

History of the Church April 1839

Volume 3 Chapter 21 [Page 306] Chapter 21

*Stirring Scenes About Far West
The Escape Of The Prophet And His Fellow Prisoners.*

Judge King's Anger

Thursday, April 4

Brothers Kimball and Turley called on Judge King, who was angry at their having reported the case to the governor, and, said he, "I could have done all the business for you properly, if you had come to me; and I would have signed the petition for all except Joe, and he is not fit to live." I bid Brothers Kimball and Turley to be of good cheer, "for we shall be delivered; but no arm but God's can deliver us now. Tell the brethren to be of good cheer and get the Saints away as fast as possible."

Brothers Kimball and Turley were not permitted to enter the prison, and all the communication we had with them was through the grate of the dungeon. The brethren left Liberty on their return to Far West.

Friday, April 5

Brothers Kimball and Turley arrived at Far West.

Plot Against the Prophet's Life.

This day a company of about fifty men in Daviess county swore that they would never eat or drink, until they had murdered "Joe Smith." Their captain, William Bowman, swore, in the presence of Theodore Turley, that he would "never eat or drink, after he had seen Joe Smith, until he had murdered him."

The Truth of a Revelation Questioned

Also eight men—Captain Bogart, who was the county judge, Dr. Laffity, John Whitmer, and five others—came into the committee's room [i.e. the room or office of the committee on removal] and presented to Theodore Turley the paper containing the revelation of July 8, 1838, 1 to Joseph Smith, directing the Twelve to take their leave of the Saints in Far West on the building site of the Lords House on the 26th of April, to go to the isles of the sea, and then asked him to read it.

Turley said, "Gentlemen, I am well acquainted with it." They said, "Then you, as a rational man, will give up Joseph Smith's being a prophet and an inspired man? He and the Twelve are now scattered all over creation; let them come here if they dare; if they do, they will be murdered. As that revelation cannot be fulfilled, you will now give up your faith."

[Page 307]

Turley's Defense of the Prophet

Turley jumped up and said, "In the name of God that revelation will be fulfilled." They laughed him to scorn. John Whitmer hung down his head. They said, "If they (the Twelve) come, they will get murdered; they dare not come to take their leave here; that is like all the rest of Joe Smith's d—n prophecies." They commenced on Turley and said, he had better do as John Corrill had done; "he is going to publish a book called 'Mormonism Fairly Delineated;' he is a sensible man, and you had better assist him."

Colloquy between Turley and John Whitmer

Turley said, "Gentlemen, I presume there are men here who have heard Corrill say, that 'Mormonism' was true, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and inspired of God. I now call upon you, John Whitmer: you say Corrill is a moral and a good man; do you believe him when he says the Book of Mormon is true, or when he says it is not true? There are many things published that they say are true, and again turn around and say they are false?" Whitmer asked, "Do you hint at me?" Turley replied, "If the cap fits you, wear it; all I know is that you have published to the world that an angel did present those plates to Joseph Smith." Whitmer replied: "I now say, I handled those plates; there were fine engravings on both sides. I handled them;" and he described how they were hung, and "they were shown to me by a supernatural power;" he acknowledged all.

Turley asked him, "Why is not the translation now true?" He said, "I could not read it [in the original] and I do not know whether it [i. e., the translation] is true or not." Whitmer testified all this in the presence of eight men.

History of the Church April 1839

[Page 308]

The committee [on removal of the Saints from Missouri] met, and Brother William Huntington made report of his journey to Liberty on business of the committee.

Land Sales and the Clothing of Prisoners

The subject of providing some clothing for the prisoners at Richmond was discussed, and the propriety of sending two brethren to Liberty, to make sales of some lands, was taken up, and Elders H. G. Sherwood and Theodore Turley were appointed.

A bill of clothing for the Richmond prisoners having been made up, was presented and given to those appointed to go to Liberty, that they might procure the goods on the sales of land.

The Prisoners Hurried into Daviess County

Saturday, April 6

Judge King evidently fearing a change of venue, or some movement on our part to escape his unhallowed persecution (and most probably expecting that we would be murdered hurried myself and fellow prisoners off to Daviess county, under a guard of about ten men, commanded by Samuel Tillery, deputy jailer of Clay county. We were promised that we should go through Far West, which was directly on our route, which our friends at that place knew, and expected us; but instead of fulfilling their promise, they took us around the city, and out of the direct course some eighteen miles; far from habitations, where every opportunity presented for a general massacre.

Preemptory Orders Considered

This evening the committee (i.e. on removal) met in council. Prayer by Elder Kimball. The business of the council was the consideration of the order of the leaders of the Daviess mob, delivered this day to the Saints in Caldwell county, to leave before Friday next.

[Page 309]

Resolved: To hire all trams that can be hired, to move the families of the Saints out of the county, to Tenny's Grove.

Resolved: To send Henry G. Sherwood immedi-

ately to Illinois for assistance, in teams from the Saints there.

The mission of Elders Sherwood and Turley to Liberty was deferred for the present.

Actions of the Committee

Sunday, April 7

The committee met in council at Brother Turley's. Brother Erastus Snow made a report of his visit to the judges at Jefferson city. A letter from the prisoners at Liberty was read and Daniel Shearer and Heber C. Kimball were appointed to see Mr. Hughes and get him to go to Daviess county and attend the sitting of the court there.

We continued our travels across the prairie, while the brethren at Far West, anxious for our welfare, gave a man thirty dollars to convey a letter to us in Daviess county, and return an answer.

Arrival of the Prisoners in Daviess County

Monday, April 8

After a tedious journey—for our long confinement had enfeebled our bodily powers—we arrived in Daviess county, about a mile from Gallatin, where we were delivered into the hands of William Morgan, sheriff of Daviess county, with his guard, William Bowman, John Brassfield and John Pogue. The Liberty guard returned immediately, but became divided, or got lost on their way; a part of them arrived in Far West after dark, and got caught in the fence; and calling for help, Elder Markham went to their assistance and took them to the tavern. From them he got a letter I had written to the committee, informing them of our arrival in Daviess county.

Arrival of Stephen Markham in Gallatin

Tuesday, April 9

Our trial commenced before a drunken grand jury, Austin A. King, presiding judge, as drunk as the jury; for they were all drunk together. Elder Stephen Markham had been dispatched by the committee to visit us, and bring a hundred dollars that was sent by Elder Kimball, as we were destitute of means at that time. He left Far West this morning, and swimming

History of the Church April 1839

several streams he arrived among us in the afternoon, and spent the evening in our company. Brother Markham brought us a written copy of a statute which had passed the legislature, giving us the privilege of a change of venue on our own affidavit.

[Page 310]

Judge Morin Favors the Prophet's Escape

Judge Morin arrived from Mill Port, and was favorable to our escape from the persecution we were enduring, and spent the evening with us in prison, and we had as pleasant a time as such circumstances would permit, for we were as happy as the happiest; the Spirit buoyed us above our trials, and we rejoiced in each other's society.

The Examination of Witnesses

Wednesday, April 10

The day was spent in the examination of witnesses before the grand jury. Dr. Sampson Avard was one of the witnesses. Brother Markham was not permitted to give his testimony.

Our guard went home, and Colonel William P. Peniston, Blakely, and others took their place.

Letter of Sidney Rigdon to the Prophet Rigdon's Plans for the Impeachment of Missouri

Quincy, Illinois, April 10, 1839

To the Saints in Prison, Greeting:

In the midst of a crowd of business, I haste to send a few lines by the hand of Brother Mace, our messenger. We wish you to know that our friendship is unabating, and our exertions for your delivery, and that of the Church unceasing. For this purpose we have labored to secure the friendship of the governor of this state, with all the principal men in this place. In this we have succeeded beyond our highest anticipations. Governor Carlin assured us last evening, that he would lay our case before the legislature of this state, and have the action of that body upon it; and he would use all his influence to have an action which should be favorable to our people. He is also getting papers prepared signed by all the noted men in this part of the country, to give us

a favorable reception at Washington, whither we shall repair forthwith, after having visited the Governor of Iowa, of whose friendship we have the strongest testimonies. We leave Quincy this day to visit him. Our plan of operation is to impeach the state of Missouri on an item of the Constitution of the United States; that the general government shall give to each state a Republican form of government. Such a form of government does not exist in Missouri, and we can prove it.

