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Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo, 1839–1846

Kenneth W. Godfrey

Nauvoo has had a good share of critics who accused it of being crime ridden. In an October 1988 article that appeared in *Restoration Trail Forum*, Samuel W. Taylor wrote that Mormon Nauvoo had an “organized underworld of the type found ordinarily only in great metropolitan centers such as New York or London.”¹ He argued that the “City Beautiful” and the Mississippi bottomland had their “brothels, barrooms, saloons” and “notorious gangs of banditti—knaves, cut-throats, horse thieves, counterfeiterers, outlaws—organized and so powerful that some frontier settlements and even counties came under their control.”² More than a decade earlier, in his historical novel *Nightfall at Nauvoo*, Taylor had stated that many of the notorious banditti realized “that the solidarity of the Mormons, the fierce defense by the entire colony of any member, provided a perfect cover for outlaw operations.” Pretending to believe in the teachings and doctrines of the Church, many of these rogues were baptized, according to Taylor, while at the same time continuing their illegal activities, thus bringing shame on the entire community.³

Governor Thomas Ford wrote in 1854 that the Illinois territory “was overrun with horsethieves and counterfeiterers.”⁴ They were so numerous and so powerful and could count so many sheriffs, justices of the peace, and constables in their number that the populace “formed themselves into revolutionary tribunals . . . under the name of regulators,” took the law into their own hands, “arrested, tried, and punished [the banditti], . . . by severe whipping and banishment from the territory.”⁵ Nevertheless, bands of these ruffians, Ford claimed, continued to exist even as late as 1840, when the Latter-day Saints were building Nauvoo.⁶ J. W. Gunnison argued

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that “horse-thieves and house-breakers,—robbers and villains gathered there [Nauvoo] to cloak their deeds in mystery.”⁷ Hancock County’s historian, Thomas Gregg, wrote that Nauvoo was infected “with a set of blacklegs, counterfeiters and debauchees.”⁸ An early doctoral study of Nauvoo states, “It is known that fugitives from justice from other portions of the union fled to Nauvoo, were received by Joe into the church, and were screened from arrest when the officers of the law sought them.” The author cites the case of one Jeremiah Smith to prove her point. Indicted in the District of Columbia for swindling the government out of three thousand dollars, Jeremiah Smith found his way to Nauvoo, where he was arrested by the deputy district marshall but discharged by the municipal court presided over by Joseph Smith.⁹ Presbyterian Reverend W. M. King stated, “I presume Nauvoo is a perfect sink of debauchery and every species of abomination as ever were Sodom and Ninevah.”¹⁰ Historian George Gayler made this assessment: “Stories of theft became so frequent and unpleasant incidents involving thefts so common place, that charges against the occupants of Nauvoo could not be disregarded entirely.”¹¹

Even Latter-day Saint writer Truman G. Madsen made similar claims: “At this time [1844] Nauvoo was the largest city in Illinois; hence, counterfeiters, blacklegs, bootleggers, slave traders [Madsen is the only one to list slave traders], gamblers, and every other disreputable type of person found their way there, trying to exploit the possibilities for dishonest profits, trying to gull recent and sometimes naïve converts who had come from far and near.”¹²

With all of these accusations of disregard for law and property in Nauvoo, it seems appropriate to examine the evidence and to ascertain just what the truth was relative to crime and punishment among the Latter-day Saints as they sojourned in Illinois and Iowa during the years 1839–46.

The Legacy of Lawlessness

John L. Harr and other students of “Law and the Lawless” conclude that the Mississippi Valley passed through an “era of lawlessness that has distinguished all frontiers or wests in America.”¹³ At times this disregard for the law and the rights of others became so prevalent that vigilance committees were organized that took the law into their own hands and punished the offenders. These groups often functioned “more as an accepted part of the political

structure than an attack upon it.”¹⁴ In 1837 in Alton, Illinois, for example, Elijah Lovejoy, publisher of an abolitionist newspaper that offended community values, was killed by just such a group.¹⁵ Mobs instigated more than thirty-seven “riots” in various American cities during the 1830s, justifying their actions as a mere “enforcement of justice within the bonds of society” to remove social dangers that “for various reasons could not be handled by ordinary legal means.”¹⁶ Thus, it was very dangerous for a community to acquire the reputation of harboring criminals or to circumvent the law in pursuit of their own aims, especially if those goals were not believed to be congruent with the mores of the surrounding society. In fact, Kenneth H. Winn, in his book *Exiles in a Land of Liberty*, argues that anti-Mormons thought they were fighting a mixture of swindlers, fools, aggressive frauds, fast dealers, and generally lawless people.¹⁷ As early as 1835, Simeon Carter, while serving a mission in Illinois, had his life threatened by a mob of twenty men¹⁸ who believed that Mormonism threatened the social stability of the region. Given the geography of the country in which the Latter-day Saints settled, the generally held belief that they frequently took things from their gentile neighbors, and the fact that some outlaws gravitated to the city on the Mississippi, it would be very unusual indeed if there were no significant crime in Nauvoo and its environs.

David J. Bodenhamer, in contrast to Harr, Joe B. Frantz, Hugh Davis, and other writers on crime and violence in America, shows through an examination of court records that even with its large influx of immigrants Marion County, Indiana, was “part of a remarkably peaceful frontier” during 1825–50.¹⁹ Except in 1840 and 1842, yearly prosecutions numbered over 90 cases. The year 1843 had the high of about 250. Still the rate of prosecutions in 1840 stood at only 8.6 per 1000 people (when Marion County had a population of 16,080).²⁰ Moral crimes, particularly violations of the gambling and liquor laws, represented the highest number of prosecutions.²¹

Similar court records so far are unavailable for Mormon Nauvoo. However, the minutes of the Nauvoo High Council, which operated much like a civic court, do exist. During the years 1841–45, this council tried more than 80 cases. Of these cases, 4 were for Church members teaching false doctrine, 3 for drunkenness, 16 for nonpayment of debts, 16 for theft, 3 for teaching spiritual wifery, 21 for moral misconduct, and 18 for lying and slander.²² Whereas 21 of the accused Saints had the charges against them dismissed, the rest were convicted. Thus, the Nauvoo High Council tried an average of

20 cases per year, while convictions averaged approximately 10 per year. The indictment rate is no lower than that of Marion County, Indiana, whose population was greater than Nauvoo's.²³ These statistics indicate that the crime rate was low in Nauvoo, as the Saints claimed. The researcher can read through diaries of the Nauvoo citizenry and find no mention of a crime having been committed. The people themselves seem to have perceived that the City of Joseph was a safe place to live.

With that much having been said, let us turn to some specifics regarding crime and punishment in Nauvoo. When the homeless Saints arrived in Illinois, they brought with them a legacy of the Judeo-Christian code, which they believed had been revealed anew through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Doctrine and Covenants 42 prohibited the Saints from killing, stealing, lying, or committing adultery.²⁴ The Saints were also admonished by the Prophet to obey, honor, and sustain the laws of the land.²⁵ Furthermore, they were subject to the rulings of bishops' courts, high council courts, and the Nauvoo municipal court, as well as to the county and federal judicial system. Such a multilayered ecclesiastical and legal structure may not have deterred all Nauvoo crime, but it was certainly efficient in bringing Latter-day Saint offenders to justice. Nauvoo, then, with its large police force, its ecclesiastical courts, and its municipal court, was equipped to handle crime and maintain law and order. That Nauvoo was perceived otherwise was unfortunate.

Crime and Punishment: The Early Years

As the destitute, beleaguered, suffering, exiled Saints made their way to Quincy, Illinois, and the hospitality of that community, the local politicians seemed pleased. But so did lawless souls. What Edward Bonney called the "Banditti of the Prairie" were aware that if they became a part of the Mormon community their foul deeds could be blamed on the Latter-day Saints. As early as May 1839, in a Church general conference, John Taylor of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was requested to publish a letter in the *Quincy Argus*, which he did, wherein he stated: "There are many individuals amongst the number who have already arrived . . . who never did belong to our Church . . . who have contracted habits which are at variance with the principles of moral rectitude, (such as swearing, dram-drinking, etc.)." He declared that the Church and its leaders disapproved of any dishonesty and concluded by warning the

citizens of Quincy that anyone who engaged in such activities was not in fellowship with the Latter-day Saints; thus he plainly stated the attitude of the Church with regard to lawbreaking.²⁶

Unfortunately, those Church members who moved to Montrose, Iowa, after acquiring land on what was known as the “half-breed tract,” resided among a group of outlaws.²⁷ On May 20, 1839, Wilford Woodruff wrote that a desperado named “Camel” lived in Montrose and “makes much trouble in the place.”²⁸ Two days later Woodruff recorded that a “mob man by the name of Rocky Mountain commenced pulling down a long barn in Montrose.” A Mr. Boothe (or the people) issued a warrant against him, but he drew a pistol on the officer and refused to submit to arrest. Having been deputized by Boothe, Wilford Woodruff and Bishop Ripley (probably Alanson Ripley) “followed the criminal into the woods. We overtook him in a thicket of bushes,” Wilford Woodruff wrote, “& compelled him to Surrender. He was taken to court & fined.”²⁹ Again, on May 28, aided by another outlaw, Rocky Mountain commenced pulling down another barn and did two hundred dollars’ worth of damage before leaving. He was never punished for this crime, although a warrant was issued for his arrest.³⁰ A week earlier, while Joseph Bates Noble prepared to plant his garden, a group of ruffians “took his horse by the bits & ordered him off from the ground. . . . Br Nobles left the ground to keep the peace.”³¹

