D. P. Raney was made the secretary. The gathering was reported to be fairly large but they became victims of a mob formed by citizens around Dresden. The leaders of the mob were all local men of some importance and standing in the community.⁶² There are no surviving local papers that could have given an account of the incident. Likewise, a search of the Dresden City Court records and the State of Tennessee Circuit Court records do not bear any record of arrests or lawsuits and/or judgements as a result of the action of the mob. The only positive result of the meeting was the selection of an official electoral college elector for General Smith.⁶³

Political candidates, especially those in 1844, were always seeking endorsements by a specific group or the news media. The Mormon newspapers of Nauvoo supported the Mormon

⁶¹Hill, Joseph Smith the First Mormon, p. 378.

⁶²Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Vol. 6, p. 408.

⁶³Ibid., p. 408.

ticket of General Smith, but only one other paper is known to editorialize for the election of Mormon candidates.

The newspaper known as The Politician also advocated James Gordon Bennett as the Mormon vice-presidential candidate. Apparently the editor did not know about Colonel Solomon Copeland and the final selection of Sidney Rigdon for the vice-presidential slot.

The Politician was published in Belleville, St. Clair County, Illinois. The owner and editor was Frederick Adam Snyder, one of the three surviving children of Adam W. and Adelaide Snyder who was an early political friend of the Mormons. Adam W. Snyder had the full support of the Mormons in his bid to become Governor of Illinois until his unexpected death removed him from the gubernatorial race.

Frederick Adam Snyder was a young man who must have possessed many talents. He was born on the American Bottom farm in St. Clair County, Illinois on December 28, 1827. In March of 1843, at the age of sixteen, Frederick graduated from McKendree College in Lebanon, St. Clair County, Illinois. (McKendree, a Methodist institution, is today the oldest college still in operation in Illinois). At the age of twenty, he was admitted to the Illinois Bar after studying law with the firm of Kinney and Bissell. Before entering his law studies he learned to set type and operate a newspaper while employed by The St. Clair Banner.

Frederick A. Snyder's The Politician was only published for the months of April to June in 1844. His newspaper carried consistent advertising from the law firm of Gustavus Koerner, an old political friend of his father and one of the three executors of his estate and guardian of his three sons. Koerner also employed Frederick's older brother, William Henry Snyder as a law student. William Snyder was later a Belleville postmaster, lawyer, Mexican War soldier and an Illinois judge.

Young Frederick Snyder was a liberal minded man with a bright intellect, excellent speaking ability, a handsome man of light hair and blue eyes. This young man must have been deeply touched by the Mormons' growth problems in order for him to have published a newspaper in favor of General Smith. It is not believed Snyder published the paper for religious reasons because neither he nor his brother, William, ever joined any official religion.

After his brief editorship, Frederick became an officer in the Mexican War. When the war ended he migrated to California and worked on the editorial staff of the Alta-California in San Francisco. In 1852 he was elected to the California legislature. By 1854 he was half owner of a newspaper called The Mountain Democrat, which he intended to use to further his political career. However, on a vacation trip to Lake Tahoe at the age of only twenty-six, he collapsed and died on the shore of the lake. He was buried

at the location of his death leaving behind no wife or family, but an unusual page in Mormon history.⁶⁴

This is a rare example of a non-Mormon coming out in favor of General Smith's election. The Belleville newspaper was the only non-Mormon press in favor of the Mormon candidate. The attack on a Nauvoo newspaper that opposed his candidacy and his leadership of the church is the major step leading to his death.

⁶⁴Snyder, Adam W. Snyder, pp. 424-425.

CHAPTER X
MURDER MOST FOUL

The Expositor

Not all people on the Illinois frontier were as liberal as Fredrich Snyder. The frontier was accustomed to the use of violence as an immediate solution to a source of irritation, even if it dealt with religion. Every religion has some dissenters and detractors. That is one of the reasons there are so many different religious groups. A powerful group of dissenters grew within the Mormon leadership at Nauvoo. A full separation had occurred between Joseph Smith and his presidential church counselor, William Law. The High Council removed Law as Smith's counselor, but Law insisted that Smith needed to make a full confession and ask for forgiveness. William's brother, Wilson Law, lost his rank as major-general of the Nauvoo Legion and in the Masonic Lodge charges were made against both of the brothers.