[Page 311]

Governor Carlin and his lady enter with all the enthusiasm of their natures into this work, having no doubt but that we can accomplish this object.

Our plan of operation in this work is, to get all the governors, in their next messages, to have the subject brought before the legislatures; and we will have a man at the capital of each state to furnish them with the testimony on the subject; and we design to be at Washington to wait upon Congress, and have the action of that body on it also; all this going on at the same time, and have the action of the whole during one session.

Brother George W. Robinson will be engaged all the time between this and the next sitting of the legislatures, in taking affidavits, and preparing for the tug of war; while we will be going from state to state, visiting the respective governors, to get the case mentioned in their respective messages to legislatures, so as to have the whole going on at once. You will see by this that our time is engrossed to overflowing.

The Bishops of the Church are required to ride and visit all scattered abroad, and to collect money to carry on this great work.

Be assured, brethren, that operations of an all important character are under motion, and will come to an issue as soon as possible. Be assured that our friendship is unabated for you, and our desires for your deliverance intense. May God hasten it speedily, is our prayer day and night.

*Yours in the bonds of affliction,
Sidney Rigdon.*

**To Joseph Smith, Jun., Hyrum Smith, Caleb Baldwin, Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae
Letter of Alanson Ripley to the Prophet. 2**

History of the Church April 1839

Quincy, Illinois, April 10, 1839

Dear Brethren in Christ Jesus:

It is with feelings of no small moment that I take pen in hand to address you, the prisoners of Jesus Christ, and in the same faith of the Gospel with myself—who are holden by the cords of malice and of hellish plottings against the just, and through the lifting up the heel against the Lord's anointed; but they shall soon fall and not rise again, for their destruction is sure; and no power beneath the heavens can save them.

[Page 312]

President Rigdon is wielding a mighty shaft against the whole host of foul calumniators and mobocrats of Missouri. Yesterday he spent part of the day with Governor Carlin of this state. President Rigdon told him that he was informed that Governor Boggs was calculating to take out a bench warrant for himself and others, and then make a demand of his excellency for them to be given up, to be taken back to Missouri for trial; and he was assured by that noble-minded hero, that if Mr. Boggs undertook the thing, he would get himself insulted. He also assured him that the people called "Mormons" should find a permanent protection in this state. He also solicited our people, one and all, to settle in this state, and if there could be a tract of country that would suit our convenience, he would use his influence for Congress to make a grant of it to us, to redress our wrongs, and make up our losses.

We met last night in council of the whole, and passed some resolutions with respect to sending to the city of Washington. We are making every exertion possible that lies in our power, to accomplish that grand object upon which hangs our temporal salvation; and interwoven with this, our eternal salvation; and so closely allied to each other are they, that I want to see the head connected with the body again; and while we are enjoying one, let us be ripening for the other. But my heart says, Where is he whose lips used to whisper the words of life to us? Alas! he is in the hands of Zion's enemies. O Lord! crieth my heart, will not heaven hear our prayers, and witness our tears! Yes, saith the Spirit, thy tears are all remembered, and shall speedily be rewarded with the deliver-

ance of thy dearly beloved brethren.

But when I see the fearful apprehensions of some of our brethren, it causes me to mourn. One instance I will mention. When I arrived at Far West I made my mind known to some of the community, and told them that I wanted they should send a messenger to the jail to communicate with you; but my request was denied. They said that the Presidency was so anxious to be free once more, that they would not consider the danger the Church was in.

They met in council and passed resolutions that myself, Amasa Lyman, and Watson Barlow, should leave Far West for Quincy forthwith. My spirit has been grieved ever since, so that I can hardly hold my peace; but there is a God in Israel that can blast the hellish desires and designs of that infernal banditti, whose hands have been imbrued in the blood of the martyrs and Saints. They wish to destroy the Church of God; but their chain is short; there is just enough left to bind their own hands with.

[Page 313]

Dear brethren, I am at your service, and I await your counsel at Quincy, and shall be happy to grant you the desire of your hearts. I am ready to act. Please to give me all the intelligence that is in your power. If you take a change of venue, let me know what county you will come to, and when, as near as possible, and what road you will come; for I shall be an adder in the path.

Yes, my dear brethren, God Almighty will deliver you. Fear not, for your redemption draweth near; the day of pour deliverance is at hand.

Dear brethren, I have it in my heart to lay my body in the sand, or deliver you from your bonds; and my mind is intensely fixed on the latter.

Dear brethren, you will be able to judge of the spirit that actuates my breast; for when I realize your sufferings, my heart is like wax before the fire; but when I reflect upon the cause of your afflictions, it is like fire in my bones, and burns against your enemies, and I never can be satisfied, while there is one of them to stand against a wall, or draw a sword, or pull a trigger. My sword has never been sheathed in peace, for the blood of David W. Patten and those who were butchered at

History of the Church April 1839

Haun's Mill, crieth for vengeance from the ground.

Therefore, hear O ye heavens! and write it, O ye recording angels! bear the tidings ye flaming seraphs! that I from this day declare myself the avenger of the blood of those innocent men, and of the innocent cause of Zion, and of her prisoners; and I will not rest until they are as free, who are in prison, as I am.

Your families are all well and in good spirits. May the Lord bless you all. Amen.

Brother Amasa Lyman and Watson Barlow join in saying, Our hearts are as thy heart. Brother Joseph, if my spirit is wrong, for God's sake correct it. Brethren, be of good cheer, for we are determined, as God liveth, to rescue you from that hellish crowd, or die in the furrow. We shall come face foremost.

Alanson Ripley.

N. B.—S. B. Crockett says he has been once driven but not whipped; Brother Brigham Young sends his best respects to you all.

A. R.

Thursday April 11

Letter of Don Carlos Smith to His Brother, Hyrum Smith

Brother Hyrum:

After reading a line from you to myself, and one to father, which awakens all the feelings of tenderness and brotherly affection that one heart is capable of containing, I sit down in haste to answer it. My health and that of my family is good; mother and Lucy have been very sick, but are getting better. Your families are in better health now than at any other period since your confinement.

[Page 314]

Brother Hyrum,

I am in hopes that my letter did not increase your trouble, for I know that your affliction is too great for human nature to bear; and if I did not know that there was a God in heaven, and that His promises are sure and faithful, and that He is your friend in the midst of all your trouble, I would fly to your relief, and either be with you in prison, or see you breathe free air—air too that had not been inhaled and corrupted by a pack of

ruffians, who trample upon virtue and innocence with impunity; and are not even satisfied with the property and blood of the Saints, but must exult over the dead. You both have my prayers, my influence and warmest feelings, with a fixed determination, if it should so be that you should be destroyed, to avenge your blood four fold.

Joseph must excuse me for not writing to him at this time. Give my love to all the prisoners. Write to me as often as you can, and do not be worried about your families. Yours in affliction as well as in peace.

Don C. Smith.

Letter of Agnes Smith to Hyrum and Joseph Smith

Beloved Brothers, Hyrum and Joseph:

By the permit of my companion, I write a line to show that I have not forgotten you; neither do I forget you; for my prayer is to my Heavenly Father for your deliverance. It seems as though the Lord is slow to hear the prayers of the Saints. But the Lord's ways are not like our ways; therefore He can do better than we ourselves. You must be comforted, Brothers Hyrum and Joseph, and look forward for better days. Your little ones are as playful as little lambs; be comforted concerning them, for they are not cast down and sorrowful as we are; their sorrows are only momentary but ours continual.

May the Lord bless, protect, and deliver you from all your enemies and restore you to the bosom of your families, is the prayer of

Agnes M. Smith

To Hyrum and Joseph Smith, Liberty, Missouri

Attempt upon the Life of Stephen Markham

The examination of witnesses was continued, and Elder Markham was permitted to give his testimony. After he had closed, Blakely, one of the guard, came in and said to Markham, that he wanted to speak to him. Brother Markham walked out with him, and around the end of the house when Blakely called out, “——— you———old Mormon; I'll kill you;” and struck at Markham with his fist and then with a club. Markham took the club from him and threw it over the fence.