On May 30, 1839, Wilford Woodruff wrote of an increased spirit of mobocracy in Montrose.³² As crimes were frequently being committed in Montrose, an event that occurred on the Mississippi River below Warsaw created great excitement and a virtual flood of publicity. A citizen of that city found a cache of goods taken from a store in Tully, Missouri. He reported his find to the citizens of Tully, who soon arrived to retrieve their property. As they were led to the “depot of stolen goods,” they chanced upon some Mormons in the river bottom looking for horses that had been stolen from them. The men from Tully, led by William Allensworth, H. M. Woodyard, William Martin, J. H. Owsely, John Bain, Light T. Lail, and Halsey White, kidnapped the Mormons, “Alanson Brown, James Allred, Benjamin Boyce and Noah Rogers, and without any writ or warrant of any character whatever, they dragged them over into Missouri.” There they “were imprisoned for a day or two in an old log cabin.”³³ “At one point, Brown was taken out, a rope placed around his neck, and he was hung up to a tree until he was nearly strangled to death. At the same time, Boyce was tied to

a tree, stripped of his clothing and inhumanely beaten. Rogers was also beaten, and Allred was stripped of every particle of clothing and tied up to a tree for the greater part of the night, and threatened frequently." Then they were given a "note of acquittal" indicating their innocence.³⁴ Such actions on the part of Missourians, especially coming after the Boggs extermination order and the Mormon expulsion from that state, outraged Nauvoo's citizenry. At a large public meeting, strong resolutions were passed denouncing the whole affair. Shortly after, five citizens of Tully found on the Illinois side of the river were arrested and tried before a Nauvoo justice of the peace, non-Mormon Daniel H. Wells. He found them innocent and discharged them. An envoy was then sent by Illinois Governor Thomas Carlin to Jefferson City, Missouri, who demanded the delivery of the Tully culprits who had abused the Saints. After receiving assurances that they would be given up, he returned to Quincy and reported his findings to Governor Carlin. Only two days later, in retaliation, two officers arrived in Quincy with a writ signed by Missouri Governor Boggs, demanding that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon be returned to that state inasmuch as they were "fugitives from justice." When Carlin refused to extradite the Prophet and his first counselor, the Tully culprits' feet never touched Illinois soil.³⁵

By July 1839, a number of Hancock County citizens had "embraced the Mormon faith." These new Saints, while pursuing their ordinary avocations, were one day assaulted by a mob of Shelby citizens. Following the incident, these Latter-day Saints appeared before a Judge Bruce and demanded the arrest of the members of the mob. Warrants were issued against fifteen men, but when Colonel James W. Vaughan attempted to arrest those indicted, his men refused to obey his orders. A large mob gathered, forcing the colonel to retreat. Once more the offenders never had to account for their actions.³⁶ The *Alton Commercial Gazette* published an article which argued that the incident described above never occurred, and the *Sangamo Journal* ran a similar article. Both newspapers saw the report as an attempt to arouse sympathy for the Saints.³⁷

While the heads of the evenly matched political parties in Illinois vied with each other for the Mormon vote, the general populace (and especially the Illinois ministry) grew alarmed at the number of Latter-day Saints arriving in the state and at their vigorous proselyting efforts. When the "Mormons began to preach in Springfield in 1839, the Christian church officials became so alarmed that

they signed a petition stating that all churches could conduct services in the publicly financed building except the Mormons.”³⁸

Soon thereafter, rumors surfaced charging Joseph Smith with teaching that there was no sin in stealing from the enemies of the Church.³⁹ Both Thomas Gregg and George W. Smith later contended that Latter-day Saints were “prone to stealing liberally from the Gentiles.”⁴⁰ David Miller, a Latter-day Saint historian, argues that such thefts were committed by “gangsters” who then boasted that they were Mormons and that the Church sanctioned their actions, “knowing that church leaders would be blamed for their lawless acts.”⁴¹ Church leader Jacob Hamblin wrote, “I soon learned to discriminate between the different kinds of people who had gathered at Nauvoo. Some were living the lives of Saints; others were full of deceit and were stumbling blocks in the way of those who were striving to do right.”⁴²

To counteract the charges that his people were thieves who disregarded the law, Joseph Smith prevailed upon the governor to issue a proclamation declaring that the Latter-day Saints were “a law abiding people.”⁴³ The governor’s proclamation seemed to do little good, and soon other rumors were afloat that the Prophet had installed “a counterfeiters outfit in Nauvoo,” “that spurious coins were turned out in large numbers,” and “that certain outlaws were authorized to see that these coins were put into circulation.” Then the Saints and their city were criticized because there “was a lack of a jail in Nauvoo.”⁴⁴ However, many American cities in the 1840s did not have prisons. Usually during this time period, convicted criminals worked on the roads rather than being incarcerated. There were plans to build a jail, but those plans were never carried out. The plans were probably part of an effort to petition the legislature to incorporate Nauvoo.⁴⁵ It should be noted, however, that Theodore Turley made some chains to bind prisoners. Another rumor stated that “thefts were committed in broad daylight” and that farmers “were powerless to prevent depredation.”⁴⁶ Things became so serious that in an effort to curb further crime “the towns people of Montebello, Illinois, published an itemized list of things stolen, the names of people sustaining the losses, and the estimated value of the stolen property.”⁴⁷ Residents of Hancock County watched the growth of Nauvoo, as theft increased in their own cities, with a growing awareness that the offenders were frequently tracked in the direction of that city but rarely brought to justice.⁴⁸ Franklin D. Richards, who would later become an Apostle, stated that “the mob

would steal horses and run off with them and lay it to our people. Put up jobs in order to find something against us . . . to drive us away.”⁴⁹

Meanwhile, Church members were sometimes intimidated by these “lawless banditti.” For example, Wilford Woodruff reported that one morning they walked or rode loudly in front of the Saints’ Montrose houses with swords drawn and flags strung upon poles, threatening the lives of the Latter-day Saints.⁵⁰

Church leaders, as well as the general populace, were concerned about violations of the law, of community standards, and of Christian ideals. D. W. Rogers was charged with compiling a hymn-book and selling it as the one selected and published by Emma Smith, but after giving suitable explanations, he was forgiven and extended the hand of fellowship once more.⁵¹ Hyrum Smith admonished Church members moving to Nauvoo to “settle with their creditors before coming to the ‘city beautiful,’” counsel which indicates that some Latter-day Saints must have left behind unpaid debts. In fact, a notice appeared in the *Times and Seasons* stating that George W. Davison had moved from Mount Hope, Illinois, “leaving his business unsettled, and his debts unpaid, and for so doing the fellowship of the church was withdrawn from him.”⁵²

A careful reading of Nauvoo’s city ordinances reveals additional problems that confronted its inhabitants and the degree to which the government in Nauvoo was exercised to establish a law-abiding community. As in other American cities, the problem of dead animals challenged the city fathers. By late 1842, the city council had passed an ordinance that required dead animals either be taken out of the city limits and disposed of or be buried at least three feet deep.⁵³ As the Saints continued their sojourn in Illinois, other ordinances were added. There was a statute that forbade nude swimming within the city limits.⁵⁴ Another required all “new comers” to register with the city constable; this ordinance was passed to keep thieves and rogues from settling in Nauvoo.⁵⁵ An additional law required people to be in their homes after 9:00 P.M. and to remain there until after sunrise. Furthermore, people were not allowed to spread contagious disease. Nor were they to keep any animals for exhibition or for any purpose that might excite passions or affect decency, virtue, or modesty. Still another ordinance forbade the residents to allow cows, calves, sheep, goats, or dogs to run at large in the city.

In spite of these ordinances (or perhaps partly because of these ordinances), violations of the law continued. J. M. Henderson’s horse

was “shamefully disfigured,” and a ten dollar reward was posted for information that would lead to “the arrest of those engaged in the naggardly act.”⁵⁶ In April 1841, the store of Cyrus Peck of Montrose was burglarized, and 75 yards of fancy colored silk were taken, along with 30 yards of black Levantine silk, 125 yards of mosquito lace, and some remnants of calico.⁵⁷

In a letter published in the *Times and Seasons*, a concerned citizen lamented that crime was widespread in the region. He claimed that dirks, pistols, and bowie knives were worn by thousands, even by farmers as they plowed. Concluding his epistle, he called for the clergy of all faiths to unite in preaching against such a state of affairs.⁵⁸ In a further effort to curb crime, the city council passed an ordinance prohibiting the sale of ardent spirits in Nauvoo.⁵⁹ Notice was also given that “elders who go to borrowing horses or money, and running away with it, will be cut off from the church without any ceremony.”⁶⁰

While residents of Hancock County continued to circulate stories about Nauvoo’s lawlessness and iniquity, the Nauvoo High Council handed down judgments. On April 12, 1840, Alva Keller charged Alanson Ripley with taking rails from his lot without permission. After both men had been given a chance to discuss the issue, reconciliation was made and the charge withdrawn.⁶¹ In another case, John A. Hicks accused John P. Greene of lying “without any cause or provocation”; the court heard the charge, and the case was subsequently resolved.⁶² In May authorities requested the return of rails which formerly belonged to the city plot and which were taken from the yard of Bishop Ripley.⁶³ On June 20, 1840, “Henry G. Sherwood . . . preferred a charge against Ebenezer A. Black” for misconduct relative to selling lots in Nauvoo. Black was convicted and “expelled from the society of the Church until he make a satisfactory confession and restored all the damages.”⁶⁴ In August, Moses Martin, a stalwart in the march of Zion’s Camp, was charged with slandering “Elders S. Brunson, and Lyman and others stating that a gang of Gadianton robbers were in the church.” He, too, was corrected, convicted, and “expelled from the Church until he should make a satisfactory confession.”⁶⁵ Elijah Fordham, charged in an August court with slandering John Patten’s character, embezzling some property from Noah Rogers, and playing “the violin at a negro ball,” made reconciliation; the case was dismissed and the court adjourned.⁶⁶ In October, Henry G. Sherwood preferred a charge against William Gregory for having “spread abroad certain slanderous

reports and insinuations that go to carry an idea that much pilfering, pillaging, plundering, stealing &c is practiced by members of said church and that such practice is known to and tolerated by the heads and leaders of the church." Gregory was convicted. However, following "a humble confession," the council was satisfied and allowed Gregory to remain in the Church.⁶⁷

These cases indicate that Latter-day Saint leaders were trying to weed out iniquity among the membership and were not permissive when it came to infractions of the law. In fact, by 1840, conditions had reached such a point that in the October general conference the Prophet urged that a committee be appointed to search out the lawbreakers and see that they were brought to justice.⁶⁸ A few weeks later the Prophet called the attention of the public to the fact that Nauvoo "had been infested . . . with a gang of *thieves*, insomuch that property of almost all kinds has been unsafe unless secured with bolts and bars; cattle and hogs have been made a free booty. The community are awake to ferret them out, and have already made some inroads among them; the measures that are taken have created a general *alarm* among the midnight *pilagers*, and they are making *tracks* as fast as possible."⁶⁹ Nevertheless, two weeks later, the Prophet wrote, "Nauvooans to the rescue! Your liberty is in danger! *Thieves* are in your midst! By day and by night are they prowling through your streets! Your property is in peril, and life, and limb, in jeopardy! Your love of justice, your personal honor, your attachment to your country, and your holy religion, all, all, loudly call upon you to assist in bringing the culprits to condign unpunishment."⁷⁰ Thus the Prophet was doing what he could to eradicate the thieves from Nauvoo and its environs.