The Law brothers were supported by other dissenters such as Chauncey and Francis Higbee. The father of the Higbee brothers had been of great help to Joseph prior to his death. However, Francis and Chauncey had been Smith's detractors for some time prior to these events. Another strong dissenter was Dr. Robert D. Foster. The doctor was not only a physician but the Surgeon General of the Nauvoo

Legion and a business partner of William Law. Foster was relieved of his duties with the Nauvoo Legion, and ex-communicated from the church after he protested against Smith's teaching his wife about the spiritual wife doctrine.¹

These were not ordinary people in Nauvoo; they were part of the inner-circle. They were members of the Legion's high command, the Quorum of the Twelve apostates and the First Presidency. The problem they presented was of major consequence and Smith was going to have to take some action against them in an effort to save his presidential election, his role in the church, the gathering at Nauvoo and perhaps his life. The course chosen was one of the most base and unworthy defenses Smith could have used. The biography of John Taylor (editor of the Times and Seasons and the Nauvoo Neighbor) claims that the course Taylor and Smith chose was to totally "destroy the credibility of the apostates."²

During this period in the spring of 1844, Smith may have been having second thoughts about polygamy, at least in public statements and denials. In Newell and Avery's account on Emma Smith, Joseph appears to be sending off his extra wives. It also appears that he was having the Female Relief Society be instructed by Emma to only follow

¹Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, pp. 389-390; Gayler, "The Expositor Affair," pp. 5-6.

²Taylor, The Kingdom or Nothing: The Life of John Taylor, Militant Mormon, p. 92.

teachings given from the public pulpit. This was the time (May-June 1844) when he instructed William Marks to bring charges against the polygamists.

The Laws, the Higbees and Dr. Foster joined forces with other dissenters, purchased a printing press and employed Sylvester Emmons to be the editor of the new paper, The Expositor. Emmons, a non-Mormon, was a prominent lawyer in Nauvoo and a member of the City Council.³ The group was growing every day and they had around three hundred followers. They organized themselves as a new Mormon Church holding to the original beliefs as they saw them. They believed Joseph Smith had been called to be a prophet but had fallen, and they opposed all of the spiritual wife doctrines.⁴

The dissenters brought legal charges against Smith for adultery, polygamy and false swearing. The group then published the one and only issue of their newspaper, The Expositor. They published the paper with the printed purpose of exposing Joseph Smith's principles, disclosing the methods by which women had been taken into spiritual wife doctrine and, achieving the repeal of the Nauvoo City Charter. A list of fifteen resolutions attacked Smith's

³Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, pp. 391-391; Gayler, "The Expositor Affair," p. 6. Gayler claims that Emmons had been ex-communicated from the Mormon Church.

⁴Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 392; Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, p. 13.

financial dealings, plural wives and his political activities.⁵

In reaction to the publication of The Expositor, Mayor Joseph Smith called the City Council into session and they acted, without proper authority, as a judicial body and declared the newspaper a public nuisance because it printed libel information and not truthful news. The council voted to empower the city Marshall to destroy the press, the pi type and the remaining copies of the paper. The Marshall was to be assisted by the Nauvoo Legion. The Mayor then ordered the Marshall to act on the council's decision and, with aid from the Nauvoo Legion, the press, type and printed materials were destroyed.⁶

The destruction of The Expositor is generally viewed as one of Joseph Smith's greatest mistakes. The reaction was greater than anyone in Nauvoo expected. The freedom of the press and charges of Mormon dictatorship were denounced everywhere. The anti-Mormon Warsaw Signal started calling for the death of Joseph Smith as the solution to the problem.

The Nauvoo dissenters fled the city and made legal charges against Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Joseph wrote to

⁵Gayler, "The Expositor Affair," pp. 7-8; Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 393; Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, p. 14.

⁶Gayler, "The Expositor Affair," p. 9; Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Vol. 6, pp. 445-448.

Governor Ford to proclaim his innocence, but the Governor wrote to Smith that he was guilty of four violations of the Constitution and had no excuse to destroy The Expositor.⁷

The Governor promised Smith protection if he would give himself up for trial. The Governor also ordered the removal of three small artillery pieces and two hundred small arms which were the property of the state being used by the Nauvoo Legion. General Smith signed the governor's order and the arms were surrendered back to the state.⁸ This arms transfer did not, however, stop the preparations for war on both sides of the question.