History of the Church April 1839

[Page 315]

There were ten of the mob who immediately rushed upon Markham to kill him, Colonel William P. Peniston, captain of the guard, being one of the number. But Markham told them he could kill the whole of them at one blow apiece, and drove them off. The court and grand jury stood and saw the affray, and heard the mob threaten Markham's life, by all the oaths they could invent, but they took no cognizance of it.

A "True Bill" Found against the Prisoners

The ten mobbers went home after their guns to shoot Markham, and the grand jury brought in a bill for "murder, treason, burglary, arson, larceny, theft, and stealing," against Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae, Caleb Baldwin, Hyrum Smith and myself.

Meeting of the Committee on Removal

This evening the committee [on removal] assembled at Daniel Shearer's. After prayer by Brother James Newberry, he was ordained an Elder on the recommendation of Elder Heber C. Kimball, under the hands of Hiram Clark and William Huntington.

Elder Kimball reported that Jessie P. Maupin, the thirty-dollar messenger they had sent to us, had returned; that the prisoners were well and in good spirits.

Sale of Jackson County Lands

Brother Rogers who had returned from Jackson county, reported that he had sold all the lands in Jackson. Elder Kimball was requested to attend a meeting of the Daviess county officials tomorrow, and as an individual, mention the case of the committee [on removal] and the brethren generally, and learn their feelings, whether they would protect the brethren from the abuse of the mob, in case they came immediately to drive them out, as they had recently threatened.

[Page 316]

Vision of the Prophet for Markham's safety

During this night the visions of the future were opened to my understanding; when I saw the ways

and means and near approach of my escape from imprisonment, and the danger that my beloved Brother Markham was in. I awoke Brother Markham, and told him if he would rise very early and not wait for the judge and lawyers, as he had contemplated doing, but rise briskly, he would get safe home, almost before he was aware of it; and if he did not the mob would shoot him on the way; and I told him to tell the brethren to be of good cheer, but lose no time in removing from the country.

Escape of Markham

Friday, April 12

This morning Brother Markham arose at dawn of day, and rode rapidly towards Far West where he arrived before nine a. m. The mobbers pursued to shoot him, but did not overtake him.

This day I received the following letter:

Jacob Stollings' Communication to the Prophet

Dear Sir:

Enclosed I send you the receipt which I promised; and if you will pay the necessary attention to it, it will be a benefit to the Church and to me; and I think with a little attention on your part, they can be produced; and any person who will deliver them at any point in the state, so I can get them, I will compensate them well, as I know you feel deeply interested in the welfare of the Church; and when you consider it will add to their character, and look upon it in a proper light, you will spare no pains in assisting me in the recovery of those books.

Yours, etc., in haste,

Jacob Stollings.

*To Joseph Smith, Jun., Diahman.
Gallatin, Daviess County, Missouri,
April 12, 1839*

Know all men by these presents—That I, Jacob Stollings, have this day agreed with Joseph Smith, Jun., to release all members of the Mormon Church, from any and all debts due to me from them for goods sold to them by me at Gallatin during the year 1838, on

History of the Church April 1839

the following condition, viz.: That said Joseph Smith, Jun., return or cause to be returned to me the following books—one ledger, three day books, and one day book of groceries, which was taken from my store in Gallatin when said store was burned. And if said books are returned to me within four months, this shall be a receipt in full, to all intents and purposes, against any debt or debts due from said Mormons to me on said books; but if not returned, this is to be null and void.

[Page 317]

Given under my hand this day and date before written.

*Jacob Stollings
Attest, J. Lynch*

The Prophet's Comments

A curious idea, that I who had been a prisoner many months should be called upon to hunt up lost property, or property most likely destroyed by the mob; but it is no more curious than a thousand other things that have happened; and I feel to do all I can to oblige any of my fellow creatures.

Isaac Galland's Communication to the Quincy Argus

*Commerce, Illinois
April 12, 1839*

Messrs. Editors:

Enclosed I send you a communication from Governor Lucas of Iowa territory. If you think the publication thereof will in any way promote the cause of justice, by vindicating the slandered reputation of the people called "Mormons," from the ridiculous falsehoods which the malice, cupidity and envy of their murderers in Missouri have endeavored to heap upon them, you are respectfully solicited to publish it in the Argus. The testimony of Governor Lucas as to the good moral character of these people, I think will have its deserved influence upon the people of Illinois, in encouraging our citizens in their humane and benevolent exertions to relieve this distressed people, who are now wandering in our neighborhoods without comfortable food, raiment, or a shelter from the pelting storm.

I am, gentlemen, very respectfully,

*Your obedient servant,
Isaac Galland*

Letter of Robert Lucas, Governor of the Territory of Iowa, Respecting the Manner in Which the Saints Might Hope to be Received and Treated in Iowa

*Executive Office
Iowa, Burlington,
March, 1839*

Dear Sir:

On my return to this city, after a few weeks' absence in the interior of the territory, I received your letter of the 25th ultimo, in which you give a short account of the sufferings of the people called Mormons and ask "whether they could be permitted to purchase lands and settle upon them, in the territory of Iowa, and there worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences, secure from oppression," etc.

[Page 318]

In answer to your inquiry, I would say that I know of no authority that can constitutionally deprive them of this right. They are citizens of the United States, and are entitled to all the rights and privileges of other citizens. The 2nd section of the 4th Article of the Constitution of the United States (which all are solemnly bound to support) declares that "the citizens of each state shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens of the several states." This privilege extends in full force to the territories of the United States. The first amendment to the Constitution of the United States, declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The ordinance of Congress of the 13th July, 1787, for the government of the territory northwest of the river Ohio, secures to the citizens of said territory, and the citizens of the states thereafter to be formed therein, certain privileges which were by the late Act of Congress organizing the territory of Iowa, extended to the citizens of this territory.

The first fundamental Article in the Ordinance, which is declared to be forever unalterable, except by common consent, reads as follows, to wit: "No person

History of the Church April 1839

demeaning himself in a peaceable and orderly manner, shall ever be molested on account of his mode of worship or religious sentiment in said territory.”

These principles I trust will ever be adhered to in the territory of Iowa. They make no distinction between religious sects. They extend equal privileges and protection to all; each must rest upon its own merits, and will prosper in proportion to the purity of its principles, and the fruit of holiness and piety produced thereby.

With regard to the peculiar people mentioned in your letter, I know but little. They had a community in the northern part of Ohio for several years; and I have no recollection of ever having heard in that state of any complaints against them for violating the laws of the country. Their religious opinions I consider have nothing to do with our political transactions. They are citizens of the United States, and are entitled to the same political rights and legal protection that other citizens are entitled to.

The foregoing are briefly my views on the subject of your inquiries.

*With sincere respect,
I am your obedient servant,
Robert Lucas*

To Isaac Galland, Esq., Commerce, Illinois

[Page 319]

Saturday, April 13

Elder Markham went to Independence to close the business of the Church in that region.

Activity of the Committee on Removal

Sunday, April 14.

The committee [on removal] in council resolved to send Sisters Fosdick and Meeks, and Brother William Monjar and another family, with Brothers Jones, Burton, and Barlow's teams, which had recently arrived at Quincy.

The committee moved thirty-six families into Tenney's Grove, about twenty-five miles from Far West; and a few men were appointed to chop wood for them, while Brother Turley was to furnish them with meal and meat, until they could be removed to Quincy. The corn was ground at the committee's horse mill, in Far

West. Elder Kimball was obliged to secrete himself in the cornfields during the day, and was in at night counseling the committee and brethren.

The Prophet and Fellow Prisoners Start for Boone county

Monday, April 15

Having procured a change of venue we started for Boone county, and were conducted to that place by a strong guard.

This evening the committee [on removal] met to make arrangements concerning teams and the moving of the few families who yet remained at Far West.