Crimes Continue

Still the crimes continued. In January 1841, a group of men entered the stable of Levi Moffitt and cut off the tails and ears of a span of dapple grey horses belonging to Joseph Smith and valued at \$250 each. They also tried to stab one of the horses.⁷¹ The culprits were never apprehended.⁷² The February 6, 1841, meeting of the Nauvoo High Council saw a charge preferred against a well-known Saint for dancing, kissing females, and "sleeping with two females coming up the Lakes and on the road to Dixons ferry." After making confession, asking forgiveness and promising never to repeat the offense, he was allowed to remain in the Church.⁷³ Alanson Brown

admitted before a March meeting of the High Council that he had told people that he committed his robberies for the Church. After admitting he had lied and after humbly confessing, he, too, was forgiven.⁷⁴ Both David Smith and Joseph Holbrook, officers in the Nauvoo Legion when convicted of theft on November 30, 1841, were given dishonorable discharges and expelled from that body.⁷⁵ During this same time, the Latter-day Saints were accused of poisoning the horses of a Mr. Kilbourne.⁷⁶

Church leaders continued to deny that they countenanced lawlessness of any kind, so it was a shock when a “nest of thieves” claiming to be Mormons was uncovered at Ramus in Hancock County. Worse, “when discovered in their nefarious practice,” they boldly asserted that the Church leaders sustained “their conduct . . . so long as the stealing was practiced upon the ‘Gentiles.’”⁷⁷ In an effort to counteract their testimony, Hyrum Smith, a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, published an affidavit that was printed in the nation’s newspapers; it disavowed crime, theft, or any other evil practice and clearly stated that the Church and its leaders did not condone criminal activity of any sort. The Quorum of the Twelve, too, signed this document, adding their support to its contents.⁷⁸ On December 1, 1841, the *Times and Seasons* also printed an article in which Church leaders denounced thievery of any sort.⁷⁹ In an effort to diffuse the volatile situation, leaders advised Latter-day Saints to stay out of anti-Mormon towns such as Warsaw. The *Warsaw Signal* printed that the people were glad that the Mormons were going to have nothing more to do with their town.⁸⁰

Perhaps one of the reasons leaders publicly delineated the Church’s stand regarding theft involved the trouble that erupted in the Ramus Stake. Late in 1841, a severe fissure developed among the stake leadership. President Joel H. Johnson wrote in his diary that a “secret clan” had developed among stake members, including his counselor and four members of the high council, as well as the bishop. These six men began to teach “that it was no harm for Mormons to steal from their enemies.” In a bitter November 1841 high council meeting, Joseph Holbrook (the first counselor) and the four high counselors left the meeting and the town in disgust. Five days later they were incarcerated in the Monmouth Jail on charges of theft.⁸¹ On November 18, 1841, Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards arrived in Ramus, conducted a stake conference, dissolved the stake, and strongly reiterated the

position of the Church that it was not right for Church members to steal from anyone.⁸²

Governor Thomas Ford remembered that by 1842 the Mormons were becoming increasingly unpopular and were charged with numerous thefts, robberies, and rogueries of all sorts.⁸³ The abundance of threats leveled against the Latter-day Saints caused Church leaders in 1842 to advise those living in isolated areas to move into larger population centers, where they could protect each other. In the meantime, the Nauvoo High Council heard a charge “prefered against Jane Price by Mercy R. Thompson for taking certain articles of property” that did not belong to her from the Thompsons’ house. Price countered with an accusation that Thompson had lied and that she had claimed she had never taken such articles. The charges were not sustained, and Jane Price was acquitted.⁸⁴ In April, *The Wasp* publicly lamented the fact that shafts of slander and missiles of the wicked were being hurled against the Saints. Every effort was being made, the editor declared, “to turn the tide of popular opinion against us.”⁸⁵

Shortly after the Church’s general conference in 1842, the Nauvoo High Council met to hear a charge of horse thievery preferred against Elihu Allen. The case was held over because Allen was sick, and when it was heard in May, the defendant was acquitted of all charges.⁸⁶

An assault on ex-Governor Boggs of Missouri was generally believed to be another example of Mormon disregard for law. Porter Rockwell was accused of performing the deed and Joseph Smith of instigating the entire affair. In February 1842, Porter Rockwell left Nauvoo with his family and traveled under an assumed name to Independence, Missouri. While waiting for his wife to give birth to their fourth child, he secured employment under the pseudonym of “Brown.” Living in that same city just a few blocks from the downtown square was Lilburn W. Boggs. About nine o’clock on the evening of May 6, 1842, while Boggs was sitting in his South Pleasant Street home, someone attempted to take his life. Boggs’s brother, a medical doctor, was summoned by the grief-stricken family. After a careful examination, he announced that the ex-governor would probably not survive. The next morning, citizens of Independence held a meeting at the courthouse and adopted measures for securing the capture of the assassin. They offered a reward of \$500 for his apprehension. The evening newspapers confidently projected an early seizure of the killer, because many people had seen him leave

town. The next morning, upon hearing of the assassination attempt, Porter Rockwell left Independence and traveled to Nauvoo. Shortly after arriving there, he, together with Joseph Smith, was implicated in the attack.⁸⁷ Soon the nation's newspapers published articles accusing the Mormon Prophet of instigating the affair. Subsequently, Rockwell was arrested, incarcerated, and tried for the crime of attempted murder. In spite of the fact that a Missouri court failed to convict Porter of the deed, in the public mind he and Joseph were guilty of attempting to kill an ex-governor of a sovereign state.

Back in Nauvoo, on May 20, 1842, George Miller appeared before the High Council and charged Chauncey L. Higbee with "unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with the widow Miller and others." Higbee wanted the trial carried over, but the council denied his motion. Three unnamed witnesses testified that he had seduced them and at different times been guilty of unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with them. They said he "taught the doctrine that it was right to have free intercourse with women if it was kept secret," because "Joseph Smith authorized him to practice these things."⁸⁸ The charge of immorality being sustained, Higbee was severed from the Church and became a bitter enemy of Joseph Smith. Catherine Warren then appeared before the court and admitted to unvirtuous conduct with John C. Bennett, a recently excommunicated Church member and former quartermaster of the Nauvoo Legion. Having declared that she had repented, and after asking for forgiveness, she was restored to fellowship in the Church. Only eight days later the court disfellowshipped another Church member, a man, after a charge that he had been unchaste was sustained.⁸⁹ In June, Amanda Smith stated that a female Saint had frequently been immoral in the absence of her husband. The charge was investigated and sustained, but the woman was allowed to retain her Church membership. Amanda, however, was reprimanded for not going to the woman first before spreading the story "amongst her acquaintances."⁹⁰

As spring turned to summer, the Church and Nauvoo continued to suffer from unfavorable publicity and false charges. On July 1, 1842, the *Times and Seasons* published an article written by William Law, titled "Much Ado about Nothing." Law, the Second Counselor in the Church's First Presidency, argued that there were fewer crimes committed on the part of the Saints in Illinois than any other group. He also said that few, if any, Saints resided in prisons, no court in the state having recorded the convictions of Latter-day Saints for any crime during the past three years. This denial did little to quell public

fears. Most non-Mormons in Hancock County already believed that Mormons guilty of crimes were able to somehow circumvent the law.⁹¹ Only eight days later, the *Illinois Republican* charged that a Latter-day Saint, Manon Demter, had stolen three dollars and a gun from a harmless old gentleman named John Stevensen before murdering him. No proof confirmed this charge.⁹²

After a public meeting of some anti-Mormons in a Green Plains schoolhouse was fired upon by parties in the bush, Church members were blamed, and the anti-Mormons resolved to begin the expulsion of the “Morley-town” Mormons.⁹³ Only a few days later, Latter-day Saints working on a Missouri hemp farm owned by H. Pinchbank were given notice by a mob to quit work and never again return to Missouri.⁹⁴ As the Saints in areas outside of Nauvoo worried about fire, threats on their lives, and expulsion, the Nauvoo High Council continued to try cases of Saints accused of immoral acts. On September 4, 1842, Gustavius Hills was disfellowshipped from the Church for teaching that Mormon males could have more wives than one.⁹⁵

However, while Church leaders denied the practice of plural marriage, certain select men were taking additional wives. Joseph Smith told William Clayton that he was to keep his now pregnant plural wife at home “and brook it and if they [other saints] raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging and probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptize you and set you ahead as good as ever.”⁹⁶ At a meeting of the Nauvoo City Council in January 1844, Joseph Smith, it was said, had given instructions to Daniel Carn that “if a man could not keep a secret he was not worthy of a place in the church.” A month later he and Hyrum Smith publicly announced that they had excommunicated an elder for preaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines.⁹⁷