The group of dissenters with William Law filed charges of riot against a total of eighteen people, including Joseph Smith. The charges were filed in Carthage, but the defendants arranged to be tried in Nauvoo. The non-Mormon Judge Daniel H. Wells was very pro-Mormon and acquitted the eighteen defendants.⁹

The Governor now issued a new warrant for Joseph and Hyrum Smith and ordered them to stand trial in Carthage. Joseph decided to flee Illinois and go to Washington, D. C. to appeal to President John Tyler for protection. The Smith's families were to meet them and all would travel to

⁷Hill, Joseph Smith The First Mormon, p. 400.

⁸Ibid., p. 403.

⁹Ibid., p. 396.

Washington.¹⁰ With the burden of all of these problems upon Joseph Smith, Newell and Avery, in their work on Emma Smith, contend that Joseph was planning to meet two young sisters, who were his plural wives, in Cincinnati.¹¹ Various cities were sites to which the Smith Brothers could flee. It did not seem to meet with Joseph Smith's charter to leave his family in danger to pick up distant "wives." The Mormons in Nauvoo expressed concern for the safety of Joseph Smith, but generally did not want the prophet to leave them in the city's moment of grave danger.¹² Many, including Emma, asked them to return to Nauvoo.

Joseph and Hyrum returned and notified the Governor of their plans to surrender to his protection. All of the historical accounts of the surrender to Ford include the fact that Joseph Smith openly announced his impending death at the hands of his enemies. Due to the various activities, Joseph and his group left Nauvoo three times. The Mormon group numbered fifteen and then were joined by Captain Dunn and members of the Illinois militia that had gathered the arms of the Nauvoo Legion. Captain Dunn also pledged to

¹⁰Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, pp. 16-17.

¹¹Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, pp. 186-187.

¹²Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, p. 17.

protect Smith on his march to Carthage because of Smith's co-operation in the collection of the Legion.¹³

On June 25, 1844, in Carthage, Governor Ford ordered the state troops to stand for review. As the Governor approached the Carthage Greys, in the company of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the troops refused to stand review. Some loaded their weapons and all refused the orders of their officers as well as the direct order of the Governor. These were the troops the Governor was going to use to protect General Smith.¹⁴

Governor Ford dismissed most of the troops in and around Carthage prior to his leaving to travel to Nauvoo. He planned to visit the city to aid in maintaining peace there. The Governor was fearful that troops taken to Nauvoo might purposely provoke the residents of Nauvoo. A large number of the troops released from duty gathered around Carthage. Ford dismissed the rumors reported to him of a plot to kill the Mormon leaders.¹⁵ The Smith Brothers and two others were residents of the Carthage jail awaiting a court hearing on charges stemming from The Expositor Affair.

While the Governor was visiting in Nauvoo, the prophet's bodyguard, Porter Rockwell, interrupted a

¹³Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, p. 109.

¹⁴Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, pp. 17-18.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 19-20.

conversation which led some to believe that Governor Ford was part of the plot to kill the Smiths. Later that night, unable to sleep, Rockwell headed toward Carthage to see what he could do to protect the prophet. It was already too late.¹⁶

There were only four Mormons still in the Carthage block courthouse and jail. The citizens of Hancock County and Carthage were proud of their modern facility. For a western settlement, Hancock County had an unusually nice structure. Many communities had log structures or others even less permanent. The county had not had a lot of violence in its history. Only one person had been executed for murder. His name was William Fraim and his lawyer, Abraham Lincoln, was unable to get the judge to change the sentence.¹⁷

John Taylor, Willard Richards, Hyrum Smith and Joseph Smith were the four Mormons in the upstairs room over the jail. Several people had visited them that day and one visitor smuggled a pistol to Joseph Smith. Approximately at 5:20 p.m., John Taylor saw a group of men approaching the jail stairs and noticed the men had their faces painted.¹⁸

¹⁶Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, p. 193.

¹⁷Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, p. 3.

¹⁸Taylor, The Kingdom or Nothing, p. 93.

