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"Will the Murderers Be Hung?": Albert Brown's 1844 Letter and the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith

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Answer
Nov 11th 1844
Respected Relative
I willingly comply with your request to write
to you to tel you all that I can on one sheet of
paper, in the first place then I will proceed to
Acknowledge the Receipt of one Box of Goods by the
hands of the Misses Munroe from the city of Utica who
arrived at the place near this Nov it contained a number
of Articles as follows, til we come to the second part
white flannel 10 yds Sometime 20 yds I believe red flannel
& 1/2 of dressmaker for pants vest pattern 1/2 yds
& 1/2 of Chequered goods each for caps which precisely
fitted he had 2 Pair socks yarn paper spoons and knives
of thread and also 2 letters one from Miss Louisa & the
other the Authors name was not attached to the other
consequently I cannot tell who wrote it. I should
write these are the articles mentioned in the
which we need for our own use, we can but acknow-
ledge our grateful thanks to Father for them
Sister Lois has not as yet got hers she lives near
twelve miles from the place we heard from her not
long since she sent word she is coming to spend
some time with us this winter she will we should address
a letter to some one of our friends where she has business
it now remains for me to give you a limited view
of the news as it stand at the present time you have
no doubt heard various and contradictory rumors for
three or four Months past concerning the Mormons some
at length some falsehood be this as it may the story runs
that a number of Apostates feeling very anxious to make
disturbance in the city got up a printing establishment
for the express purpose of vilifying and slandering and
if possible to destroy the whole Society of Latter Day
Saints the first paper contained the most profane and
was certainly one of the most foul filthy & libelous things
ever heard of where upon the City Council proceeded
to take measures to destroy it they proceeded according
to the strict letter of the Law so I every believe to
suppress the press or remit it as a nuisance

ENC 70921

Letter from Albert Brown to Albert Underwood, November 11, 1844. This four-page letter by Albert Brown, written less than four months after the martyrdom, recounts at length the widely discussed details of that event. Courtesy Albert Brown Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

“Will the Murderers Be Hung?”

Albert Brown’s 1844 Letter and the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith

Timothy Merrill

Albert Brown’s November 11, 1844, letter from Nauvoo to his New York relatives adds significantly to the historical record of Joseph Smith’s martyrdom. Brown wrote from the perspective of one loyal to Joseph Smith. When studied in connection with antagonistic accounts published earlier in *BYU Studies*, readers of the letter can sense the views, loyalties, and hostilities of the bitterly divided factions that swirled around Joseph Smith as they once did around Jesus Christ.¹

Written less than four months after the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the letter captures the Saints’ efforts to make sense of the brutal act. Albert Brown’s account of the martyrdom draws from a July 4, 1844, affidavit written by William M. Daniels and published by Lyman O. Littlefield in 1845. Littlefield’s sensational account portrayed a lynch mob intent on mutilating Joseph’s body “when a light, so sudden and powerful, burst from the heavens upon the bloody scene. . . . The arm of the ruffian, that held the knife, fell powerless; the muskets of the four, who fired, fell to the ground, and they all stood like marble statues.”² Chroniclers initially included this information in the Manuscript History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but B. H. Roberts considered the details

1. David W. Kilbourne to Reverend Thomas Dent, June 29, 1844, Kilbourne Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines; Warren A. Jennings, “The Lynching of an American Prophet,” *BYU Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 207–11.

2. Lyman O. Littlefield, *A Correct Account of the Murders of Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage on the 27th Day of June, 1844 by William M. Daniels, an Eye Witness* (Nauvoo, Ill.: John Taylor, 1845), 13–14, quoted in Dean C. Jessee, “Return to Carthage: Writing the History of Joseph Smith’s Martyrdom,” *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981): 16.

"questionable" and edited them out of the published *History of the Church*.³ Brown's letter evidences how this story spread quickly and widely after the murders. Whether factual or not, Saints used this story as part of an effort to cope with their shocking loss.