On October 22, 1842, the High Council heard the case against Benjamin Boydston, who was charged with five violations of Church law—one, imprudent conduct towards John Tarpin’s wife; two, insulting, abusing, and striking L. T. Coons in his own house; three, being of a contentious nature; four, misrepresenting and telling falsehoods; and five, wanting D. M. Gamset to carry a challenge to L. T. Coons to meet him at his own time or place with sticks, swords, guns, or fist, and knock it out. Boydston pled guilty to all charges, repented, and made reconciliation. He was allowed to remain in the Church.⁹⁸

As the year drew to a close, instances of lawbreaking continued. In November 1842, the Prophet investigated “frauds and irregularities” in the Nauvoo Post Office. Calvin Warren sent a petition signed by some Nauvoo citizens to “Judge Young [U.S. senator from Illinois], with a request that the latter should present the same to the postmaster general, and use his influence to have the present postmaster [Sidney Rigdon] removed, and a new one appointed.”⁹⁹ However, the non-Mormon populace of Illinois came to believe that everything that was stolen in or near Hancock County had been taken by Mormons and that all Mormons were thieves.¹⁰⁰

In response to the continued accusations that the Church condoned theft and harbored thieves, the Prophet published a strong statement in the *Times and Seasons* in which he asserted, “I wish it to be distinctly understood in all coming time, that the Church over which I have the honor of presiding will ever set its brows like brass, and its face like steel, against all . . . abominable acts of villainy and crime.”¹⁰¹ Still Joseph Smith publicly admitted that as the minutes of the municipal court fully testified Nauvoo was “infested with a set of blacklegs, counterfeiterers and debauchees.”¹⁰²

In the new year the High Council continued to convict Latter-day Saints for not paying their debts, cheating people out of land, teaching spiritual wifery, stealing oxen, and saying bad things about others; these convictions indicate that indeed the Church did not condone misconduct on the part of its members.¹⁰³ The February 11, 1843, meeting of the High Council heard a rather unique and unusual case. A charge against a Brother Hoyt was preferred for accusing certain persons of being wizards or witches, working with the divining rod, and bringing toads to heal the sick. He was convicted of all charges.¹⁰⁴ Another extraordinary case involved Henry Cook, who was accused of attempting to sell his wife. Cook testified that shortly after his first wife had died, “upon a short acquaintance [*sic*]” he had married a lady named Mary. He then discovered “that she was in the habit of traveling about at night” and had “misuse[d] his children.” Furthermore, she insulted him, boasted “that she would be governed by no man and threatened to use violence on him and his children,” and often left him, vowing not to return but later returning anyway. Cook “whipped her pretty severely” and did say something about selling her, but meant it to be a joke. Hyrum Smith reprimanded Cook for whipping his wife, and the court rendered a decision of acquittal.¹⁰⁵

About this time, a “respected old settler” near Fountain Green made an affidavit that residents accused the Mormons of stealing “a yoke of cattle or a horse over there and then fled to Nauvoo, then they were safe. I never could find the man that lost the horse or cattle. . . . I tried several times to locate one man that would say he had cattle or horses stolen.”¹⁰⁶ When the *Quincy Whig* accused the Mormons of harboring horse thieves, the *Nauvoo Neighbor* challenged the *Whig* to name the culprits and said the culprits would be punished.¹⁰⁷ The Prophet also told Peter Haws to correct his boys of their wickedness, or they would eventually go to prison.¹⁰⁸ Joseph published an affidavit in the *Wasp* again condemning crime and lawlessness of any sort.¹⁰⁹ He also stated that “there is no city either in this state or in the United States that can compare with Nauvoo. You may live in our city for a month and not hear an oath sworn, you may be here so long and not see one person intoxicated.”¹¹⁰ In April 1843, the Prophet, in his capacity as mayor of Nauvoo, challenged the populace “to ferret out a band of thievish outlaws from our midst.”¹¹¹

Patriarch Hyrum Smith told the Saints that a group of men in Nauvoo held that it was “right to steal from any one who does not belong to the Church, provided they consecrate one-third of it to the building of the Temple.” These men, led by David Holman and James Dunn, were also making bogus money. Hyrum denounced the men and their teachings and admonished Church members to give no heed to their doctrines.¹¹² When it was reported that a gang of thieves were about to move to Nauvoo, the Twelve Apostles warned them not to set foot in the kingdom on the Mississippi.¹¹³ At the same time, Oliver Olney, Alanson Brown, Joseph Holbrook, John Telford, James B. T. Page, and William Edwards were all “expelled from the church” for having committed larceny.¹¹⁴

As 1844 dawned, it was commonly believed that the Nauvoo city court always set the Church members free and convicted Gentiles brought before it. This notion, while false, increased the hatred against the Saints. Non-Mormon authors told wild stories about the Danite band’s operations and claimed that night after night the band rode among the residents of Hancock County. Writing three decades after the fact, the writers claimed the Mormon riders resembled the South’s “Ku Klux Klan [which developed after Nauvoo was abandoned], clothed for the occasion in the disguise of white gown and wearing red girdles. Their faces were covered with masks to conceal their identity.” Bill Hickman, accused of being their

leader, rode, it was said, “a fast and blooded stallion” and was seldom seen.¹¹⁵ Colonel J. M. Reid stated that “a county man surrounded by Mormon neighbors had a large lot of wood hauled and corded up; the Danites coveted it and came with wagons to haul it off. He [the non-Mormon] shot one of them and fled; they took the wood nevertheless, and he never dared to return as they threatened his life. This was just what they wanted; they then appropriated his house, goods and possessions, and kept them till they were driven from the country.”¹¹⁶

John Bowes reported that both Michael Yeoman, a Mormon, and John Smith, a non-Mormon, had lost an ox. While searching for the oxen, they found two Mormons skinning the dead animals, while Sherwood, another Church member, waited on the river with a boat to carry the beef away.¹¹⁷

In January two Church members, a father and a son, were kidnapped and taken to Missouri and imprisoned.¹¹⁸ Enraged at such lawlessness, the Saints demanded their extradition, but nothing was done. A January 21, 1844, article in the *Warsaw Message* stated that one-half of the adult population of Nauvoo were either knaves or robbers and thus deserved punishment.¹¹⁹ The *Warsaw Signal* editorialized that if the Mormons wanted to live in peace, they “must cease from screening each other from the just operations of the law—cease from sham trials . . . cease from releasing prisoners in custody of state officers . . . cease from insulting the laws.”¹²⁰ Most of these accusations had their roots in the numerous attempts on the part of Missouri officials to capture Joseph Smith and take him back to that state to stand trial. The Prophet knew that if he set foot on Missouri soil he was a dead man, so he resisted arrest by hiding out or by having friendly judges declare the papers null and void on technicalities. Thus, in the public’s eyes, he was viewed as circumventing the law.

Again, in April the *Warsaw Signal* warned the public, “There is a species of counterfeit, extensively circulated in this community called Nauvoo Bogus. They are half dollars dated 1828. They are pretty good imitations of the genuine coin.” These coins, the reporter asserted, were manufactured in “the city of the saints.”¹²¹

Just prior to the Prophet’s martyrdom, a young Church member named Theron Terrell had been arrested for having in his possession a counterfeit Spanish half dollar, which had been given to him by George Reeder, a Latter-day Saint, with whom he had been living.¹²² This coin indicates that some sort of counterfeiting was being done in Nauvoo, but not necessarily by one of the Saints.

On March 29, 1844, the Nauvoo store of Rollison and Finch was burglarized. A man named Caesam was captured with some of the stolen goods in his possession and was taken into the woods and severely beaten.¹²³ Although this incident created considerable excitement in the city, Caesam's assailant was never apprehended. The *Warsaw Signal* charged that no one had been tried for any crime in Nauvoo for a long time¹²⁴ when in fact Jacob Shoemaker was at that time convicted of breaking George Morris's ax, using abusive language, and threatening to whip him.¹²⁵

The Martyrdom and Its Aftermath

As the spring turned to summer, Nauvoo citizens were accused of hiding known criminals such as Joseph Jackson and Jeremiah Smith, while the Prophet himself was more and more being seen as a man who could circumvent the law and escape justice. The closing down of the *Nauvoo Expositor* became the catalyst that led to the murder of Joseph and his brother Hyrum by a mob which believed that the normal course of justice would fail to convict the Mormon leader. Thus, like so many others before them, they took the law into their own hands and assassinated Joseph and Hyrum. That this action reflected the will of the community is attested to by the fact that the perpetrators were never convicted of their crimes, even though the entire region knew their identity.¹²⁶ In contrast, the Latter-day Saints saw the murder of their two leaders as an example of mob rule, religious persecution, and total disregard for the law.¹²⁷

With the Prophet dead and the threat of mob violence increasing, the Saints attempted to cast undesirables out of the city. A group of ladies banded together and threatened to tar and feather villains who came into Nauvoo.¹²⁸ The famous "Whistling and Whittling Brigade" continued to function. And through all of this turmoil, the Nauvoo High Council ruled on incidents of misconduct on the part of Church members, including adultery, theft, and apostasy.¹²⁹

In December 1844, the *Daily National Intelligencer* reported that a party of Mormons led by Lyman Wight had robbed a trading station ninety miles from Prairie du Chien and that four people had been killed. Although this report was untrue, many non-Mormons believed it. That fall two men pretending to be Mormon preachers, stayed with a Latter-day Saint who lived near Pekin on the Illinois River. They told him that Brigham Young wanted gold to finish the temple in Nauvoo. In this way they learned where the old man kept

his money. Later they returned and took it from him, and the Saints were blamed for the deed.¹³⁰

After assuming leadership of the Church, Senior Apostle Brigham Young publicly exhorted “the brethren to rise up en masse and put down the thieving, bad-houses, swearing disorderly conduct of the boys, gambling, retailing spiritous Liquors, bogus making, and such like abominations which was practiced in our midst by our enemies.”¹³¹ Guards were placed around the Nauvoo Temple, and on the night of April 3, 1845, a trespasser was beaten almost to death, a deed which “created considerable warmth of feelings” among the citizenry. Chief of Police Hosea Stout defended his men, declaring they had only done their duty.¹³²