Everything had been arranged. The majority of the troops were camped away from the jail. The few guarding the jail had blank loads in their guns.¹⁹ The guards did fire their guns when the attackers were only twenty yards away, but no one was shot and the guards were easily pushed aside.²⁰

The men upstairs picked up what defensive weapons they had and attempted to hold the door shut. The door had no lock and holding it shut was the only way not to allow entry into the upstairs room. A series of shots were fired by the attackers through the door. A bullet hit Hyrum in the face and a second struck him under the chin, he fell backwards onto the wooden floor a dead man.

Joseph, seeing his dead brother, opened the door slightly and fired his six shot pistol, but three loads did not fire. The three shots that did fire hit human targets. The wounds were not fatal but gave identity to three of the attackers. Following Joseph Smith's shots a renewed attack on the room was launched. Smith hit several of the men attempting to enter the door. John Taylor, using a rascal-beater, tried to knock down the muskets that were being pointed into the room. When the door was forced open, Taylor ran towards the window and, when shot from behind, he

¹⁹Ibid., p. 93; Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, pp. 20-21.

²⁰Ibid., p. 21.

fell on the ledge. Other assassins still on the outside of the building fired at Taylor from below. One of the bullets struck Taylor's body, hitting his pocket watch and knocking him back into the room. Taylor was then able to crawl under the bed and, even though he was hit by three more bullets, survived the attack.

Joseph, seeing the situation in the room was hopeless, also attempted to escape through the window. He was shot several times from behind and fell out the window. He attempted to hang onto the window sill but fell to the ground, rolled over against the wall and died. The attackers now fled leaving the fourth man, Richards, alive and with no apparent injury. The citizens of Carthage fled because the Mormons would surely come.²¹

A Farewell to a Prophet

The Mormons did not come. They stayed to mourn and bury their prophet and his loyal brother. Even Governor Ford fled, fearing the Mormons would blame him and start a civil war in Illinois.

The fallen leaders were brought to Nauvoo in wooden caskets, insulated from the June heat by leaves and limbs.²² In this time period the modern technology of

²¹Ibid., p. 21; Taylor, The Kingdom or Nothing, p. 93; Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, pp. 194-195.

²²Ibid., p. 196.

caring for the bodies was not known. Funerals were difficult to endure, but harder when victims had been violated.

The next morning, thirty-nine hours after their martyrdom, the house was opened to allow the Saints a last look at their fallen leaders. The people "commenced assembling at an early hour," reported Dr. B. W. Richmond, "and the surrounding county swarmed with men and women during the whole day." As Richmond described it:

The scene around the bodies of the dead men was too horrible to witness. Hyrum was shot in the brain, and bled none, but by noon his face was so swollen--neck and face forming one bloated mass--that no one could recognize it. Joseph's blood continued to pour out of his wounds, which had been filled with cotton, the muscles relaxed and the gory fluid trickled down on the floor and formed puddles across the room. Tar, vinegar, and sugar are kept burning on the stove to enable persons to stay in the apartment. In order to see the bodies, thousands came in at one door and out another, from morning till night they came and went, and in the house for the livelong day the lament of sorrow was heard.²³

The next day, following the funeral service, caskets filled with sandbags were buried. That night the real bodies were buried in the basement of the unfinished Nauvoo House, covered with various dirt and rocks like the construction site and that night a rain storm completed the camouflage. The family feared even the dead bodies were not

²³Launius, Joseph Smith III, p. 21.

free from attackers or from being removed to Missouri for reasons unthinkable.²⁴

Justice is More Than Blind

A grand jury met in October 1844 to hear evidence in order to bring the killers to justice. There was a large number involved in the raid on the Carthage jail, but the grand jury only produced nine indictments. The nine were charged with two separate counts of murder. The way the accounts were worded, along with the interpretation of Illinois law, one person was specifically named as the murderer but the others participated and were equally guilty.

The three most obvious were the men shot by Joseph Smith. The three men afterwards claimed to be first in the jail and shot through the door, killing Hyrum Smith. The first of the three was a man named Wills. John Wills had been shot in the arm and was described as an Irishman that joined the mob because he loved a brawl. The second man was never listed with a first name and went simply as Gallaher. He was a young man from Mississippi and had been shot in the face. William Voras was the third man that had been shot by Smith. Voras, who was from Bear Creek, had been shot in the shoulder. These men fled the area and were never brought to trial. Their wounds would have been enough to convict them.