Letter of Elias Higbee to Joseph Smith, Jun., and Fellow Prisoners

Tuesday, Quincy

April 16, 1839

To Joseph Smith, Jun., and others, Prisoners in Liberty or Elsewhere, Greeting:

Dear Brethren In Affliction:

Through the mercy and providence of God, I am here alive, and in tolerable health, as also are all of your families, as far as I know, having heard from them lately, and having seen Sister Emma yesterday.

Brethren, I have sorrow of heart when I think of your great sufferings by that ungodly mob which has spread such desolation and caused so much suffering among us. I often reflect on the scenes which we passed through together; the course we pursued; the counselings we had; the results which followed, when harassed, pressed on every side insulted and abused by that lawless banditti; and I am decidedly of opinion that the hand of the Great God hath controlled the whole business for purposes of His own, which will eventually work out good for the Saints (I mean those who are worthy of the name). I know that your intentions, and the intentions of all the worthy Saints, have been pure, and tending to do good to all men, and to injure no man in person or property, except we were forced to it in defense of our lives.

[Page 320]

Brethren, I am aware that I cannot wholly realize your sufferings; neither can any other person who has

History of the Church April 1839

not experienced the like afflictions; but I doubt not for a moment, neither have I ever doubted for a moment, that the same God which delivered me from their grasp (though narrowly) will deliver you. I staid near Far West for about three weeks, being hunted by them almost every day; and as I learned, they did not intend to give me the chance of a trial, but put an end to me forthwith, I went for my horse and left the wicked clan and came off. Francis 3 is with his uncle in Ohio. I received a letter lately from him; he is strong in the faith. I now live in the Big-Neck-Prairie, on the same farm with President Rigdon, who is here with me and waiting for me with his riding dress on, to go home. So I must necessarily close, praying God to speedily deliver you, and bless you.

*From yours in the bonds of the everlasting love,
Elias Higbee.*

The Prophet's Reasons for Escaping from the Officers of the Law

This evening our guard got intoxicated. We thought it a favorable opportunity to make our escape; knowing that the only object of our enemies was our destruction; and likewise knowing that a number of our brethren had been massacred by them on Shoal Creek, amongst whom were two children; and that they sought every opportunity to abuse others who were left in that state; and that they were never brought to an account for their barbarous proceedings, which were winked at and encouraged by those in authority. We thought that it was necessary for us, inasmuch as we loved our lives, and did not wish to die by the hand of murderers and assassins; and inasmuch as we loved our families and friends, to deliver ourselves from our enemies, and from that land of tyranny and oppression, and again take our stand among a people in whose bosoms dwell those feelings of republicanism and liberty which gave rise to our nation: feelings which the inhabitants of the State of Missouri were strangers to. Accordingly, we took advantage of the situation of our guard and departed, and that night we traveled a considerable distance. 4

[Page 322]

Wednesday, April 17

We prosecuted our journey towards Illinois, keeping off from the main road as much as possible, which impeded our progress.

Elder Kimball's Warning to the Committee

Thursday, April 18

This morning Elder Kimball went into the committee room and told the committee [on removal] to wind up their affairs and be off, or their lives would be taken. Stephen Markham had gone over the Missouri river on business. Elders Turley and Shearer were at Far West.

Attack on Theodore Turley

Twelve men went to Elder Turley's with loaded rifles to shoot him. They broke seventeen clocks into match wood. They broke tables, smashed in the windows; while Bogart (the county judge) looked on and laughed. One Whitaker threw iron pots at Turley, one of which hit him on the shoulder, at which Whitaker jumped and laughed like a madman. The mob shot down cows while the girls were milking them. The mob threatened to send the committee to hell jumping," and "put daylight through them."

The Mob's Assault on Elder Kimball

The same day, previous to the breaking of the clocks, some of the same company met Elder Kimball on the public square in Far West, and asked him if he was a "———Mormon;" he replied, "I am a Mormon." "Well,——————you, we'll blow your brains out, you——————Mormon," and tried to ride over him with their horses. This was in the presence of Elias Smith, Theodore Turley, and others of the committee.

The Mob Loots Far West

The brethren gathered up what they could and left Far West in one hour; and the mob staid until they left, then plundered thousands of dollars' worth of property which had been left by the exiled brethren and sisters to help the poor to remove.

One mobber rode up, and finding no convenient place to fasten his horse, shot a cow that was standing near, and while the poor animal was yet struggling in death, he cut a strip of her hide from her nose to the

History of the Church April 1839

tip of her tail, this he tied round a stump, to which he fastened his halter.

[Page 323]

The Loss of Records, Accounts, etc.

During the commotion this day, a great portion of the records of the committee, accounts, history, etc., were destroyed or lost, so that but few definite items can be registered in their place.

Flight of the Saints via Missouri River

When the Saints commenced removing from Far West they shipped as many families and goods as possible at Richmond to go down the Missouri river to Quincy, Illinois. This mission was in charge of Elder Levi Richards and Reuben Hedlock, who were appointed by the committee.

I continued on my journey with my brethren towards Quincy.

Assistance for the Poor

Elder David W. Rogers made a donation of money to remove the poor from Missouri.

The brethren and sisters who had arrived in Illinois were beginning to write of their sufferings and losses in Missouri. The statement of Sister Amanda Smith, written by her own hand, I will here insert:

Narrative of Amanda Smith Respecting the Massacre at Haun's Mills

To whom this may come:

I do hereby certify that my husband, Warren Smith, in company with several other families, was moving [in 1838] from Ohio to Missouri. We came to Caldwell county. Whilst we were traveling, minding our own business, we were stopped by a mob; they told us that if we went another step, they would kill us all. They took our guns from us (as we were going into a new country, we took guns along with us); they took us back five miles, placed a guard around us, kept us three days, and then let us go.

I thought—is this our boasted land of liberty? for some said we must deny our faith, or they would kill us; others said, we should die at any rate.

The names of this mob, or the heads, were Thomas O'Brien, county clerk; Jefferson Brien, William Ewell, Esq., and James Austin, all of Livingston county. After they let us go we traveled ten miles, came to a small town composed of one grist mill, one saw mill, and eight or ten houses belonging to our brethren; there we stopped for the night.

[Page 324]

A little before sunset a mob of three hundred came upon us. The men hallooed for the women and children to run for the woods; and they ran into an old blacksmith's shop, for they feared, if we all ran together, they would rush upon us and kill the women and children. The mob fired before we had time to start from our camp. Our men took off their hats and swung them, and cried "quarters" until they were shot. The mob paid no attention to their cries nor entreaties, but fired alternately.

I took my little girls, my boy I could not find, and started for the woods. The mob encircled us on all sides but the brook. I ran down the bank, across the mill-pond on a plank, up the hill into the bushes. The bullets whistled around me all the way like hail, and cut down the bushes on all sides of us. One girl was wounded by my side, and fell over a log, and her clothes hung across the log; and they shot at them, expecting they were hitting her; and our people afterwards cut out of that log twenty bullets.

I sat down and witnessed the dreadful scene. When they had done firing, they began to howl, and one would have thought that all the infernals had come from the lower regions. They plundered the principal part of our goods, took our horses and wagons, and ran off howling like demons.

I came down to view the awful sight. Oh horrible! My husband, and one son ten years old, lay lifeless upon the ground, and one son seven years old, wounded very badly. The ground was covered with the dead. These little boys crept under the bellows in the shop; one little boy of ten years had three wounds in him; he lived five weeks and died; he was not mine.

Realize for a moment the scene! It was sunset; nothing but horror and distress; the dogs filled with

History of the Church April 1839

rage, howling over their dead masters; the cattle caught the scent of the innocent blood, and bellowed; a dozen helpless widows, thirty or forty fatherless children, crying and moaning for the loss of their fathers and husbands; the groans of the wounded and dying were enough to have melted the heart of anything but a Missouri mob.

There were fifteen dead, and ten wounded: two died the next day. There were no men, or not enough to bury the dead; so they were thrown into a dry well and covered with dirt. The next day the mob came back. They told us we must leave the state forthwith, or be killed. It was cold weather, and they had our teams and clothes, our husbands were dead or wounded. I told them they might kill me and my children, and welcome. They sent word to us from time to time that if we did not leave the state, they would come and kill us. We had little prayer meetings. They said if we did not stop them they would kill every man, woman and child. We had spelling schools for our little children; they said if we did not stop them they would kill every man, woman and child. We did our own milking, got our own wood; no man to help us.