In an April morning meeting, Apostle John Taylor told several U.S. marshals that if they attempted to serve the writs they had in their possession “it would cost them their lives” because they had murdered two of the best men in the nation and no more would the Saints submit to such outrages.¹³³

In responding to the repeated charge that Nauvoo was a city of sin, iniquity, and crime, the Church leaders and the new mayor of the “City of Joseph,” Daniel Spencer, published an explanation of what was transpiring in Hancock County. The mayor argued that a “greater part of the thefts which have been complained of, are not in our opinion, true in fact, but have been *trumped up* by inimical persons, in order to cover their aggressive doings, with plausibility, and entice honest and unwary citizens to unite with them” against the Latter-day Saints.¹³⁴ Spencer then challenged “the world to substantiate a single instance, where we [the Mormons] have concealed criminals, or screened them from justice; but, on the contrary, always have been, and now are, extremely anxious that they should be ferretted out and brought to justice.”¹³⁵ The mayor also declared that it was his “opinion that very many scoundrels, such as thieves, robbers, bogus makers, counterfeiters and murderers, have been induced from reports published in the Warsaw Signal to flock into this county in order to carry on their evil practices, knowing that it would be immediately charged upon the Mormons, and thereby they escape—and although we think that the reports of thefts have been very much exaggerated, yet we know from dear bought experience that such things do exist.”¹³⁶ In concluding, the mayor expressed an anxiousness “to ferret out and bring to justice” all evildoers within the limits of the city and announced that the police force had been massively increased to five hundred men in

an effort to rid the city and the country of infamous characters.¹³⁷

In another public statement Mayor Spencer stated the bee yards had “been robbed, and the hives left at Mormon doors, to palm the theft upon us, when the honey has been found in the houses of our enemies.” He went on to declare that innumerable tricks had been played by the enemies of the Church upon good, honest men. Runners had been employed, Spencer said, to steal saddles and bridles from the horses of evil men while they were in Nauvoo so that the Mormons would be blamed for the crimes. In spite of all that was going on, Spencer was certain that the charge of promiscuous stealing was greatly exaggerated, and he argued that Nauvoo had fewer crimes than St. Louis, a western city of comparable size.¹³⁸

The Murder of John Miller and Henry Leisi

John Miller, a Mennonite preacher, lived in a single-room cabin near West Point, Lee county, Iowa. On May 10, 1845, three men broke into the cabin where Miller, his wife, his daughters, and their husbands—Henry Leisi and Jacob Risser—slept. Mrs. Miller awoke to the sound and sight of the “break-in men” carrying guns and clubs, their faces blackened in disguise, a single lantern held high. She shook her husband, and one of the men clubbed him. Another lashed out at Leisi.

The third stood at Risser’s bed, holding his gun on its occupants. Miller leaped from his bed and went for his own gun. He and his attackers fought and Leisi came to his aid. A revolver went off. Shot, savagely cut and beaten, Leisi crumpled to the floor. The three assailants fled, and Miller chased after them, gun in hand. Jacob Risser, out of the bed now, followed close on his father-in-law’s heels until he reached the cabin door, where he was shot at and missed by one of the intruders. When he got outside, the three men were gone, leaving Miller in their wake bleeding—dying—from a stab wound in the chest.¹³⁹

By early the next morning, the sheriff and a doctor reached the cabin and found Miller dead and Leisi critically wounded. Three weeks later Leisi died. The survivors identified William and Stephen Hodges, believed to be Mormons, as the killers—their motive, robbery.

The Hodgeses were also linked to the scene of the crime by three bludgeons and a cap they left behind. The brothers were captured at the home of another brother, Amos Hodges, on May 13, 1845. The third man accused of the crime, Thomas Brown, escaped the officers. Nauvoo’s newspapers denied that the Hodgeses were Church members, except for their brother, Stephen, who was not

involved in the crime.¹⁴⁰ While the Hodgeses awaited trial in an Iowa jail, another brother, Irwin, attempted to raise money to defend his siblings. He tried to induce Brigham Young to send men to break open the jail and allow the prisoners to escape. When Brigham did not take action, Irwin Hodges publicly denounced and threatened Brigham Young. Irwin was later accosted by two men in Nauvoo and killed with his own knife. Allen J. Stout, Hosea's younger brother, was standing guard with John Scott at the home of Brigham Young the night Irwin was murdered. He reported that just before the time for the changing of the guard, he heard the sound of dull blows, followed by screeches as if someone were beating an ox. The two men ran toward the place and met Irwin, staggering, wounded in the back with a knife. It was so dark that they did not see the assailant, who was never apprehended. However, Brigham Young was accused of having ordered Irwin's death. Most of Hancock County's non-Mormon populace eagerly believed the accusations.¹⁴¹

After a trial before Judge Charles Mason, the Hodges brothers were sentenced to death by hanging and were executed on July 15, 1845.¹⁴² The Hodges brothers maintained their innocence to the last but were hanged anyway. James Monroe, a Nauvoo schoolteacher, recorded in his diary, "I have heard today that two men have been murdered by our people a short distance from here and whether it is the fact or not it will be so reported and we shall have to suffer for it."¹⁴³ Hosea Stout reported that "our enemies" are endeavoring "to lay this thing to the Mormons and are raising a hue & cry that we [Nauvoo citizens] were harboring the murderers."¹⁴⁴

Continued Confrontations

Evidence of lawbreaking continued. In June, William Smith demanded the release of a prisoner being held in Nauvoo, and when his request was refused, he attacked the officer, Elbridge Tufts.¹⁴⁵ Then, in the fall of 1845, mobs burned Mormon homes in Lima, and Brigham Young sent four hundred teams to move the Saints from that area into Nauvoo.

On Tuesday, June 24, 1845, an altercation occurred between Dr. Samuel Marshall, the Hancock County clerk, and General Deming, the sheriff of the county. Marshall was a very exact and punctual man in his affairs, and he expected others to be equally so. The sheriff was not so punctual nor exact, a problem which apparently irritated Marshall. A scuffle ensued in the midst of which

Deming drew a pistol and shot his antagonist. Marshall was strongly anti-Mormon in his feelings and principles, and some believed that Deming, who was friendly to the Church, perhaps killed him because he was ordered to do so by the Mormons. Deming was indicted for the murder but never brought to trial since he contracted congestive fever and died September 10, 1845. Another version of this shooting of Marshall has it that Deming confronted a mob bent on doing harm to the Saints, and he shot and killed the mob's leader, who was none other than the doctor.¹⁴⁶

Regardless of what happened, the death of Deming necessitated a replacement, and J. B. Backenstos emerged as the sheriff. While Backenstos was investigating the expulsion of the Saints from Morley-town, Frank Worrell and a group of men pursued the sheriff, intending to kill him because of the strong stand he had taken in defense of the Saints. Instead, Worrell was fatally killed by the deputized Porter Rockwell, who thereby increased the hatred on the part of Hancock County's citizenry against the Mormons.¹⁴⁷ In his history of Hancock County, Thomas Gregg told a different story of Worrell's death. He says that Worrell, "in company with eight other men . . . was passing on the road from Carthage to Warsaw, with the view of ascertaining the facts" regarding "disturbances at Green Plains. Three of these men, Worrell and two others, were on horseback; the others were in a buggy and a two-horse wagon," which also contained the arms of the company. "As they came in sight of the road leading toward Nauvoo, and which they would cross at right angles, they discovered a man riding up that road. Not knowing him, and seeing he was coming from the direction of the burning, they hurried on to intercept him at the crossing, hoping to gain information. He then drove more rapidly, apparently to cross before they [the group] could come up. They hurried on, the three horsemen in the lead. As they neared the brow of a ravine . . . he was seen standing near his buggy, and at the same moment a shot fired" from nearby struck him. Neither "he [Worrell] nor his associates had made any demonstration of violence; but now seeing or believing it to be Backenstos and his *posse*, [the survivor] immediately wheeled their horses and rode toward the wagon and buggy which were approaching. Mr. Worrell soon fell from his horse, was picked up, placed in the wagon and driven to Warsaw; but died on the way."¹⁴⁸

With Church members being attacked in outlying settlements, security in Nauvoo increased. Guards were stationed near the Mansion

House, and many of the males were told that at the “tolling of the Temple Bell every man know it as an alarm & repair forthwith armed & equiped to the parade ground.”¹⁴⁹ A group of Saints had to be sent out to rescue the wife of the late Sheriff Deming because a mob had gathered and attempted to burn her home. While on this rescue excursion, Chief of Police Hosea Stout instructed his men that they were authorized to take enough property to sustain life, in spite of the fact that Sheriff Backenstos had told them not to “meddle with anyone’s property.”¹⁵⁰ On September 18, 1845, mail carrier Hiram Kimball and his guard “were assaulted in the most inhuman manner” and their lives threatened. Only after submitting to a “sound whipping” were they permitted to return to Nauvoo.¹⁵¹ Four days later, Mormon Cyrus Daniels was ambushed and shot through the right arm just above the elbow.¹⁵² Again in October, Phineas Wilcox came to Nauvoo to have some grain ground into flour. On his return home, he was shot and killed. It was said that a mob killed him because they believed him to be a Mormon spy.¹⁵³ On October 8, 1845, another man, named Debanair, was found buried in the bottom of a ditch and the Mormons were again blamed for his murder.¹⁵⁴

On July 4, 1845, a Colonel Davenport, at home alone in Rock Island, Illinois, was attacked in broad daylight. While all the family except the old colonel were absent at a celebration, three men entered his home. One of them discharged a pistol at him, “the ball entering his thigh. He was then dragged through a hall, and up the stairs, to a closet containing his safe, which they compelled him to open. After obtaining the contents, and the money from his bureau drawers, they left him, still tied upon his bed, in which condition he was afterward found by persons passing by. Surgical aid was procured, and he was revived sufficiently to describe the assassins and the circumstances, but he died about ten o’clock that night.” The villains belonged to a gang which was said to be headquartered in Nauvoo.¹⁵⁵

Even as burnings, murders, beatings, and other atrocities were taking place in Hancock County, the Nauvoo High Council sat as a court hearing cases for stealing, striking a brother with a sword, watermelon stealing, and brickbatting a house—all of which seem rather insignificant when compared with what was going on in the surrounding countryside.¹⁵⁶ Still, the fact that such cases were being tried is evidence that the council was not ignoring wrong-doing.