²⁴Newell and Avery, Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, p. 198.

A fourth man, never arrested, was named Allen. Again no first name was given.

The first of the five who did stand trial was Mark Aldrich and at age forty-two was the oldest of the defendants. Aldrich was a land speculator who lost money when the Mormons refused to build on land owned by Aldrich and others. This settlement was to have been called Warren. Aldrich was forced to take bankruptcy, but he was able to use the national laws to cast off his debts yet retain his property. This defendant also held the rank of Major in the Illinois Militia.

The second defendant was Jacob Cunningham Davis. During all this activity Davis was an Illinois state senator. He had been appointed as a circuit court clerk by S. A. Douglas. He had been helped in some elections by the Mormon vote, but failed to gain the congressional nomination given to Joseph P. Hodge. Davis was not married and lived in Warsaw.

The third of the five defendants was a twenty-six year old captain in the state militia, William N. Grover. He was a lawyer who lived in Warsaw. Grover seemed to have joined in the killing over general military jealousy due to the size and power of the Nauvoo Legion.

The fourth defendant was perhaps locally the best known. He was Thomas C. Sharp the part owner and editor of the Warsaw Signal. The fifth defendant was Levi Williams.

This defendant was a colonel in the Illinois Militia and had a long history of arresting and harassing not only Mormons, but non-Mormons. He had become involved because of the Mormons political control over Hancock County. He felt the killing of Smith was the only way to get rid of the Mormons.²⁵

The five defendants were defended by two very capable lawyers, William A. Richardson and a lawyer who once had defended Joseph Smith, Orville H. Browning. The other two defense attorneys were Calvin A. Warren, who had been involved in the Warren land sales, and Archibald Williams.²⁶ The prosecutor was Josiah Lamborn who had been assigned to this case. Lamborn was considered to be an outstanding prosecutor, but odds were stacked against him during this trial. The judge, Richard M. Young, felt his life was endangered during this trial.²⁷

The jury had been especially selected so that no Mormons were among the twelve to decide the fate of the five defendants.²⁸ The first trial of those acquitted of the killing of Joseph Smith lasted six court days and ended on May 30, 1845, and at 2:00 on that date the jury returned a not guilty verdict for the defendants. The lawyers for the

²⁵Oaks and Hill, Carthage Conspiracy, pp. 51-59.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 80-83.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 123-124.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 97-102.

defense then asked for an immediate hearing on the charges of murdering Hyrum Smith. This trial was held on June 24, 1845, and again no Mormons were on the jury. The prosecutor, however, seemed to be working harder on his advance work than he had on the first trial.²⁹ The crowd around the courthouse made it a dangerous place. The sheriff, Minor Deming, had to shoot a man who attacked him in the courthouse hallway. Sheriff Deming died of illness and the next elected sheriff, Beckenstos, a non-Mormon, was ordered by Judge Young to keep the peace, but the sheriff was unable to find enough neutrals to do the job. The anti-Mormon forces were so strong the new sheriff moved his family to Nauvoo for safety, and was chased by armed men when he fled.³⁰ The anti-Mormons would not support the sheriff because he had been elected by a Mormon majority.

One of the defendants, Levi Williams had started attacking the Mormons and burning their homes. On September 16, 1845, Sheriff Beckenstos, under attack, shot and killed Franklin Worrell,³¹ the commander of the Carthage Greys that had failed to protect the Smiths.

The trial of the murderers of Hyrum Smith was to begin on June 24, 1845. No one appeared for the prosecution. Judge Young called the court into session again on the

²⁹Ibid., p. 191.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 194-195.

³¹Ibid., p. 195.

twenty-fifth, but there still was no one for the prosecution; not even Lamborn appeared. Judge Young dismissed the case.³²

The Mormons in Nauvoo entered into an internal power struggle for leadership. The two major groups today are the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, with their headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, with headquarters in Independence, Missouri.

Nauvoo touched the lives of many in and away from the city. It started as nothing and grew to hold the promise of greatness. However, the weakness of men both within and outside of the Mormon movement destroyed the lives of the Mormon founder and his loyal brother.

Within two years the Mormons would be driven from Nauvoo and several men would come forward to be the leaders of the Mormon Church but only two main organizations will survive with large memberships. Nauvoo was the center of the Mormons' largest growth in Illinois and was one of the major events of Mormon history and religious changes.