Except for the unverifiable story, Brown's letter is an efficient and accurate recounting of the events that led to Joseph's martyrdom and the trial of the accused assassins. Brown wrote it weeks after nine men were indicted for the murders. "The question arises," he wrote, "will the Murder[er]s be hung?" His expectation that they would not be punished is both historical and prescient. Joseph's accused assassins, some of whom were "leading citizens in Hancock County," were acquitted. Their guilt was tacitly acknowledged, but their actions represented the popular will.⁴

Albert Brown was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1807 and joined the LDS Church in 1832.⁵ A carpenter by trade, Brown served in Zion's Camp, the Nauvoo Legion, and the Mormon Battalion.⁶ He supported Joseph Smith and the Restoration at every turn, including serving as a doorkeeper in the House of the Lord during the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple.⁷ In Utah, Albert Brown served as a patriarch until he died in 1902

3. Jessee, "Return to Carthage," 16–17. Robert S. Wicks and Fred R. Foister, *Junius and Joseph: Presidential Politics and the Assassination of the First Mormon Prophet* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005), 276–79. For further discussion of the historiographical issues surrounding the Daniels account, see Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 395.

4. Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 6, 214. An editorial in the *Times and Seasons* asked, "If one of these murderers, their abettors or accessories before or after the fact, are suffered to cumber the earth, without being *dealt with according to law*, what is life worth, and what is the benefit of laws? and more than all, what is the use of institutions which savages would honor, where *civilized beings* murder without cause or provocation?" "The Murder," *Times and Seasons* 5 (July 15, 1844): 585; emphasis in original.

5. Thomas Hull, "Events of the Month," *Improvement Era* 5 (March 1902): 398; Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 662.

6. Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio, 1830–1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 377; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 662.

7. Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 128; Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:342 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*); Susan Easton Black, comp., *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1848*, 50 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 7:12–15.

in Mill Creek at age ninety-four.⁸ In 1980 *BYU Studies* published another historically important letter by Albert Brown dealing with the Book of Abraham, and this 1844 letter was displayed in the gallery at the Library of Congress during the Joseph Smith bicentennial conference.⁹ Both that letter and the one published here for the first time are housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Brown's spelling, punctuation, capitalization, superscripts, and grammar have been maintained. His strikeouts are interlined ~~like this~~; his inserts are in angle brackets <like these>. Editorial inserts are in brackets [like these].

8. Stanley B. Kimball, "Sources on the History of the Mormons in Ohio: 1830-38 (Located East of the Mississippi)," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 527-28; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 662.

9. Christopher C. Lund, "A Letter Regarding the Acquisition of the Book of Abraham," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 4 (1980): 402-3; "The Worlds of Joseph Smith Gallery Display," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 4 (2005): 127.

Albert Brown's 1844 Letter

Amos L. Underwood
Utica On[e]ida CO NY

Nauvoo

Nov 11 the 1844

Respected Relatives

I willingly comply with your request to write to you to tel you all that I can on one sheet of paper, in the first place then I will proced to Acknowl-
edeg the Receipt of one Box of Drygoods by the hand of the Misses Mun-
rose from the city of Utica¹⁰ who Arived at this place near the 1 <first> Nov
it contained a number of Articals as follows til we come to the second part
white flannel 10 yds Domestic 30 yds I believe red flannel 5 yds Casimear
for pants or vest patter dress pattern Also 5 yds chquered goods cap for
Carlos¹¹ which precisely fited his h<e>ad 2 Pair socks yarn paper spools
and skeins of thread and also to letters one from Miss Louisa¹² & Bro wn
the Authors name was not attached to the other consequently I cannot tell
who wrote it. If I r^ecolect write these are the Articals we received [docu-
ment damage obscures at least one word] which we need for our own use,
we can but acknowledge our grateful thanks to Father for these [?] Sister
Ives¹³ has not as yet go hirs She lives near twelve miles from this place
we heard from her not Long sinse she sent word she is coming to spend

10. Probably refers to Mrs. R. Monroe of Utica, New York. Sister Monroe was an active member of the Utica Branch, which numbered sixty-one saints in 1842. James Blakeslee, "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 3 (July 15, 1842): 861; John P. Green and E. P. Maginn, "General Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 4 (August 15, 1843): 127, 300.

11. Don Carlos Brown was Albert's son. He was born April 6, 1843, in Nauvoo. At the time of this letter, Carlos would have been eighteen months old. Black, *Membership*, 7:13.