However, matters did not improve when six Mormons were accused of stealing corn from a Mr. B. Clark of Carthage and when

Charles Crisman, a Church member, was arrested for stealing three wagon loads of iron from the railroad that ran to Jacksonville.¹⁵⁷ When the sheriff of Rock County, Illinois, arrested a man named Riding and attempted to take him back to the county seat on the boat *Sara Ann*, it was reported that a body of Mormons armed with pistols and stones attacked the boat and rescued the prisoner. A hundred of the governor's troops were required to quell the ensuing riot.¹⁵⁸

Thomas Bullock reported that on September 19, 1845, Emma Smith told him that a man was shot at the Temple the previous night through the carelessness of the guard.¹⁵⁹

Mormon Benjamin Brackenbury was arrested in a bar room and charged with perjury by virtue of a writ issued in Augusta, situated in the southeastern part of Hancock County. The real reason for his arrest, however, was to enable his enemies to destroy his testimony in relation to the trial of the murderers of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. At one point, the constable's attention was drawn away from the defendant by the clamor of the crowd. While the sheriff was distracted, Oliver Huntington slipped Brackenbury into the back room and out the back door, and the two men escaped.¹⁶⁰

As the Saints prepared to leave Nauvoo and move west, gentile spies entered the city. Hosea Stout reports that when he came to the Temple on the night of January 9, 1846, "a considerable number of the guard were assembled and among them was William Hibbard son of the old man Hibbard. He was evidently come as a spy. When I saw him," Stout reported, "I told Scott that we must 'bounce a stone off of his head.' to which he agreed we prepared accordingly & I got an opportunity & hit him on the back of his head which came very near taking his life. But few knew any thing about what was the matter he left the ground out of his senses when he came to himself he could not tell what had happened to him &c."¹⁶¹

On the evening of January 11, 1846, a number of "scoundrels" disguised as government troops entered Nauvoo and went to the house of Andrew Calton. They roused him from his bed, charged him with horse stealing, and took him to Carthage.¹⁶² This action led Hosea Stout to instruct his police force to shoot the next set of armed men who came into Nauvoo.¹⁶³

The grand jury of the United States district court of Springfield, Illinois, in January 1846, issued twelve indictments against prominent Church leaders for counterfeiting United States coin.¹⁶⁴ This action was generally thought to be a ploy on the part of the government to make certain that the Saints would keep their promise to

leave Nauvoo in the spring. Church leaders issued a circular in which they denied the charge of counterfeiting. They reiterated that they expected the migration to begin early in March.¹⁶⁵ They then went into hiding and refused to give themselves up for trial.

On February 9, 1846, Thomas Bullock recorded in his diary that the governor's troops came into the city in search of thieves. At 3 P.M., the Temple caught fire, and the troops attempted to force their passage into that structure but were prevented by the guards from doing so.¹⁶⁶ Some difficulties continued to persist, and additional crimes were committed as mobs invaded Nauvoo. Not until the Church and most of its members had left the city or had put their religion in abeyance did peace come to that area.

Even as late as 1849, with the Saints safely residing in the Great Basin, they were still an interesting topic of discussion in areas surrounding Nauvoo. For example, on March 3, 1849, William Arrowsmith called on John Bowes and told him that while he was not a Mormon he was married to the sister of Apostle John Taylor. Arrowsmith also stated that the Mormons had persuaded his wife to leave him and that they had robbed him of three hundred dollars' worth of property. He then told Bowes that Joseph Smith was a drunken man and that he, William Arrowsmith, had slept at his mother-in-law's when Joseph Smith slept with Orson Hyde's wife under the same roof.¹⁶⁷

Conclusion

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions from the available data about crime and punishment in and around Nauvoo 1839–46. Besides the fact that legal records are scanty, interpreting these materials is extremely problematic. Many of the alleged crimes were merely unsubstantiated rumors that never came to trial, let alone conviction; reports were indelibly colored by the strong biases and deep emotions involved in even the slightest alleged irregularity; and it is often impossible to determine where the alleged crimes took place and whether the purported criminals were actually Mormons or not.

Within the city of Nauvoo, the picture appears to be one of relative calm and lawfulness. Although municipal court records are lacking, diligent searching of other documents for the seven years from 1839 to 1846 has discovered only a few more than the sixty-four "crimes" discussed in this article. Over half of those "crimes" were cases brought before the Nauvoo High Council, and most of

them involved relatively minor offenses: swearing, drinking, a hymn-book copyright violation, taking fence rails, lying, real estate deceptions, slander, playing the violin, dancing, widow abuse, delinquency of debt, misappropriation of an axe, striking with a sword, “brickbatting” a house, and watermelon stealing, in addition to a few cases involving adultery and the unauthorized teaching of polygamy. In the context of the rugged frontier environment that surrounded Nauvoo, most of these cases are insignificant misdemeanors. Little wonder that the ecclesiastical High Council acquitted or mediated a reconciliation between the parties in as many cases as it could.

Most of the serious criminal activity in this period occurred outside the city of Nauvoo, and often the evidence is lacking to implicate Mormons in these events. Camel and Rocky Mountain were non-Mormon ruffians. Mormons were implicated in the Tully theft in Montrose only on suspicion. The 1839 burglars in Montrose were never detected. In the 1842 Boggs incident in Missouri, no evidence was ever presented against the alleged assailant. The Demter murder and the shots at Green Plains likewise remained lacking in proof. Alleged irregularities in the post office of Nauvoo never resulted in a conviction either. In 1843, the alleged stealing of oxen in Fountain Green was never proved, and the reoccurring allegations of counterfeiting were never substantiated. The 1844 robbery at Prairie du Chien was erroneously attributed to the Saints, and the robbery at Pekin did not involve Mormons. Matters became tense in 1845, resulting in a trespasser’s being beaten in Nauvoo, a negligent homicide occurring in guarding the Nauvoo Temple, and an officer was attacked in Nauvoo, but the more violent crimes took place in the outlying surrounding regions. The Hodgeses’ murders in West Point, Iowa, were perpetrated by non-Mormons. The attack of the postman, the shooting of the alleged Mormon spy, the shooting of Marshall by Deming, the Debonair incident, the assault on Davenport, the corn theft, the iron theft, and apparently Carlton’s horse thievery all took place outside of Nauvoo. As often as not, non-Mormons were instigators.

The documentary history thus allows for several conclusions about Nauvoo’s alleged crime “problem”:

1. Some Mormons committed crimes—of varying degrees of seriousness.
2. LDS leaders publicly and privately spoke out strongly and repeatedly against criminal activity.

3. The Nauvoo High Council tried many cases and had a respectably high conviction rate but tried to reconcile the parties or obtain a repentant confession whenever possible.
4. Non-Mormons occasionally used Nauvoo as a base from which to commit crimes in Nauvoo and in other areas.
5. Often perpetrators tried to make it appear that they were LDS or that they were acting for the LDS church.
6. Many neighboring nonmembers, unable to discriminate between good and bad Saints or to know if lawbreakers from Nauvoo were in fact Mormons, came to believe Nauvoo was a hotbed of criminal activity.
7. LDS control of Nauvoo courts gave the justice dispensed there a pro-Mormon edge.
8. The destruction of the *Expositor* seemed to many to be irrefutable proof that LDS officials encouraged lawbreaking.
9. Some Saints before, during, and after the Nauvoo sojourn believed that under some circumstances the taking of gentile goods was justifiable, thus arousing anger among their neighbors and public reprimand from Church officials.
10. Some Saints practiced plural marriage while at the same time acknowledging it only in private and denying it in public, and enough “reliable” rumors leaked around to this effect that Mormon neighbors became infuriated.
11. Anti-Mormon crusaders exploited crime cases, with or without strong Mormon ties, to arouse public sentiment against the Saints.
12. To outsiders bothered by why the Saints created the massive Nauvoo Legion, it made sense that the army might be there to protect Saints against state and local officials and hence to defend wrong-doing, especially when indictments and warrants were rejected by Nauvoo partisans.

Very likely the public then as now expected religious communities and followers to be above reproach. When adherents faltered, more attention was paid to their crimes than would be directed

at nonreligious communities or individuals. In such settings, one provable case or two very easily can create a stereotype.

More research, similar to what is provided here about Nauvoo, is needed in order to identify how extensive crime was elsewhere at the time and how it was handled. Nauvoo should be compared with contemporary cities similar in size, location, and stage of development. Until then, available records regarding Nauvoo's crime and punishment indicate that images of Nauvoo as a crime haven contain elements of truth but are exaggerations.

NOTES

¹Samuel W. Taylor, "The Nauvoo Everyone Should Know," *Restoration Trail Forum* 14 (October 1988): 4.

²Taylor, "Nauvoo Everyone Should Know," 4. Actually there is no record of a brothel in Nauvoo even though Palaskie Cahoon was accused of operating one. There were bars and some women sold sexual favors.

³Samuel W. Taylor, *Nightfall at Nauvoo* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 54.

⁴Thomas Ford, *History of Illinois, From Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847*, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. C. Griggs; New York: Ivison and Phinney, 1854), 2:10.

⁵Ford, *History of Illinois* 2:11.

⁶Ford, *History of Illinois* 2:11.