³²Ibid. p. 191.

Educational Statement

Every research project the size of a dissertation usually presents some disappointing deadends. The reverse effect, however, presents exciting findings and relationships not realized prior to the study.

The research performed for this study has given new understanding of the role the Mormons played in pre-Mexican War America. They were in step with many other movements of the time and also present an enlarged insight as to why large groups of settlers moved west. In studying the economic complexities of the Mormon movement the financial problems of the United States are encountered and reflected on the state level.

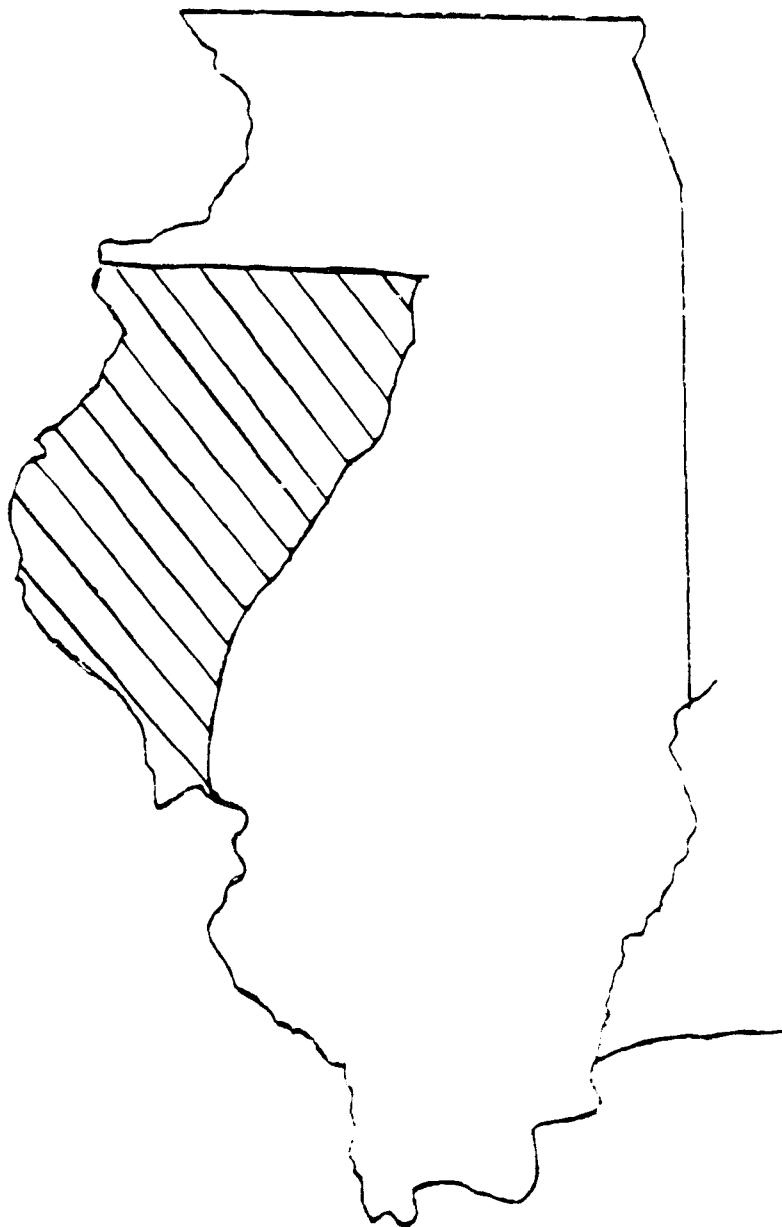
The expansionist movement felt by the people in the United States, Tennessee, Missouri, and Illinois, when studied with a backdrop of local history and to special groups, such as the Mormons, clearly illustrates that historic events have a cause and result effect that crosses multi-levels of government and people.

