

Missouri Mormon War Commanding Officers

Governor Lilburn W. Boggs Commander in Chief, Missouri Militia

Boggs was the 6th Governor of Missouri from 1836 to 1840. Boggs served as a Missouri State Senator from 1825 to 1832. He then served as Lieutenant Governor from 1832 to 1836. During this entire time he was living in Independence and was well aware of the expulsion of the Saints for Jackson County in 1833.

On October 27, 1838, Governor Boggs issued Missouri Executive Order 44, commonly called the “Extermination Order.” This order read in part, “The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace their outrages are beyond all description.”

On May 6, 1842, Boggs was shot by an unknown party who fired at him through a window as he read a newspaper in his study. Boggs was hit by large buckshot in four places. Orrin Porter Rockwell was later arrested for this crime and defended by Alexander Doniphan. Held for almost a year in jail, Rockwell was acquitted of all charges.

Major General John B. Clark 1st Division of the Missouri Militia

Clark was living in Howard County and was ill when Gov. Boggs relieves Major General Atchison of Commander of the Missouri Militia and places Major General Clark in Command, October 26, 1838. Not wanting to wait for General Clark, Major General Lucas assumed command of the militia and marched onto Far West. General Clark ordered Lucas to take all prisoners to Richmond. General Lucas ignored this order and transported seven prisoners to Independence. When General Clark learned these prisoners were taken to Independence, he sent a detachment to retrieve the prisoners and transport them to Richmond.

Following the arrest of 64 Saints and their incarceration at Richmond, General Clark wrote to Fort Leavenworth requesting a legal opinion – if he can try the prisoners in a military court. Leavenworth responds that he cannot hold a court martial as the prisoners are not military. Governor Boggs learns of General Clark's and General Lucas' attempts at trying the prisoners in a court martial and on November 19, 1838, sends orders that all the Saints are to be tried in a civilian court of law.

Major General David R. Atchison 3rd Division of the Missouri Militia

Atchison and his law partner, Alexander Doniphan, served as the Saints attorney following their expulsion from Jackson County in 1833. As a State Representative, Atchison worked hard for the Platte Purchase, which extended the northwestern boundary of Missouri to the Missouri River in 1837. During the Mormon conflicts in 1838, Atchison is sympathetic to the Saints and also aware of the Missouri citizen's concerns due to the increased number of Mormons moving into northern Missouri.

October 26, 1838, Atchison is released by Gov. Boggs as Commander of the State Militia in Northern Missouri. Major General Clark replaced him; however, he was ill at the time and unable to respond – therefore Major General Lucas assumes command.

Atchison served in the U. S. Senate from 1843 to 1855. During the Civil War, Major General Atchison led 3,500 militia to defeat Union troops in the Battle of Liberty, September 17, 1861.

Major General Samuel D. Lucas 4th Division of the Missouri Militia

Lucas was living in Jackson County and had been heavily involved with the Saints expulsion for that county in 1833. It is obvious by Lucas' many actions that he distains the Saints. Lucas was the defendant in a civil lawsuit filed by Alexander Doniphan for the tar and feathering of Edward Partridge during July 1833. Lucas is charged with “trespass by force and arms.” Following two years of legal proceedings, Richmond, Ray County Justice of the Peace John F. Ryland renders a verdict of guilty, July 1836, and orders Lucas to pay damages – one cent.

During the Missouri Mormon War, Edward Partridge was arrested, incarcerated and indicted for arson and treason. He was only released after posting \$1,000 bail. Partridge was then ordered to leave the State of Missouri.

On October 26, 1838, Governor Boggs' releases Major General Atchison of command and replaces him with Major General Clark. Clark was ill and in Richmond at this time and Major General Lucas did not want to wait for General Clark and therefore assumed command.

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General Lucas marched the state militia to Far West and on October 31, 1838, arrested Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Ridgon, Parley P. Pratt, George W. Robinson, and Lyman Wight. The following day Hyrum Smith and Amasa Lyman were arrested. That same night, November 1, 1838, Lucas held a Court Martial for these seven prisoners. Following a one-hour trial, he found the men guilty of treason against the State of Missouri. He sentenced them to be shot the following morning. Their lives were spared when Brigadier General Doniphan refused to carry out the order of execution. Lucas then ignored orders from Major General Clark to take all prisoner to Richmond. Instead, Lucas ordered Brigadier General Wilson to take the prisoners to Independence, where Lucas and his 300 soldiers, paraded the 7 Mormon prisoners confined in a large heavy wagon.