⁷John William Gunnison, *The Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake: A History of Their Rise and Progress; Peculiar Doctrines, Present Condition, and Prospects Derived from Personal Observation during a Residence among Them* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott and Grambo, 1852), 116.

⁸Thomas Gregg, *History of Hancock County, Illinois* (Chicago: C. C. Chapman, 1880), 318.

⁹Ellen Olivia Carlson, "The Latter-day Saints as a Factor in Illinois History" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1925), 77.

¹⁰Quoted in Clyde E. Buckingham, "Mormonism in Illinois," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society* 32 (June 1939): 185.

¹¹George R. Gayler, "A Social, Economic and Political Study of the Mormons in Western Illinois, 1839–1846" (Ph.D. diss., University of Indiana, 1965), 128.

¹²Truman G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Bookcraft: Salt Lake City, 1989), 112.

¹³John L. Harr, "Law and the Lawless in the Lower Mississippi Valley, 1815–1860" (n.p., n.d.), 51; copy in possession of the author.

¹⁴David Grimsted, "Rioting in Its Jacksonian Setting," *American Historical Review* 77 (April 1972): 362.

¹⁵"Edward Beecher and the Murder of Elijah Lovejoy," in *Western Illinois Heritage*, ed. John E. Hallwas (Macomb: Illinois Heritage, 1983), 98–99.

¹⁶Grimsted, "Rioting in Its Jacksonian Setting," 365; see also Pauline Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (January 1970): 3–35.

¹⁷ Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty; Mormons in America, 1830–1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 65, 160.

¹⁸ Buckingham, "Mormonism in Illinois," 176.

¹⁹ David J. Bodenhamer, "Law and Disorder on the Early Frontier: Marion County, Indiana, 1823–1859," *Western Historical Quarterly* 10 (July 1979): 336. See also Joe B. Frantz, "The Frontier Tradition: An Invitation to Violence," in *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, a staff report to the U.S. National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), 119–43.

²⁰ Bodenhamer, "Law and Disorder on the Early Frontier," 328–29.

²¹ Bodenhamer, "Law and Disorder on the Early Frontier," 331–33. Moral crimes are defined by Bodenhamer as "gambling, retailing liquor, fornication, adultery, betting, public indecency, keeping bawdy houses, enticing a female into prostitution" (331n).

²² Moral crimes also represented the highest number of prosecutions in Marion County, Indiana.

²³ Bodenhamer, "Law and Disorder on the Early Frontier," 328.

²⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 42:18–25.

²⁵ Articles of Faith 12.

²⁶ B. H. Roberts, *The Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 2:15–16; 3:341–42; hereafter cited as *CHC*.

²⁷ See "Skulduggery along the Mississippi," *Eastern Illinois Heritage*, ed. John E. Hallwas (Macomb: Illinois Heritage, 1983), 144–45.

²⁸ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, typescript, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 1:333, May 20, 1839.

²⁹ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, May 22, 1839, 1:334.

³⁰ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, May 28, 1839, 1:335.

³¹ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, May 21, 1839, 1:334.

³² *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, May 30, 1839, 1:337.

³³ *CHC* 2:50–51.

³⁴ *CHC* 2:51; see also Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 272–73.

³⁵ Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 272–73.

³⁶ Jeremiah Hughes, ed., *Niles' National Register*, 53 vols. (Baltimore: Jeremiah Hughes), 56 (September 1839–March 1840): July 20, 1839.

³⁷ *Alton Commercial Gazette*, June 18, 1839; and *Sangamo Journal*, June 21, 1839.

³⁸ Charles P. Kane, *The Christian Church of Springfield, Illinois: Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society for the Year 1907* (Springfield: Phillips, 1908), 304; also quoted in Kenneth Gordon Crider, "Rhetorical Aspects of the Controversies over Mormonism in Illinois, 1839–1847" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1956), 94–95.

³⁹ Adam W. Snyder, *Illinois History 1817–1842* (Virginia, Ill.: N.p., n.d.), 18.

⁴⁰ Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 326; and George W. Smith, *History of Illinois and Her People* (Chicago: American History Society, 1921), 274.

⁴¹ David E. Miller, *Westward Migration of the Mormons with Special Emphasis on the History of Nauvoo*, report submitted to the National Park Service (1963), 167.

⁴² Quoted in George R. Gayler, "Economic and Political Study of the Mormons in Western Illinois" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1955), 132; Gayler also published

"The Attempt of the State of Missouri to Extradite Joseph Smith 1841–1843," *Northwest Missouri State College Studies* 19 (June 1, 1955); *The Expositor Affair, Prelude to the Downfall of Joseph Smith* (Maryville, Mo.: Rush, 1961); and "Governor Ford and the Death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society* 50 (Winter 1957): 391–411.

⁴³ Diary of William Huntington, 17, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁴⁴ George W. Smith, *History of Illinois*, 286.

⁴⁵ Henry Brown, *History of Illinois from Its Discovery to Present Day* (New York: J. Winchester, New World Press, 1844), 395, 398.

⁴⁶ William V. Pooley, "The Settlement of Illinois from 1830–1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1905), 519.

⁴⁷ Crider, "Controversies over Mormonism in Illinois," 186.

⁴⁸ Edward Bonney, *The Banditti of the Prairies* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, n.d.), 18.

⁴⁹ Narrative of Franklin D. Richards, Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

⁵⁰ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, June 2, 1839, 1:338.

⁵¹ *Times and Seasons* 1 (April, 1840): 92.

⁵² *Times and Seasons* 1 (March 15, 1841): 358.

⁵³ *Wasp*, October 1, 1842.

⁵⁴ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 29, 1843; and Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Nauvoo Neighborhood: A Little Philadelphia or Unique City Set upon a Hill?" *Journal of Mormon History* 11 (1984): 93.

⁵⁵ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 5, 1843.

⁵⁶ *Times and Seasons* 1 (March 1, 1841): 342.

⁵⁷ *Times and Seasons* 2 (April 1, 1841): 368.

⁵⁸ *Times and Seasons* 2 (May 15, 1841): 411–12.

⁵⁹ *Times and Seasons* 2 (July 1, 1841): 464.

⁶⁰ *Times and Seasons* 5 (November 1, 1844): 696.

⁶¹ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 12, 1840, 25; hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives.

⁶² Nauvoo High Council Minutes, April 19, 1840, 26.

⁶³ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, May 2, 1840, 27.

⁶⁴ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, June 20, 1840, 9–10.

⁶⁵ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, August 8, 1840, 13.

⁶⁶ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, August 17, 1840, 14–16.

⁶⁷ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, October 17 and 24, 1840, 21–22.

⁶⁸ *Times and Seasons* 1 (October 1840): 185.

⁶⁹ *Times and Seasons* 2 (November 1, 1840): 204.

⁷⁰ *Times and Seasons* 2 (November 15, 1840): 221–22.

⁷¹ *Hawkeye and Iowa Patriot*, January 21, 1841.

⁷² *Times and Seasons* 2 (January 15, 1841): 288.

⁷³ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, February 6, 1841, 25–26.

⁷⁴ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, March 31, 1841, 26–27.

⁷⁵ *Wasp*, March 29, 1843; see also Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 282.

⁷⁶ *Daily Missouri Republican*, September 2, 1841.

⁷⁷ *CHC* 2:114.

⁷⁸ Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 278, 281.

⁷⁹ *Times and Seasons* 3 (December 1, 1841): 615; see also Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 178.

⁸⁰ *Warsaw Signal*, December 29, 1841.

⁸¹ Joel Hills Johnson, *Reminiscences and Journals, 1835–1882*, 1:35–37, LDS Church Archives. In another account of this incident appearing in the Macedonia Branch Minute Book, the Monmouth Jail is spelled as Monmont, but the other details are the same as reported by Johnson.

⁸² Bruce A. Van Orden, “Items of Instruction: Sections 130 and 131,” in *Hearken, O Ye People: Discourses on the Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Bruce R. McConkie and others (Sandy, Utah: Randall, 1984), 234.

⁸³ Ford, *History of Illinois* 2:168–70.

⁸⁴ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, March 25, 1842, 41.

⁸⁵ *Wasp*, April 16, 1842.

⁸⁶ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, April 6, 1841, 27–28, and May 9, 1842, 44.

⁸⁷ For further information regarding this incident, see Richard Lloyd Dewey, *Porter Rockwell: A Biography* (New York: Paramount, 1986); Harold Schindler, *Orrin Porter Rockwell: Man of God, Son of Thunder* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1966); and Monte B. McLaws, “The Attempted Assassination of Missouri’s Ex-Governor Lilburn W. Boggs,” *Missouri Historical Review* 60 (October 1965): 50–62.

⁸⁸ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, May 20, 1842, 1–2.

⁸⁹ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, May 28, 1842, 4.

⁹⁰ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, June 10, 1842, 5.

⁹¹ *Times and Seasons* 3 (July 1, 1842): 831–32.

⁹² *Illinois Republican*, July 9, 1842.

⁹³ Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 340.

⁹⁴ *Quincy Whig*, September 10, 1842, 2.

⁹⁵ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, September 3 and 4, 1842, 8–9.

⁹⁶ William Clayton, *Diary, First Presidency Archives*, Salt Lake City, October 19, 1843; see also D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904,” *Dialogue* 18 (Spring 1985): 9–105; and George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 122.

⁹⁷ Joseph Smith, Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols., 2d ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 6:164; hereafter cited as *HC*; and *Times and Seasons* 5 (February 1, 1844): 423.

⁹⁸ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, October 22, 1842, 13.

⁹⁹ *HC* 5:184.

¹⁰⁰ Cecil A. Snider, “Development of Attitudes in Sectarian Conflict: A Study of Mormonism in Illinois in Contemporary Newspaper Sources” (Master’s thesis, State University of Iowa, 1933), 16.

¹⁰¹ Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 281.

¹⁰² Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 318.

¹⁰³ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 2, January 28, 1843, 26–27; January 21, 1843, 25; February 4 and 11, 1843, 20–31.