[Page 325]

I started the first of February for Illinois, without money, (mob all the way), drove my own team, slept out of doors. I had five small children; we suffered hunger, fatigue and cold; for what? For our religion, where, in a boasted land of liberty, "Deny your faith or die," was the cry.

I will mention some of the names of the heads of the mob: two brothers by the name of Comstock, William Mann, Benjamin Ashley, Robert White, one by the name of Rogers, who took an old scythe and cut an old white-headed man all to pieces. [Thomas McBride.]

I wish further also to state, that when the mob came upon us (as I was told by one of them afterwards), their intention was to kill everything belonging to us, that had life; and that after our men were shot down by them, they went around and shot all the dead men over again, to make sure of their death.

I now leave it with this Honorable Government [the United States] to say what my damages may be, or what they would be willing to see their wives and children

slaughtered for, as I have seen my husband, son and others.

I lost in property by the mob—to goods stolen, fifty dollars; one pocketbook, and fifty dollars cash notes; damage of horses and time, one hundred dollars; one gun, ten dollars; in short, my all. Whole damages are more than the State of Missouri is worth.

Written by my own hand, this 18th day of April, 1839.

Amanda Smith.

Quincy, Adams County, Illinois

Thus are the cries of the widows and the fatherless ascending to heaven. How long, O Lord, wilt thou not avenge the blood of the Saints? 5

Friday, April 19

Elders Turley and Clark had traveled but a few miles from Far West when an axle-tree broke, and Brother Clark had to go to Richmond after some boxes, which delayed them some days.

[Page 326]

Saturday, April 20

The last of the Saints left Far West.

Sunday, April 21

I had still continued my journey.

Chapter 21 Notes

1. See Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 118.
2. It must be remembered that this letter was written under very great stress of feeling, and that accounts for its general harshness. It should also be remembered that as Edmund Burke said a long while ago—and it is now accepted as a trueism—"It is not fair to judge of the temper or disposition of any man, or any set of men when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct or their expressions in a state of disturbance and irritation."
3. This refers to Francis M. Higbee, son of Elias Higbee.
4. Undoubtedly the guards, and for matter of that Judge Birch himself, and also the ex-sheriff of Daviess county, William Bowman, connived at the escape of the prisoners. The story of the escape was

History of the Church April 1839

afterwards told in detail by Hyrum Smith, as follows: “They got us a change of venue from Daviess to Boone county, and a mittimus was made out by the pretended Judge Birch, without date, name, or place. They [the court officials at Gallatin] fitted us out with a two horse wagon, a horse and four men, besides the sheriff, to be our guard. There were five of us that started from Gallatin, the sun about two hours high, and went as far as Diahman that evening, and stayed till morning. There we bought two horses of the guard, and paid for one of them in our clothing which we had with us, and for the other we gave our note. We went down that day as far as Judge Morin’s, a distance of some four or five miles. There we stayed until the next morning, when we started on our journey to Boone county, and traveled on the road about twenty miles distance. There we bought a jug of whisky, with which we treated the company, and while there the sheriff showed us the mittimus before referred to, without date or signature, and said that Judge Birch told him never to carry us to Boone county, and never to show the mittimus; and, said he, I shall take good drink of grog, and go to bed, and you may do as you have a mind to. Three others of the guards drank pretty freely of the whisky, sweetened with honey. They also went to bed, and were soon asleep and the other guard went along with us, and helped to saddle the horses. Two of us mounted the horses, and the other three started on foot, and we took our change of venue for the State of Illinois; and in the course of nine or ten days arrived safely at Quincy, Adams county, where we found our families in a state of poverty, although in good health.” (From the affidavit of Hyrum Smith before the municipal court of Nauvoo, given July 1, 1843.)

The name of the sheriff in charge of the prisoners was William Morgan, and upon his return to Gallatin both he and the ex-sheriff, William Bowman, who was suspected of complicity in the escape of the prisoners, received harsh treatment at the hands of the citizens of that place. The story is told in the “History of Daviess County,” published by Birdsall & Dean, 1882, as follows: “The prison-

ers took change of venue to Boone county, and the Daviess county officers started with the prisoners to their destination in Boone county. Some of the prisoners having no horses, William Bowman, the first sheriff of Daviess county, [and now ex-sheriff], furnished the prisoners three horses, and they left in charge of William Morgan, the sheriff of the county. The sheriff alone returned on horseback, the guard who accompanied him returning on foot, or riding and tying by turns. The sheriff reported that the prisoners had all escaped in the night, taking the horses with them, and that a search made for them proved unavailing. The people of Gallatin were greatly exercised, and they disgraced themselves by very ruffianly conduct. They rode the sheriff on a rail, and Bowman was dragged over the square by the hair of the head. The men guilty of these dastardly acts, accused sheriff Morgan and ex-Sheriff Bowman of complicity in the escape of the Mormon leaders; that Bowman furnished the horses, and that Morgan allowed them to escape, and both got well paid for their treachery. The truth of history compels us to state that the charges were never sustained by any evidence adduced by the persons who committed this flagrant act of mob law.”—See above named history, page 206.

5. The number of killed and wounded in the tragedy at Haun’s Mills, [according to information supplied by the late Church Historian, Franklin D. Richards, to the “National Historical Company,” St. Louis, Missouri, which issued a history of Caldwell and Livingston counties, in 1886], are seventeen of the former and thirteen of the latter; and their names are given as follows:

Killed

Thomas McBride, Simon Cox, Levi N. Merrick, Hiram Abbott, Elias Benner, John York, Josiah Fuller, John Lee, Benjamin Lewis, John Myers, Alexander Campbell, Warren Smith, George S. Richards, Sardius Smith, aged 10, William Napier, Charles Merrick, aged 9, Augustine Harner.

Wounded

Isaac Laney, Jacob Haun, (Founder of the Mills),

History of the Church April 1839

Nathan K. Knight, Jacob Foutz, Jacob Myers, Jacob Potts, George Myers, Charles Jimison, William Yokum, John Walker, Tarlton Lewis, Alma Smith, aged 7 years. A young Mormon woman, Miss Mary Stedwell, was shot through the hand, as she was running to the woods.

Following this statement concerning the killed and wounded among the Saints, the history above referred to, also says: “The militia, or Jennings’ men, had but three men wounded, and none killed. John Renfrow, now [1886] living in Ray County, had a thumb shot off. Allen England, a Daviess county man, was severely wounded in the thigh, and the other wounded man was named Hart.

“Dies irae! What a woeful day this had been to Haun’s Mills! What a pitiful scene was there when the militia rode away upon the conclusion of their bloody work! The wounded men had been given no attention, and the bodies of the slain were left to fester and putrify in the Indian summer temperature, warm and mellowing. The widows and orphans of the dead came timidly and warily forth from their hiding places as soon as the troops left, and as they recognized one a husband, another a father, another a son, another a brother among the bloody corpses, the wailings of grief and terror that went up were pitiful and agonizing. All that night they were alone with their dead. A return visit of Jennings’ men to complete the work of ‘extermination’ had been threatened and was expected. Verily, the experience of the poor survivors of the Haun’s Mills affair was terrible; no wonder that they long remember it.”—History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri. National Historical Company, 1886.

Volume 3 Chapter 22

[Page 327]

Chapter 22 The Prophet’s Account of his Experiences in Missouri Fulfillment Of A Prophetic Revelation Complete Exodus Of The Saints From Missouri

The Prophet and Companions Continue their Flight Monday, April 22

We continued on our journey, both by night and by day; and after suffering much fatigue and hunger, I arrived in Quincy, Illinois, amidst the congratulations of my friends, and the embraces of my family, whom I found as well as could be expected, considering what they had been called to endure. Before leaving Missouri I had paid the lawyers at Richmond thirty-four thousand dollars in cash, lands, etc.; one lot which I let them have, in Jackson county, for seven thousand dollars, they were soon offered ten thousand dollars for it, but would not accept it. For other vexatious suits which I had to contend against the few months I was in this state, I paid lawyers’ fees to the amount of about sixteen thousand dollars, making in all about fifty thousand dollars, for which I received very little in return; for sometimes they were afraid to act on account of the mob, and sometimes they were so drunk as to incapacitate them for business. But there were a few honorable exceptions.