Brigadier General Hiram D. Parks

Daviess County Militia commanding officer

As hostilities in Daviess County against the Saints escalated, General Parks authorized Colonel Lyman Wight 59th Missouri Regiment, to organize a force of 150 Mormon men and use them to disperse all mobs found in Daviess County. Lyman Wight had been the Colonel of the Caldwell Militia. When he moved to Daviess County in 1838, George H. Hinkle was appointed Colonel of the Caldwell Militia.

Parks labored to be true to his military command, like General Atchison and Doniphan, Parks sought to establish peace between the Saints and his fellow Missourians. Unlike Generals Clark and Lucas who took every opportunity to punish and “exterminate” the Saints.

Brigadier General Alexander William Doniphan

Caldwell County Militia commanding officer

Doniphan served as attorney for the Saints following their expulsion from Jackson County during the fall of 1833. At this time Samuel D. Lucas was a leader in the tar and feathering of Edward Partridge. Doniphan sought criminal action through the courts; however, nobody was every prosecuted. Therefore, Doniphan filed a civil lawsuit against Samuel D. Lucas and others. Following two years of legal proceedings, Lucas and other associates were found guilty of “trespass by force and arms” and ordered to pay damages – one cent.

General Doniphan was present at Far West when Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Ridgon, Parley P. Pratt, George W. Robinson, Lyman Wight, Hyrum Smith and Amasa Lyman were arrested and convicted in a one-hour court martial by General Lucas. Brigadier General Doniphan refused Major General Samuel D. Lucas’ order of execution and is credited with saving their lives. General Lucas then orders Brigadier General Moses to transport the prisoners to Independence, a direct violation of Major General Clark’s orders.

On November 28, 1838, in payment for defense serves rendered during the Richmond Court of Inquiry, Amos Rees and Alexander Doniphan would accept 1,080.52 acres of land in Jackson County from the Saints. However, the Saints did not sell the 63.27 acres of the temple lot at this time.

Brigadier General Moses G. Wilson

Jackson County Militia commanding officer

On November 2, 1838, General Wilson is ordered by Major General Lucas to take 7 prisoners to Independence (transported in a large heavy wagon) and guarded by 300 soldiers. This action was in direct violation of Major General Clark’s orders to transport the prisoner to Richmond. Lucas remained at Far West and then left the next day and caught up with General Wilson.

November 4, 1838, about 3:00 p.m., General Lucas with his prisoners and 300 troops arrive at Independence. General Lucas parades his prisoners before the citizens of Independence. Joseph Smith is able to teach a lady the principles of the Church, thus fulfilling a prophecy that an Elder of the Church shall yet teach in Jackson County this year. The prisoners are housed in a vacant log house just north of and across the street from Independences’ public square.

Wilson later invited the prisoners to dine at his home – the former Flournoy house. General Wilson’s son had been killed during the 1833 conflicts with the Saints at Jackson County. During dinner, Joseph Smith related the atrocities committed against the Saints. Wilson’s wife wept.

Caldwell Militia

Colonel George H. Hinkle

Lyman Wight was Colonel of the Caldwell Militia.

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When Wight moved to Daviess County in 1838, George H. Hinkle is appointed Colonel of the Caldwell Militia. Hinkle is later sent to DeWitt during the siege – September – October 1838.

On October 31, 1838, Colonel Hinkle surrenders Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, George W. Robinson and Lyman Wight at Far West to Major General Lucas. Hinkle would later claim that he surrendered the Prophet to avoid further bloodshed.

Colonel David W. Patten

Known as “Captain Fear-not,” Patten was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. He was killed during the Battle of Crooked River. Parley P. Pratt, a participant at this battle, addresses him as Colonel Patten.

Captain Charles C. Rich

Recently appointed Captain, Rich had served as a private under Captain Brunson. Captain Rich participated in the Battle of Crooked River. Following the Extermination Order, Rich fled the state to avoid prosecution.

Captain Patrick Durfee

It is unknown if he was given the title of Captain; however he was placed in command of a column of men at the Battle of Crooked River. He may have replaced Brunson who was not present. Following the Extermination Order, Durfee fled the state to avoid prosecution.

Captain Seymour Brunson

Although Brunson was a Captain with the Caldwell Militia, he was not at the Battle of Crooked River, but was at Daviess County with Colonel Wight on that date. Brunson was captured by the Ray County Militia and briefly held, before he was able to escape his captors.

Captain Alexander McRae

Alexander McRae served with the U.S. Army from 1829 - 1834. He was baptized June 1837. During the siege at Far West, members of the Caldwell militia were required to surrender all weapons. Stepping forward, McRae flourished his sword in the air several times and then jammed it into the ground declaring, “You have got my arms, but you have not got my spunk.” McRae was imprisoned in Liberty Jail from December 1, 1838 until April 6, 1839, with Joseph Smith Jr., Hyrum Smith,

Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight and Caleb Baldwin.