The greatest of revelations of this study was how the seemingly isolated activities of the Mormons reached out and developed a relationship with other places and people. The examples of the Mormons touching localities within the experience of the researcher provided for an increased appreciation for local history and its relationship to national events. The impact of the Mormons on national and

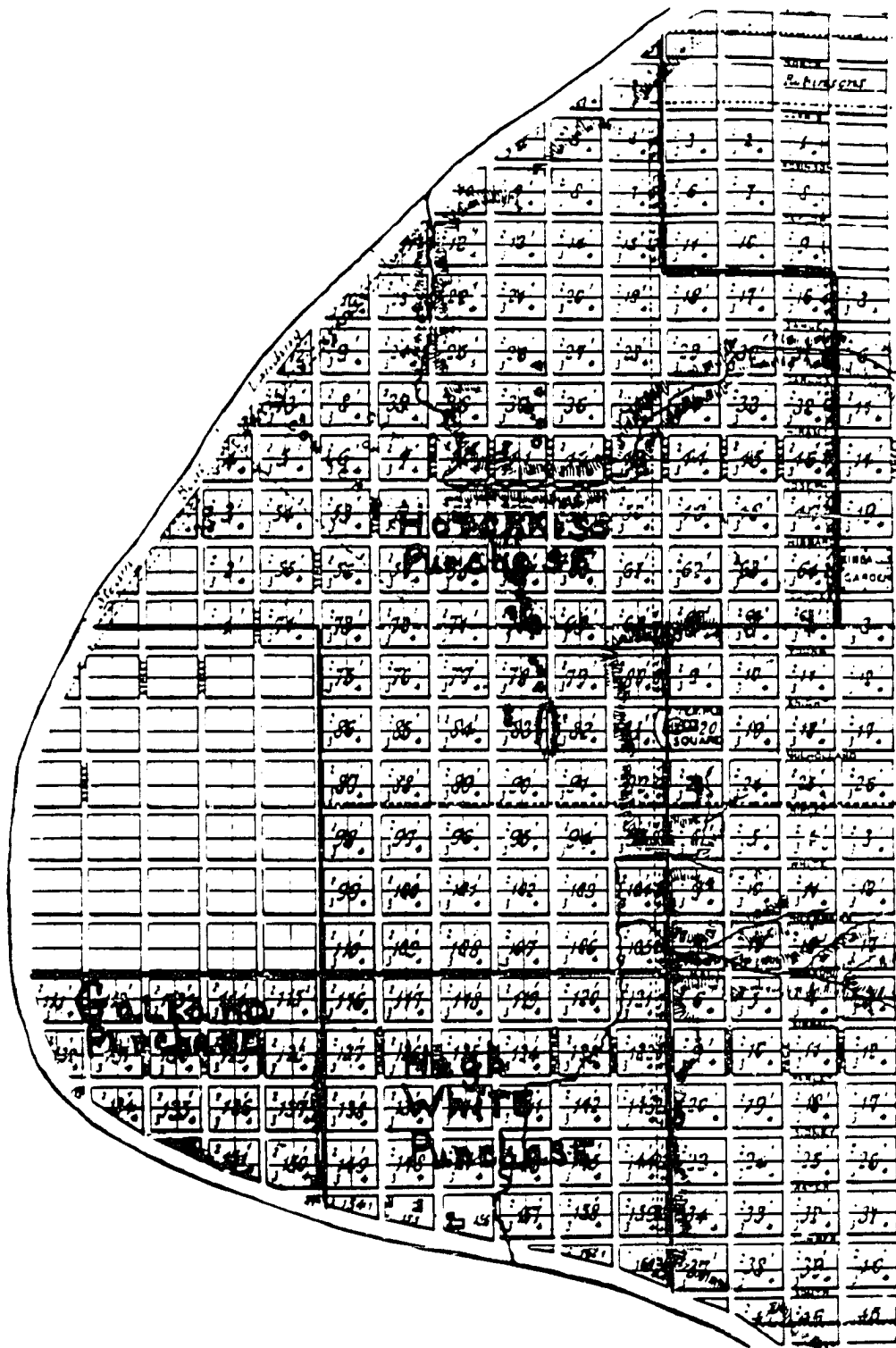
almost unknown local people stands as an excellent example of how political events reach out and have a strong impact on social history.

This study has allowed for an increased background which will allow for greater teaching. It will also allow for in-depth understanding in the cause/effect study of a specific historical happening. The relationship seen between the national economic events and the problems that resulted in the states and local areas during the Age of Jackson should allow students to understand some of the major social issues and their political and economic causes. The students will also benefit because of the local people and issues that will be incorporated into the classroom discussions. The study also allows for an example of how a movement (the Mormons) had historical connection to a wide variety of local events. State activities in Tennessee, Illinois, and Missouri also played a role in this unusual Jacksonian expression of religion and expansionism.