The Leading Characters in the Persecutions of the Saints

Among those who have been the chief instruments and leading characters in the cruel persecutions against the Church of Latter-day Saints, the following stand conspicuous, viz.: Generals Clark, Wilson and Lucas, Colonel Price, and Cornelius Gillium; Captain Bogart also, whose zeal in the cause of oppression and injustice was unequalled, and whose delight has been to rob, murder, and spread devastation among the Saints. He stole a valuable horse, saddle, and bridle from me, which cost two hundred dollars, and then sold the same to General Wilson. On understanding this, I applied to General Wilson for the horse, who assured me, upon the honor of a gentleman and an officer, that I should have the horse returned to me; but this promise has not been fulfilled.

[Page 328]

Part of Governor Boggs in the Persecutions

History of the Church April 1839

All the threats, murders, and robberies, which these officers have been guilty of, are entirely overlooked by the executive of the state; who, to hide his own iniquity, must of course shield and protect those whom he employed to carry into effect his murderous purposes.

Treatment of the Prophet by the Mob

I was in their hands, as a prisoner, about six months; but notwithstanding their determination to destroy me, with the rest of my brethren who were with me, and although at three different times (as I was informed) we were sentenced to be shot, without the least shadow of law (as we were not military men), and had the time and place appointed for that purpose, yet through the mercy of God, in answer to the prayers of the Saints, I have been preserved and delivered out of their hands, and can again enjoy the society of my friends and brethren, whom I love, and to whom I feel united in bonds that are stronger than death; and in a state where I believe the laws are respected, and whose citizens are humane and charitable.

Calm Assurance of the Prophet Respecting his own Safety

During the time I was in the hands of my enemies, 50 must say, that although I felt great anxiety respecting my family and friends, who were so inhumanly treated and abused, and who had to mourn the loss of their husbands and children who had been slain, and, after having been robbed of nearly all that they possessed, were driven from their homes, and forced to wander as strangers in a strange country, in order that they might save themselves and their little ones from the destruction they were threatened with in Missouri, yet as far as I was concerned, I felt perfectly calm, and resigned to the will of my Heavenly Father. I knew my innocence as well as that of the Saints, and that we had done nothing to deserve such treatment from the hands of our oppressors. Consequently, I could look to that God who has the lives of all men in His hands, and who had saved me frequently from the gates of death, for deliverance; and notwithstanding that every avenue of escape seemed to be entirely closed, and death stared me in the face, and that my destruction was

determined upon, as far as man was concerned, yet, from my first entrance into the camp, I felt an assurance that I, with my brethren and our families, should be delivered. Yes, that still small voice, which has so often whispered consolation to my soul, in the depths of sorrow and distress, bade me be of good cheer, and promised deliverance, which gave me great comfort. I And although the heathen raged, and the people imagined vain things, yet the Lord of Hosts, the God of Jacob was my refuge; and when I cried unto Him in the day of trouble, He delivered me; for which I call upon my soul, and all that is within me, to bless and praise His holy name. For although I was "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

[Page 329]

Department of the Saints

The conduct of the Saints, under their accumulated wrongs and sufferings, has been praiseworthy; their courage in defending their brethren from the ravages of the mobs; their attachment to the cause of truth, under circumstances the most trying and distressing which humanity can possibly endure; their love to each other; their readiness to afford assistance to me and my brethren who were confined in a dungeon; their sacrifices in leaving Missouri, and assisting the poor widows and orphans, and securing them houses in a more hospitable land; all conspire to raise them in the estimation of all good and virtuous men, and has secured them the favor and approbation of Jehovah, and a name as imperishable as eternity. And their virtuous deeds and heroic actions, while in defense of truth and their brethren, will be fresh and blooming when the names of their oppressors shall be either entirely forgotten, or only remembered for their barbarity and cruelty.

[Page 330]

Their attention and affection to me, while in prison, will ever be remembered by me; and when I have seen them thrust away and abused by the jailer and guard, when they came to do any kind offices, and to cheer

History of the Church April 1839

our minds while we were in the gloomy prison-house, gave me feelings which I cannot describe; while those who wished to insult and abuse us by their threats and blasphemous language, were applauded, and had every encouragement given them.

Sure Reward of the Faithful Saints

However, thank God, we have been delivered. And although some of our beloved brethren have had to seal their testimony with their blood, and have died martyrs to the cause of truth—

Short though bitter was their pain,
Everlasting is their joy.

Let us not sorrow as “those without hope;” the time is fast approaching when we shall see them again and rejoice together, without being afraid of wicked men. Yes, those who have slept in Christ, shall He bring with Him, when He shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and admired by all those who believe, but to take vengeance upon His enemies and all those who obey not the Gospel.

At that time the hearts of the widows and fatherless shall be comforted, and every tear shall be wiped from their faces. The trials they have had to pass through shall work together for their good, and prepare them for the society of those who have come up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

[Page 331]

The Saints not to Marvel at Persecution

Marvel not, then, if you are persecuted; but remember the words of the Savior: “The servant is not above his Lord; if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also;” and that all the afflictions through which the Saints have to pass, are the fulfillment of the words of the Prophets which have spoken since the world began.

We shall therefore do well to discern the signs of the times as we pass along, that the day of the Lord may not “overtake us as a thief in the night.” Afflictions, persecutions, imprisonments, and death, we must expect, according to the scriptures, which tell us that the blood of those whose souls were under the

altar could not be avenged on them that dwell on the earth, until their brethren should be slain as they were.

The Crime of Missouri to be Viewed in the Light of the Civilized Age in which it was Committed

If these transactions had taken place among barbarians, under the authority of a despot, or in a nation where a certain religion is established according to law, and all others proscribed, then there might have been some shadow of defense offered. But can we realize that in a land which is the cradle of liberty and equal rights, and where the voice of the conquerors who had vanquished our foes had scarcely died away upon our ears, where we frequently mingled with those who had stood amidst “the battle and the breeze,” and whose arms have been nerved in the defense of their country and liberty, whose institutions are the theme of philosophers and poets, and held up to the admiration of the whole civilized world—in the midst of all these scenes, with which we were surrounded, a persecution the most unwarrantable was commenced, and a tragedy the most dreadful was enacted, by a large portion of the inhabitants of one of those free and sovereign states which comprise this vast Republic; and a deadly blow was struck at the institutions for which our fathers had fought many a hard battle, and for which many a patriot had shed his blood. Suddenly was heard, amidst the voice of joy and gratitude for our national liberty, the voice of mourning, lamentation and woe. Yes! in this land, a mob, regardless of those laws for which so much blood had been spilled, dead to every feeling of virtue and patriotism which animated the bosom of freemen, fell upon a people whose religious faith was different from their own, and not only destroyed their homes, drove them away, and carried off their property but murdered many a free-born son of America—a tragedy which has no parallel in modern, and hardly in ancient, times; even the face of the red man would be ready to turn pale at the recital of it. It would have been some consolation, if the authorities of the state had been innocent in this affair; but they are involved in the guilt thereof, and the blood of innocence, even of children, cry for vengeance upon them.

[Page 332]

History of the Church April 1839

The Appeal of the Prophet to the People of the United States

I ask the citizens of this Republic whether such a state of things is to be suffered to pass unnoticed, and the hearts of widows, orphans, and patriots to be broken, and their wrongs left without redress? No! I invoke the genius of our Constitution. I appeal to the patriotism of Americans to stop this unlawful and unholy procedure; and pray that God may defend this nation from the dreadful effects of such outrages.

Is there no virtue in the body politic? Will not the people rise up in their majesty, and with that promptitude and zeal which are so characteristic of them, discountenance such proceedings, by bringing the offenders to that punishment which they so richly deserve, and save the nation from that disgrace and ultimate ruin, which otherwise must inevitably fall upon it?