12. Miss Louisa possibly refers to Louisa A. Brown, Albert's niece. See Black, *Membership*, 7:146.

13. Mary Ives was a widow whose husband died of dysentery after the Saints' expulsion from Missouri. Mary took in boarders to support herself and her children. Apparently, Mary anticipated receiving supplies similar to those Albert listed. Several years before this letter she wrote to her parents, "I can work for provisions but it is verry hard to get clothing more particular Flannel unless one has the money." Mary Ives to Parents and Friends, ca. 1840, photocopy, Amos L. Underwood Correspondence, 1831-1853, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives), quoted in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In Their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 9, 93.

Some time with us this winter she will no [illegible word] address a letter to som one of our friends when she has Leisure it now remains for me to give you a limited view of the knews as it stands at the presant time you have no Doubt heard various and Contradictory rumors for three or four Mo<n>ths past concerning the Mormons som th^e truth som Fals-hood be this as it may the story runs thus A number of Apostates feeling very anxious to make Disturbance in this city got up a Printing Establishment¹⁴ for the Expres Purpose of vilifying and slandering and if Possible to Destroy the whole sosity of Latter Day Saints the first paper contained their prospe<c>tus it was Certainly one of the most fowl filthy Libilous ever heard of,¹⁵ where upon the City Counsel proceded to take Measurs to Destroy it they proceded acording to the strict letter of the Law as I very believe to Demolish the press or remit it as a neusance¹⁶ after evry Counselor had Expressed his views and wishes in relation to it it finally passed to a vote the ["the" blotted out, but not clear if intentional] Result was only one Desenting <voice> voice¹⁷ som ten or twelve persons then ~~proceded to~~ Repaired to the office opend the door took the press and threw it into the street smashed it to peeces consumed the furnitur destroyed the fixturs,¹⁸

14. On May 7, 1844, a group of apostates formed a printing establishment a block from the Nauvoo Temple site. The *Nauvoo Expositor* published its only issue (1,000 copies) a month later on June 7, 1844. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 362. The *Expositor* was "established by William and Wilson Law, Charles and Robert D. Foster, Francis M. and Chauncey L. Higbee, and managed by Sylvester Emmans." Franklin William Scott, *Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879*, 6 vols. (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1910), 6:261.

15. The *Nauvoo Expositor's* stated purpose was to "explode the vicious principles of Joseph Smith, and those who practice the same abominations and whoredoms." The primary arguments of the paper were that Joseph Smith "had too much power, that polygamy was whoredom in disguise, and that the Nauvoo charter should be unconditionally repealed." John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith: An American Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 197.

16. For a detailed account of the legal issues surrounding the council's decision to destroy the press, see Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the Nauvoo Expositor," *Utah Law Review* 9 (Winter 1965): 862-905.

17. Councilman Benjamin Warrington cast the dissenting vote. He did not belong to the Church and believed that a fine of \$3,000 should be levied against those who libeled. *History of the Church*, 6:445-46.

18. The Council passed the ordinance to destroy the press around 6:30 PM on June 10, 1844. Joseph then instructed John P. Greene, the City Marshal, to

destroy the printing press from whence issues the *Nauvoo Expositor*, and pi [scatter] the type of said printing establishment in the street, and burn all the *Expositors* and libelous handbills found in said establishment; and if resistance be offered to your execution of this order by the owners

thus one of the Meanest vulgares printing Establishments that Ever disgrast anny place or People from the Beginning of time up to the presant Date was remitted according to Constituton and the Laws of Illinois this as a matter of course Greatly Incensed the Mob party of handcok [Hancock] county¹⁹ who thirsted for the Blood of Joseph and hiram Smith and others also however those alone have been killed after the Destruction of the Above press the owners of it Left the city for the Cuntry²⁰ got [document damage obscures several words] they could and those together with others who have for some time saught the Lives of our valuable citizen<n>s considered this a good oppertunity to Execut their hellish plots convened at Carthage ^{held} their Mob Meeting²¹ finally got out a [w]rit and sent an officer to Nauvoo for Joseph and hiram with Maⁿy other of for no other purpos thant to Mass[a]cre them they refused to give themselves up until the Governor Interfered who by the by the Mob party had Deputed

or others, demolish the house; and if anyone threatens you or the Mayor or the officers of the city, arrest those who threaten you, and fail not to execute this order without delay, and make due return hereon. (*History of the Church*, 6:448.)

Greene fulfilled the order with the assistance of the city police. The Nauvoo Legion under Jonathan Dunham was ready to assist. By 8:00 PM it was finished.