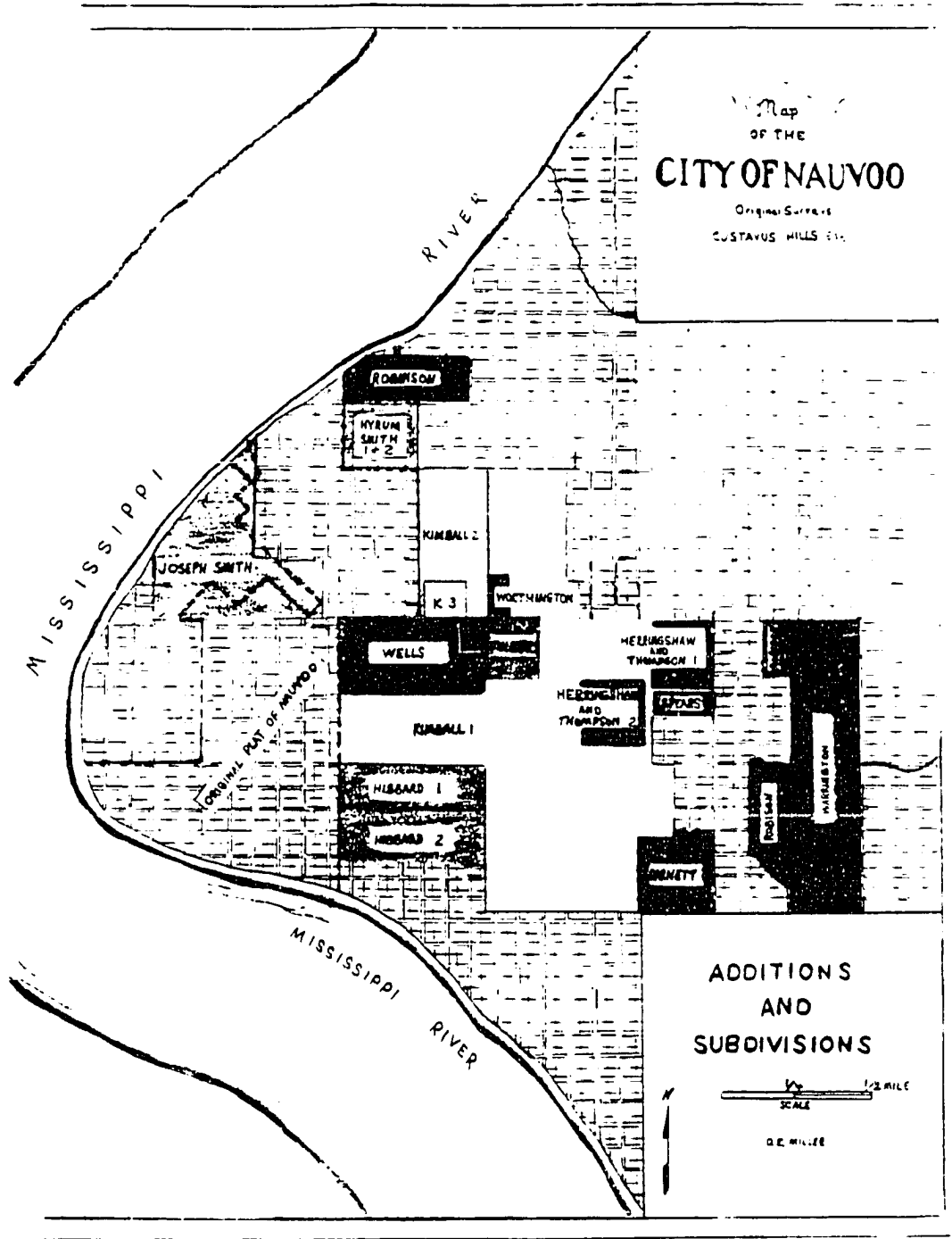
APPENDIX



THE ILLINOIS MILITARY TRACT



ORIGINAL LAND PURCHASES OF THE CHURCH



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