Pursuit of Elder Markham

Elder Markham had closed his business in Jackson county and returned to Far West, having been chased as far as the river by the mob on horses at full speed, for the purpose of shooting him. Brother Markham tarried in and near Far West until the 24th of April.

[Page 333]

On my arrival at Quincy I found the brethren had been diligent in preparing for an investigation of their wrongs in Missouri, as the following letters will show.

Letter of Governor Lucas of Iowa to Elder Rigdon. Burlington, Iowa Territory, April 22, 1839

Dear Sir:

I herewith enclose two letters, one addressed to the President of the United States, and one to Governor Shannon, of Ohio. As the object sought by you is an investigation into the facts connected with your misfortunes, I have thought it the most prudent course to refrain from an expression of an individual opinion in the matter, relative to the merits or demerits of the controversy. I sincerely hope that you may succeed in obtaining a general investigation into the cause and

extent of your sufferings, and that you may obtain from the government that attention which is your due as citizens of the United States.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,
Robert Lucas
Doctor Sidney Rigdon

Letter of Governor Lucas to President Martin Van Buren Respecting the Latter-day Saints Burlington, Iowa Territory, April 22, 1839

To His Excellency Martin Van Buren President of the United States

Sir:

I have the honor to introduce to your acquaintance, the bearer, Doctor Sidney Rigdon, who was for many years a citizen of the State of Ohio, and a firm supporter of the administration of the General Government.

Doctor Rigdon visits Washington (as I am informed) as the representative of a community of people called Mormons, to solicit from the Government of the United States, an investigation into the cause that led to their expulsion from the State of Missouri: together with the various circumstances connected with that extraordinary affair.

I think it due to that people to state, that they had for a number of years a community established in Ohio, and that while in that state they were (as far as I ever heard) believed to be an industrious, inoffensive people; and I have no recollection of having ever heard of any of them being charged in that state as violators of the laws.

[Page 334]

With sincere respect
I am your obedient servant,
Robert Lucas

Letter of Governor Lucas to the Governor of Ohio Introducing President Rigdon Burlington, Iowa Territory, April 22, 1839

History of the Church April 1839

To His Excellency Wilson Shannon, Governor of the State of Ohio

Sir:

I have the honor to introduce to your acquaintance, Doctor Sidney Rigdon, who was for many years a citizen of Ohio. Doctor Rigdon wishes to obtain from the General Government of the United States, an investigation into the causes that led to the expulsion of the people called Mormons from the State of Missouri; together with all the facts connected with that extraordinary affair. This investigation, it appears to me, is due them as citizens of the United States, as well as to the nation at large.

Any assistance that you can render the Doctor, towards accomplishing that desirable object, will be gratefully received and duly appreciated by your sincere friend and humble servant,

Robert Lucas

Letter of W. W. Phelps to John P. Greene. Far West, Missouri, April 23, 1839

Sir:

The summit end of Mr. Benson's mill-dam was carried away by the late freshet, and, unless repaired, it will all go the next.

The committee have gone, and if Father Smith would send me a power of attorney, in connection with Mr. Benson's and Corrill's, I have a chance to sell it before it is all lost. Maybe I might save the old gentleman something, which I promised Hyrum I would do if possible, because they have now need. Will you have them do so?

W. W. Phelps

To John P. Greene Quincy, Illinois

All this day I spent in greeting and receiving visits from my brethren and friends, and truly it was a joyful time.

Parley P. Pratt et al. Before the Grand Jury at Richmond

Wednesday, April 24

Elder Parley P. Pratt and his fellow prisoners were

brought before the grand jury of Ray county at Richmond, and Darwin Chase and Norman Shearer were dismissed, after being imprisoned about six months. Mrs. Morris Phelps, who had been with her husband in prison some days, hoping he would be released, now parted from him, and, with her little infant, started for Illinois. The number of prisoners at Richmond was now reduced to four. King Follett having been added about the middle of April: he was dragged from his distressed family just as they were leaving the state. Thus of all the prisoners which were taken at an expense of two hundred thousand dollars, only two of the original ones who belonged to the Church, now remained (Luman Gibbs having denied the faith to try to save his life); these were Morris Phelps and Parley P. Pratt. All who were let to bail were banished from the state, together with those who bailed them.

[Page 335]

Thus none are like to have a trial by law but Brothers Pratt and Phelps, and they are without friends or witnesses in the state.

The Twelve en route for Far West

Elders Clark and Turley met Alpheus Cutler, Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, George A. Smith, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, John E. Page, Daniel Shearer, and others, going up from Quincy to Far West, to fulfill the revelation on the 26th of April, and Clark and Turley turned and went back with them.

Elder Markham visited at Tenney's Grove

This evening I met the Church in council.

Minutes of a Council Meeting held at Quincy, Illinois

Minutes of a council held in Quincy on the 24th day of April, A. D. 1839, when President Joseph Smith, Jun., was called to the chair, and Brother Alanson Ripley chosen Clerk.

After prayer by the chairman, Elder John P. Greene arose and explained the object of the meeting. A document intended for publication was handed in, touching certain things relative to disorderly persons, who have

History of the Church April 1839

represented or may represent themselves as belonging to our Church; which document was approved by the council. After which it was

[Page 336]

Resolved first: That President Joseph Smith, Jun., Bishop Knight, and Brother Alanson Ripley, visit Iowa Territory immediately, for the purpose of making a location for the Church.

Resolved second: That the advice of the conference to the brethren in general is, that as many of them as are able, move north to Commerce, as soon as they possibly can.

Resolved third: That all the prisoners be received into fellowship.

Resolved fourth: That Brother Mulholland be appointed clerk pro tem.

Resolved fifth: That Father Smith's case relative to his circumstances, be referred to the Bishops.

Resolved sixth: That Brother Rogers receive some money to remunerate him for his services in transacting business for the Church in Missouri.

Alanson Ripley, Clerk.

Seeking a New Location

Thursday, April 25

I accompanied the committee to Iowa to select a location for the Saints. Elder Markham returned from Tenney's Grove to Far West, waiting the arrival of the brethren from Quincy.

Arrival of the Twelve at Far West

Friday, April 26

Early this morning, soon after midnight, the brethren arrived at Far West, and proceeded to transact the business of their mission according to the following minutes:

Minutes of the Meeting of the Twelve Apostles at Far West, April 26, 1839.

At a conference held at Far West by the Twelve, High Priests, Elders, and Priests, on the 26th day of April, 1839, the following resolution was adopted.

Resolved: That the following persons be no more fellowshipped in the Church of Jesus Christ of Lat-

ter-day Saints, but excommunicated from the same, viz.; Isaac Russell, Mary Russell, John Goodson and wife, Jacob Scott, Sen., and wife, Isaac Scott, Jacob Scott, Jun., Ann Scott, Sister Walton, Robert Walton, Sister Cavanaugh, Ann Wanlass, William Dawson, Jun., and wife, William Dawson, Sen., and wife, George Nelson, Joseph Nelson and wife and mother, William Warnock and wife, Jonathan Maynard, Nelson Maynard, George Miller, John Grigg and wife, Luman Gibbs, Simeon Gardner, and Freeborn Gardner.

The council then proceeded to the building spot of the Lord's House; when the following business was transacted: Part of a hymn was sung, on the mission of the Twelve.

[Page 337]

Elder Alpheus Cutler, the master workman of the house, then recommenced laying the foundation of the Lord's House, agreeably to revelation, by rolling up a large stone near the southeast corner.

The following of the Twelve were present: Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, John E. Page, and John Taylor, who proceeded to ordain Wilford Woodruff, 2 and George A. Smith, (who had been previously nominated by the First Presidency, accepted by the Twelve, and acknowledged by the Church), to the office of Apostles and members of the quorum of the Twelve, to fill the places of those who are fallen. Darwin Chase and Norman Shearer (who had just been liberated from the Richmond prison, where they had been confined for the cause of Jesus Christ) were then ordained to the office of the Seventies.