McRae would later serve as Captain with the Nauvoo Legion.

Ray County Militia

Major Amos Rees

Although Amos Rees was a Major with the Ray County Militia, he was not present during the Battle of Crooked River, October 25, 1838. However, Rees would write Governor Boggs and state that the Mormons “have determined to attack and burn Richmond to night.” He also adds, “these creatures will never Stop until they are stoped (sp.) by the Strong hand of force.”

Rees had previously served as the Saints attorney during their expulsion from Jackson County in 1833. He would again be hired to defend the Saints during the Richmond Hearing. For his fee, Rees and Doniphan would obtain 1,080.52 acres of land in Jackson County.

Captain Samuel Bogart

Samuel Bogart was a Methodist preacher and commanding officer of the Ray County Militia. General Atchison authorized Captain Bogart to patrol the border between Ray County and Caldwell County; however, Bogart was not authorized to cross into Caldwell County. On October 24, 1838, the Ray County Militia crossed into Caldwell County, harassing several Mormon settlements and taking three men prisoners. Later that evening, the Caldwell County Militia (Saints) pursued what they believed to be a mob, which led to the Battle of Crooked River during the early morning hours of October 25, 1838. Following this brief skirmish, an express from Ray County reported “that Captain Bogart and all his company amounting to between fifty and sixty were massacred by the Mormons....” In fact, only one member of the Ray County Militia had been killed. This false report may have been due to the fact that when the Caldwell County Militia (Saints) attacked, the Ray County Militia fled the scene of battle.

Brothers of Gideon Daughters of Zion Danites

Sampson Avard

Sampson Avard organized the Danites. He was in

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possession of the Danite Constitution, which he wrote, when arrested by Major General John B. Clark. Once arrested Avarad quickly testified against others in order to avoid prosecution. Avarad's testimony, during the Richmond Hearing, filled 25 handwritten pages. Major General Clark wrote, "I will here remark, but for the capture of Sampson Avarad, a leading Mormon... I do not believe I could have obtained any useful facts. No one disclosed any useful matter until he was captured and brought in."

Jared Carter

Reed Peck, one-time member of the order, claimed the Danites were organized under Jared Carter, the "terrible Brother of Gideon." Carter was never arrested or charged with any crimes.

George W. Robinson

Robinson was arrested and charged with arson and treason. He and Edward Partridge were the only prisoners required to post \$1,000 bail to secure their freedom. All other prisoners that were allowed bail were charged between \$150 and \$500.

Cornelius P. Lott

Although identified as a ringleader of the Danites, Lott was only charged with larceny.

Hawn's Mills Massacre

Colonel Thomas Jennings

Colonel Jennings commanded the militia from Livingston, Daviess and Carroll counties and led the raid on Hawn's Mill, October 30, 1838.

Major Daniel Ashby

Major Ashby was a member of the Missouri state legislature (House of Representatives) and participated in the Hawn's Mill massacre.

Ashby would later write, how the mob "kept up such a constant fire that the Mormons could not get their guns out to shoot." He then described the attempts of the Mormons to escape the blacksmith shop, saying that "many fell in their flight."

Captain Nehemiah Comstock

On October 29, 1838, Comstock assured the Saints at Hawn's Mill of their safety if they would but surrender their arms – many surrendered their muskets while others did not. They following afternoon the Saints were attacked.

Captain William Gee

Captain Gee's men formed the right flank during the initial attack at Hawn's Mill.

Captain William O. Jennings

Jennings was serving as Sheriff of Livingston County and also as Captain of the Livingston militia. His men formed the left flank during the initial attack at Hawn's Mill.

Thomas R. Bryan

Bryan was Clerk of Livingston County and also participated in the raid at Hawn's Mill.

Jacob S. Rogers Jr.

After being wounded, Thomas W. McBride (age 78 and a veteran of the Revolutionary War), surrendered his musket to Jacob Rogers, a Daviess County resident, who then shot him with his own musket. Rogers then hacked McBride with a corn knife. McBride, the Grand River Township Justice of the Peace would die later that night.

William Reynolds

As a member of the Livingston County Militia, Reynolds entered the blacksmith shop and discovered ten-year-old Sardius Smith hiding under the bellows. The boy pleading for his life when Reynolds blew the top of the child's head off. Reynolds his inhuman act by the old Indian aphorism, "Nits will make lice."

Following these murderous acts, the mob robbed the bodies of their boots, belts, firearms and anything of value. They then moved into the cabins stealing or destroying food, bedding and clothing. The looting lasted for 10 days until all the food and livestock had been plundered.