19. One of the most vocal antagonists was Thomas Sharp, editor of the *Warsaw Signal* and organizer of the Anti-Mormon Party. Sharp was outraged after the destruction of the *Expositor's* press and wrote, "CITIZENS ARISE, ONE AND ALL!!!—Can you *stand* by, and suffer such INFERNAL DEVILS! to ROB men of their property and RIGHTS, without avenging them. We have no time for comment, every man will make his own. LET IT BE MADE with POWDER AND BALL!!!" "Unparalleled Outrage at Nauvoo," *Warsaw Signal*, June 12, 1844; Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 540–43; emphasis in the original.

20. The Mormon paper *Nauvoo Neighbor* insisted the dissenters left Nauvoo "as a matter of their choice." The apostates claimed the dissenters left under duress. See Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 370. A month later, Church leaders claimed that the dissenters had set fire to their own homes, perhaps hoping to blame it on Church members. The police extinguished the fire before it spread. In Carthage, the dissenters persuaded Justice Morrison to issue a writ for Joseph's arrest. Willard Richards and John Taylor to Reuben Hedlock, July 9, 1844, published in *Millennial Star* 24 (November 22, 1862): 743.

21. Arguably the most important "mob" meeting occurred in Carthage on the eve of the Martyrdom. Anti-Mormons gathered together as the Carthage Central Committee, or Committee of Safety, to determine what should be done with Joseph and Hyrum. Governor Thomas Ford was notably present, along with important business and political leaders from around the country. It was decided that after the governor left Carthage the following day, a dozen handpicked men would shoot the Smiths. Wicks and Foister, *Junius and Joseph*, 164–65.

Messengers to hold an intervue with ~~him~~ the Governor soon repaired to carthag where he was soon

[unclear line of writing along fold]

of Mobocrcy his mind became poisoned with falshood and finally maid a Deman for the Men a bove Mentioned who Did not give them selves up until the Governor had pldge his word and the faith of the State of Illinois that they should be protected²² after som three or ~~or~~ four Days consultation thy concluded to repair to Carthage to Meet the Governor²³ Joseph well knowing howevr before he left home that he never should return ~~here~~ a live for said he I am Going Like a Lamb to Slaughter but I have a conscienc void of offence toards God and all men I shall dye

22. Governor Ford repeatedly pledged to Joseph his protection and guaranteed him “a trial safe from vigilantes.” Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 375. For a contemporary discussion of the governor’s involvement in the murders, see “Was Governor Ford Responsible for the Murder of the Prophet and Patriarch of the New Dispensation?” *History of the Church*, 7:113–16.

23. On the night of June 22, Joseph, Hyrum, Orrin Porter Rockwell, and Willard Richards had crossed over the river into Iowa intending to go into hiding. The next day Joseph wrote Emma, “I do not know where I shall go, or what I shall do, but shall if possible endeavor to get to the city of washington.” Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 616. Other accounts record the Prophet’s intention to head west towards the Rocky Mountains. “The way is open. It is clear to my mind what to do. . . . We will cross the river tonight, and go away to the West.” *History of the Church*, 6:545–46. Joseph F. Smith, who was nearly six years old at the time, remembered,

The last time I saw [Joseph] was when he crossed the river, he and my father, from Iowa back to Nauvoo, after they had started for the Rocky Mountains; for let me tell you that the Prophet Joseph contemplated journeying to these mountains for the purpose of looking out a gathering place for the people of God. Being constantly persecuted by his enemies, he laid his plans to slip out of their grasp and way, and come out to these mountains to explore them with a view to seeking out a place where the people of God could be gathered and worship God in peace and according to the dictates of their own consciences. But some of these false brethren, of whom I have been speaking, raised the hue and cry that only a false shepherd flew from the flock when the wolves approached. He was upbraided by some of those false brethren of being a false shepherd. When that word came to him he was wounded in his feelings, and so hurt that he turned round and said: “If this is all my friends care for my life, why should I care for it?” And he returned home and went, as he said, “like a lamb to the slaughter.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Collected Discourses*, comp. and ed. Brian H. Stuy, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif.: B. H. S. Publishing, 1987–92], 5:28.)