[Page 338]

The Twelve then offered up vocal prayer in the following order; Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, John E. Page, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and George A. Smith. 3 After which we sung Adam-on-di-Ahman, and then the Twelve took their leave of the following Saints, agreeable to the revelation, viz.: Alpheus Cutler, Elias Smith, Norman Shearer, William Burton, Stephen Markham, Shadrach Roundy, William O. Clark, John W. Clark, Hezekiah Peck, Darwin Chase, Richard Howard, Mary Ann Peck, Artimesa

History of the Church April 1839

Grainger, Martha Peck, Sarah Grainger, Theodore Turley, Hyrum Clark, and Daniel Shearer.

[Page 339]

Elder Alpheus Cutler then placed the stone before alluded to in its regular position, after which, in consequence of the peculiar situation of the Saints, he thought it wisdom to adjourn until some future time, when the Lord shall open the way; expressing his determination then to proceed with the building; whereupon the conference adjourned.

Brigham Young, President.
John Taylor, Clerk

The Revelation of April 8, 1838, Fulfilled

Thus was fulfilled a revelation of July 8, 1838, which our enemies had said could not be fulfilled, as no "Mormon" would be permitted to be in the state.

As the Saints were passing away from the meeting, Brother Turley said to Elders Page and Woodruff,

"Stop a bit, while I bid Isaac Russell good bye;" and knocking at the door, called Brother Russell.

His wife answered, "Come in, it is Brother Turley."

Russell replied, "It is not; he left here two weeks ago;" and appeared quite alarmed; but on finding it was Brother Turley, asked him to sit down;

but the latter replied, "I cannot, I shall lose my company."

"Who is your company?" enquired Russell.

"The Twelve."

"The Twelve!"

"Yes, don't you know that this is the twenty-sixth, and the day the Twelve were to take leave of their friends on the foundation of the Lord's House, to go to the islands of the sea? The revelation is now fulfilled, and I am going with them."

Russell was speechless, and Turley bid him farewell.

[Page 340]

The brethren immediately returned to Quincy taking with them the families from Tenney's Grove

Chapter 22 Notes

1. See the prediction of the Prophet on the safety of himself and fellow prisoners, this volume, p. 200, note.

2. Wilford Woodruff was born March 1, 1807, at Farmington (now called Avon), Hartford County, Connecticut. He was the son of Apehek and Beulah Thompson Woodruff. His father, his grandfather, Eldad Woodruff, and his great-grandfather, Josiah Woodruff, were men of strong constitutions, and were noted for their arduous manual labors. His great-grandfather was nearly one hundred years old when he died, and was able to work until shortly before his decease. At an early age Wilfor assisted his father on the Farmington mills, and when 20 years of age, took charge of a flouring mill belonging to his aunt, Helen Wheeler, holding the position of manger for three years, when he was placed in charge of the Collins flouring mills at South Canton, Connecticut, and subsequently of the flouring mill owned by Richard B. Cowles, of New Hartford, Connecticut. In the spring of 1832 in company with his brother Azmon Woodruff, he went to Richland, Oswego county, New York, purchased a farm and sawmill, and settled down to business on his own account. On December 29, 1833, he and his brother Azmon heard the Gospel preached by Elders Zera Pulsipher and Elijah Cheney, and they both believed at once, entertained the Elders, offered themselves for baptism, read the Book of Mormon, and received the divine testimony of its truth. He was baptized and confirmed by Elder Zera Pulsipher, December 31, 1833. At a very early age Wilford Woodruff was imbued with religious sentiments, but never allied himself with any of the various sects. He received much information from Robert Mason, who resided at Simsbury, Connecticut, and was called "the old Prophet Mason." He taught that no man had authority to administer in the things of God without revelation from God; that the modern religious societies were without that authority; that the time would come when the true Church would be established with all its gifts and graces and manifestations, and that the same blessings enjoyed in the early Christian Church could be obtained in this age through faith. This led the youthful Wilford to hold aloof from the churches of the day, and to desire and pray for the coming of an Apostle or other inspired man to show the way of life. For three years previous to receiving the everlasting Gospel, he was impressed

History of the Church

April 1839

with the conviction that God was about to set up His Church and kingdom on the earth in the last days, and for the last time, hence, he was prepared to receive the truth when it was presented to him by the Elders. On January 2, 1834, he was ordained a Teacher, and on February 1st, being visited by Elder Parley P. Pratt, he was instructed to prepare himself to join the body of the Church at Kirtland. He immediately commenced to settle up his business, and started with wagon and horses, and arrived in Kirtland April 25, 1834. There he met with the Prophet Joseph Smith, and many leading Elders, and received much light and knowledge. A week later he went to New Portage, where he joined the company of volunteers which was organized by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and known as "Zion's Camp," to go into Missouri for the relief of the suffering Saints in that state. He remained with the camp through all its travels and trials, until it was dispersed in Clay county, Missouri. * * * At a meeting of the High Council in Lyman Wight's house, November 5, 1834, Brother Woodruff was ordained a Priest by Elder Simeon Carter, and was shortly afterwards sent on a mission to the Southern States. * * * On April 13, 1837, he married Phebe W. Carter. * * * In July of the same year, when enroute for a mission to the Fox Islands, he preached at Farmington, Connecticut, and converted several members of his father's house. In August he arrived in Fox Islands. (For an account of his success in that mission see volume 2, page 507, and note). In July, 1838, he again visited Farmington, Connecticut, and resumed his labors in the ministry, succeeding in converting his father and step-mother; his sister Eunice, and several other relatives. Meantime, he had been called by revelation (see D&C 118) to fill a vacancy in the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and was ordained under the circumstances given in the minutes of the meeting of the Twelve Apostles at Far West, April 26, 1839. (The foregoing account of Wilford Woodruff's life is taken mainly from a sketch written by Franklin D. Richards, historian of the Church, at the request of Wilford Woodruff.)

3. Following is the prophet's account of George A. Smith:

"George A. Smith, son of John and Clarissa Smith, was born June 26, 1817, in Potsdam, St. Lawrence county, New York. When nine years old he received a blow on the head which deprived him of his senses about three weeks. Five noted physicians decided that he must be trepanned, or he would not recover. His father dismissed them on this decision, believing that God would heal his son; and he firmly believes that He did heal him in answer to the prayer of faith. He was early trained by his parents, who were Presbyterians, to religious habits, and to a regular attendance in the Sabbath school. Hence he had early and anxious desires to know the way of life; but was not satisfied with the sects.

"In the summer of 1830, when my father and my brother Don Carlos visited relatives in St. Lawrence county, George A. became convinced of the truth of the Book of Mormon, and from that time defended the cause against those who opposed it.

"His mother was baptized in August, 1831. His father was baptized on the ninth of January, 1832, and ordained an Elder. He had been given up by the doctors to die of consumption. The weather was extremely cold, and the ice had to be cut. From that time he gained health and strength. George A. was baptized on the 10th of September, 1832, and on the 1st of May, 1833, his father and family took leave of their old home and removed to Kirtland, Ohio. George A. spent the season in laboring on the Temple, although much afflicted with inflammation of the eyes.

"On the 5th of May, 1834, he started for Zion, in the camp, and acted his part well as my armor-bearer although still much afflicted with sore eyes. On the twenty-eighth he was attacked by the cholera, but was delivered by faith. He was ordained into the first Seventy under my hands on the 1st of March, 1835, being seventeen years old. He left on the 5th of June, in company with Lyman Smith, for the State of New York, to preach the Gospel without purse or scrip. Traveled two thousand miles, baptized eight, held eighty meetings, and returned on the 2nd of November. Spent the winter in school, much afflicted with the rheumatism. In the spring, summer, and fall of 1836, he preached in different parts of Ohio with good success. Returned

History of the Church April 1839

and went to school in the winter. On the 6th of June, 1837, he took leave of me and started with my blessing for the South. After a successful mission of ten months, mostly in Virginia, he returned and assisted his father in moving to Far West, Missouri. He was ordained a High Councilor at Adam-ondi-Ahman, and sent on a mission to the South in company with Don Carlos Smith; returned about the 25th of December.

“He visited me while in Liberty jail, when I made known to him that he was appointed to fill the place of Thomas B. Marsh in the quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He assisted in moving the Saints out of Far West, and returned with the twelve to fulfill the revelation concerning the Twelve taking their leave of the Saints on the building site of the Temple at Far West.”