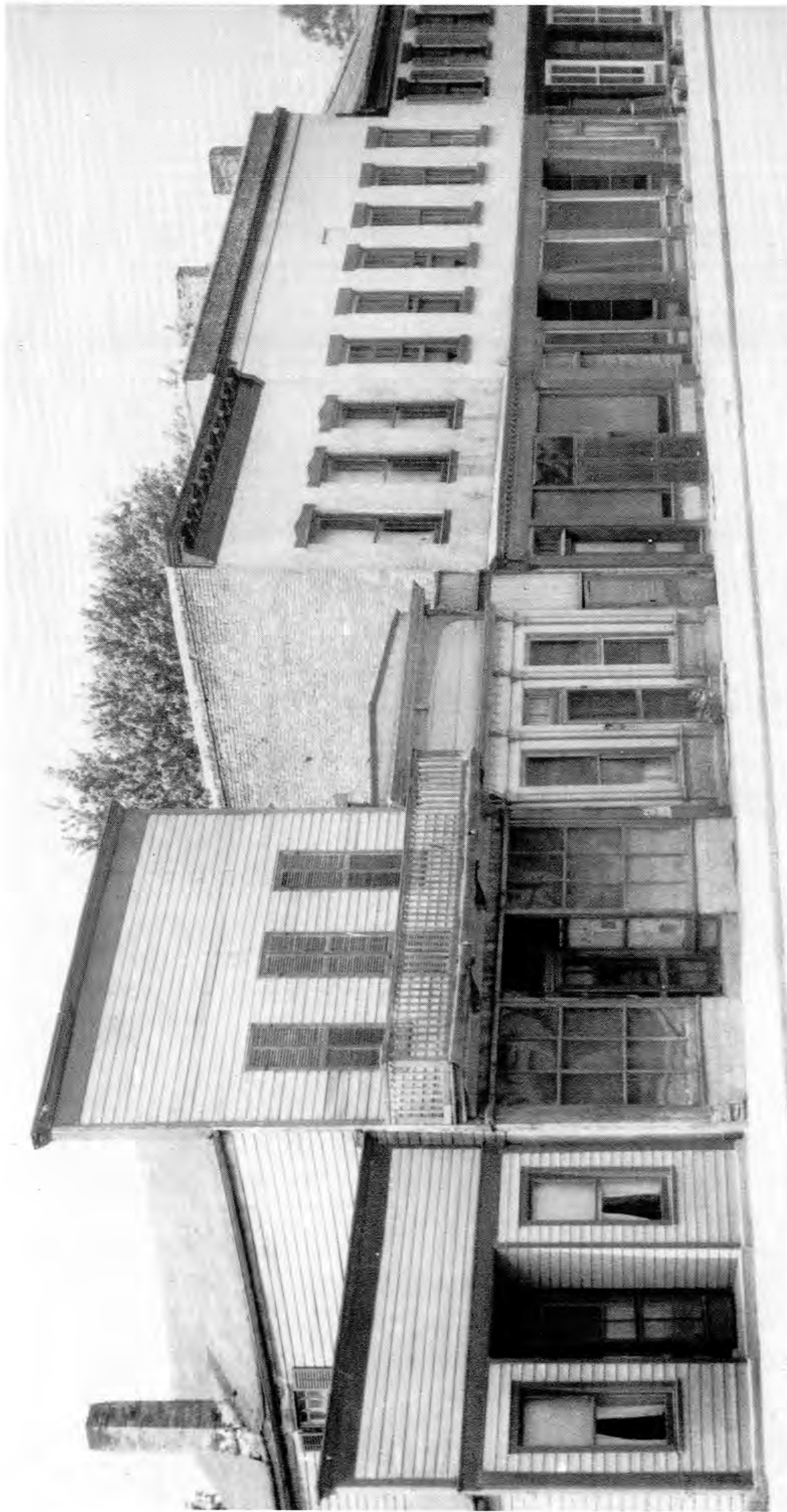
¹⁰⁴ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 3, February 11, 1843, 6; March 9, 1843, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 3, January 17, 1843, 22–23.

¹⁰⁶ Solomon J. Salisbury, “Reminiscences of an Octogenarian,” *Journal of History* 15 (January 1922): 285.

- ¹⁰⁷ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 27, 1843.
- ¹⁰⁸ *HC* 5:305.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Wasp*, March 29, 1843.
- ¹¹⁰ *HC* 5:34.
- ¹¹¹ *Times and Seasons* 4 (May 1, 1843): 184; and *Wasp*, April 19, 1843.
- ¹¹² *HC* 5:332–33.
- ¹¹³ *Wasp*, March 29, 1843.
- ¹¹⁴ *Wasp*, March 29, 1843.
- ¹¹⁵ J. M. Reid, *Sketches and Anecdotes of the Old Settlers and New Comers, the Mormon Bandits and Danite Band* (Keokuk, Ill.: R. B. Ogden, 1876), 34.
- ¹¹⁶ Reid, *Sketches and Anecdotes*, 35.
- ¹¹⁷ John Bowes, *Mormonism Exposed, in Its Swindling and Licentious Abominations, Refuted in Its Principles, and in the Claims of Its Head, the Modern Mohammed Joseph Smith, Who Is Proved to Have Been a Deceiver, and No Prophet of God* (London: E. War, n.d.), 64.
- ¹¹⁸ *Illinois Statesman*, January 15, 1844.
- ¹¹⁹ *Warsaw Message*, January 31, 1844.
- ¹²⁰ *Warsaw Signal*, February 28, 1844.
- ¹²¹ *Warsaw Signal*, April 25, 1844.
- ¹²² *Warsaw Signal*, June 5, 1844.
- ¹²³ *Warsaw Signal*, April 10, 1844.
- ¹²⁴ *Warsaw Signal*, April 10, 1844.
- ¹²⁵ Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 3, April 13, 1844, 27–28.
- ¹²⁶ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin Hill, *The Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 22, 42, 71, 75, 86–87, 185–86.
- ¹²⁷ See Kenneth W. Godfrey, “Non-Mormon Accounts of the Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith,” *John Whitmer Journal* 7 (1987): 12–20.
- ¹²⁸ See letter of General W. Douglas Knox to Willard Richards, July 25, 1844; copy in possession of author.
- ¹²⁹ Thurmon Dean Moody, “Nauvoo’s Whistling and Whittling Brigade,” *BYU Studies* 15 (Fall 1975): 480–90; and Nauvoo High Council Minutes, Book 4, September 21, 1844, 1; November 30, 1844, 1–6.
- ¹³⁰ Bonney, *Banditti of the Prairies*, 15.
- ¹³¹ Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), January 5, 1845, 1:14; hereafter cited as *Diary of Hosea Stout*.
- ¹³² *Diary of Hosea Stout*, April 3, 1845, 1:32.
- ¹³³ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, April 13, 1845, 1:34.
- ¹³⁴ *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 774.
- ¹³⁵ *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 774.
- ¹³⁶ *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 774.
- ¹³⁷ *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 774.
- ¹³⁸ *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 774–75.
- ¹³⁹ Barbara Howard and Junia Braby, “The Hodges Hanging,” *The Palimpsest* 60 (March/April 1979): 48–58; copy in possession of the author.
- ¹⁴⁰ Susan Easton Black, comp., *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1830–1848*, 50 vols. (Religious Studies Center, Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1989), 23:346, identifies Stephen Hodges as a Church member as early as the Church’s sojourn in Missouri.

- ¹⁴¹ Stout, *Reminiscence*, 16, 24.
- ¹⁴² Reid, *Sketches and Anecdotes*, 37–41; and “Edward Bonney: Bounty Hunter,” *Eastern Illinois Heritage*, ed. John E. Hallwas (Macomb: Illinois Heritage, 1983), 133–34.
- ¹⁴³ James M. Monroe Diary, 123.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, May 15, 1845, 1:43–44.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, 1:49, n. 10.
- ¹⁴⁶ HC 7:428, 439; *Warsaw Signal*, June 25 and July 2, 1845; and *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 9, 1845.
- ¹⁴⁷ HC 7:439; and *Diary of Hosea Stout*, September 16, 1845, 1:64.
- ¹⁴⁸ Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 340–41.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, September 17, 1845, 1:66.
- ¹⁵⁰ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, September 19, 1845, 1:66.
- ¹⁵¹ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, September 19, 1845, 1:69.
- ¹⁵² *Diary of Hosea Stout*, September 22, 1845, 1:71.
- ¹⁵³ Ford, *History of Illinois*, 299.
- ¹⁵⁴ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, October 8, 1845, 1:81.
- ¹⁵⁵ Gregg, *History of Hancock County*, 338.
- ¹⁵⁶ High Council Minutes, Book 5, January 18, 1845, 1; August 23, 1845, 15.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Warsaw Signal*, October 22, 1845; and *Missouri Reporter*, June 23, 1845.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Missouri Reporter*, October 31, 1845.
- ¹⁵⁹ Thomas Bullock, “Journal of Thomas Bullock (1816–1885): 31 August 1845 to 5 July 1846,” *BYU Studies* 31 (Winter 1991): 20 (September 19, 1845).
- ¹⁶⁰ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, March 13, 1845, 1:26, n. 53.
- ¹⁶¹ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, January 9, 1846, 1:103.
- ¹⁶² *Diary of Hosea Stout*, January 11, 1846, 1:104–5, n. 60.
- ¹⁶³ *Diary of Hosea Stout*, January 11, 1846, 1:104–5.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Niles' National Register*, January 3, 1846.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Missouri Reporter*, February 5, 1846.
- ¹⁶⁶ Bullock, “Journal,” 47–49 (February 9, 1846).
- ¹⁶⁷ Bowes, *Mormonism Exposed*, 63.



A 1936 (ca.) view of Main Street in Warsaw, Illinois (Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress, courtesy of Library of Congress). The *Warsaw Signal* office was located in the large building on the right. In this newspaper, editor Thomas Sharp reported several crimes supposedly perpetrated by Mormons and eventually called for the expulsion of the Mormons.