inncent²⁴ he finally arived at carthage where were gathered sevral hundred men or demons wating impatin[tly] to reek their vengence on an inocent Man²⁵ they immediately gave Bail for their appearance to Court after which they were arrested for treason on purpost to Detain them²⁶ knowing they could not Sustain any charg against them after they had been there two or three days the g[?] governor finally concluded to disband his men all but two or three companes who had sworn that Joseph and hiram Smih should never leave Carthage a live out of these a guard was selected

24. Albert Brown perhaps learned of this statement of the Prophet from the *Times and Seasons* July 15, 1844, article, which recorded Joseph as saying, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter: but I am calm as a summer's morning: I have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward all men: I shall die innocent." "The Murder," *Times and Seasons* 5 (July 15, 1844): 585 (emphasis in original). The Prophet's final entry in his *History* was, "I told Stephen Markham that if I and Hyrum were ever taken again we should be massacred, or I was not a prophet of God. I want Hyrum to live to avenge my blood, but he is determined not to leave me." *History of the Church*, 6:546 (emphasis in original). In response to those who pled with him not to go to Carthage, Joseph replied,

If I do not go there, the result will be the destruction of this city and its inhabitants; and I cannot think of my dear brothers and sisters and their children suffering the scenes of Missouri again in Nauvoo; no, it is better for your brother, Joseph, to die for his brothers and sisters, for I am willing to die for them. My work is finished; the Lord has heard my prayers and has promised that we shall have rest. (Dan Jones, "The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith and His Brother, Hyrum," trans., Ronald D. Dennis, *BYU Studies* 24, no. 1 [1984]: 85.)

25. When Joseph and Hyrum arrived in Carthage, the soldiers "shouted obscenities and threatened 'to shoot the damned Mormons.'" Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 378. Colonel Thomas Geddes inquired of Governor Ford if he would interfere with the assassination of the Smiths. "No, I will not, . . . until you are through!" the governor replied. Wicks and Foister, *Junius and Joseph*, 163.

26. Joseph had been arrested on a writ for rioting. Having lured him to Carthage, his adversaries then proceeded to charge him with treason—a capital crime that was punishable by hanging. Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 18. This explains the interchange between the Prophet and Dr. Willard Richards,

"If we go into the cell, will you go in with us?" The doctor answered, "Brother Joseph you did not ask me to cross the river with you—you did not ask me to come to Carthage—you did not ask me to come to jail with you—and do you think I would forsake you now? But I will tell you what I will do; if you are condemned to be hung for treason, I will be hung in your stead, and you shall go free." Joseph said "You cannot." The doctor replied, "I will." (*History of the Church*, 6:16.)

to guard the Jail in which these mene were unlawfully Detained²⁷ on the Morning of the Day on which Joseph and hiram was killed the governor had maid [damage obscures words] to March to Nauvoo to make [damage, presumably "a"] Speech to citizns²⁸ this being a favourable oppertu[nity] [damages] Murders to the a mount of betwene 1 and two hundrd prepared themselves²⁹ som painted yellow som black som red³⁰ and in the after part of the Day³¹ Repaired to the Jail Broke opne the door Discharged their Muskit killed Joseph³² and hiram Smith³³ Dead on the spo[t] [final letter cut off] and wounded John tailor very seriously³⁴ he has since recovered

27. Major Franklin Worrell, who was supposed to protect the Prophet as an officer of the guard at the jail, warned Dan Jones, "We have had too much trouble to bring Old Joe here to let him ever escape alive, and unless you want to die with him you had better leave before sundown; and you are not a damned bit better than him for taking his part, and you'll see that I can prophesy better than Old Joe, for neither he nor his brother, nor anyone who will remain with them will see the sun set today." *History of the Church*, 6:602.

28. Governor Ford acted as a "Judas," leaving Carthage knowing of the plot against the Prophet. Ford had given his word to Joseph that "if I go [to Nauvoo], I will certainly take you along." Wicks and Foister, *Junius and Joseph*, 162–63. Breaking his promise, the Governor traveled to Nauvoo where he spoke to 5,000 Saints gathered to hear news of their beloved leader. Many Church members, including Porter Rockwell and Stephen Markham, believed the Governor's trip was planned as a pretext to give the mob an opportunity to kill the Prophet while providing an alibi for the Governor. See Wicks and Foister, *Junius and Joseph*, 191–92.

29. For a list of men who were possibly involved, see *History of the Church*, 7:142–43. Recent scholarship implicates John C. Elliot as the man "who shot the fatal bullet into the breast of the Prophet Joseph." Wicks and Foister, *Junius and Joseph*, 176–78, 239–42.

30. This account is one of three contemporary accounts that describes the mob as having painted faces rather than merely "blackened" ones. See Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 724 n. 37.

31. Shortly after 5:00 PM.

32. Accounts do not agree on whether Joseph was shot after he hit the ground. Leonard argues that he was not. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 397, 725 n. 50. The authors of *Junius and Joseph* argue that Joseph was indeed shot while leaning against the well on the ground. Wicks and Foister, *Junius and Joseph*, 178–80 n. 76.

33. Hyrum was also hit by four balls. Willard Richards, an eyewitness, recorded that the first shot entered "the side of his nose" causing Hyrum to fall backwards onto the floor. After exclaiming, "I am a dead man," another musket ball grazed his chest, passed through his throat, and entered his head. "Two Minutes in Jail," *History of the Church*, 6:619–20.

34. At nearly the same moment, one ball hit John Taylor in the left leg just below the knee (giving him a limp for the rest of his life) and another struck his pocket watch, stopping it at 5:16 PM. He was also shot in the left wrist and left hip,

doctor Richards was in the same room but escaped unhurt,³⁵ there was one occurrence which I must relate after they had shot these Brethren one [damaged words] to take off his head at this Moment there was a sharp flash of light flashed around them and the four men ^{that} don the horrid deed were disarmed of their strength their guns fell to the ground and had to be carried or helped of a way from the spot, after all this Mobocrats and Murders air not satisfied with Blood Matters have continued with more or less Excitemen up until the present time however it has now mostly died away I would say that Eight or ten of those Murderers have been Indited be for the Court,³⁶ the question arises will the Murders be be hung it is very unlikely no Murderer has ever bin Punished I believe sinse the world began for Murdering a P^{ro}phit of the Lord³⁷

I have now written what I wish to at this on this subject our papers contain an impartial account of the whole affiar, but to conclude I wish you prosperity and happiness

"cutting away a piece of flesh . . . as large as a man's hand." "Two Minutes in Jail," in *History of the Church* 6:620.

35. Brigham Young later recounted,

I recollect a promise Joseph gave to Willard [Richards] at a certain time when he clothed him with a priestly garment. Said he, "Willard, never go without this garment on your body, for you will stand where the balls will fly around you like hail and men will fall dead by your side, and if you will never part with this garment there never shall a ball injure you." I heard him say this (voice in the stand: "So did I.") It is true. When the mob shot Joseph, Willard was there and Br. Taylor was in the room. I have nothing to say about the rest. You know about it. Willard obeyed the words of the Prophet. He said, "I will die before I part with this garment." The balls flew around him, riddled his clothes, and shaved a passage through one of his whiskers. (Brigham Young, *Brigham Young Addresses, 1860–1864: A Chronological Compilation of Known Addresses of the Prophet Brigham Young*, comp. and ed. Elden J. Watson, 6 vols. [Salt Lake City: Elden J. Watson, 1980] 4:1, July 14, 1861. Original in Church Archives)

36. Those indicted were John Wills, William Voras, William N. Grover, Jacob C. Davis, Mark Aldrich, Thomas C. Sharp, Levi Williams, Gallaher, and Allen. Only five men were brought to trial: Sharp, Williams, Aldrich, Davis, and Grover. Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 51–52.

37. No one was convicted for the murders of Joseph and Hyrum. "Those who were charged with the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith and judged by their peers not guilty of murder resumed their lives. . . . Then, despite legends to the contrary, they lived out their lives as respected citizens with successful careers in their communities." Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 416.

I wish further more that you could see and understand the fullness of the gospel as it is revealed in the Last Days firmly believing that it would constitute your happiness in this world and in the world to come you would be prepared to understand the sines of the times also, I must come to a close I must say to Louisa I thank hir for the goodness and generosity she has manifested in hir Litter to me and may the Bessings of Almighty God be with hir is the Preyr of hir unworthy Uncle and all the re[s]t

Albert Brown

Timothy Merrill (tim_merrill@byu.edu) is an instructor of religious studies at Brigham Young University. He received his JD from J. Reuben Clark Law School in 2005. Timothy would like to thank Steven Harper for introducing him to Brown's letter.