



7-1-2011

# John Taylor's June 27, 1854, Account of the Martyrdom

LaJean P. Carruth

Mark L. Staker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>

## Recommended Citation

Carruth, LaJean P. and Staker, Mark L. (2011) "John Taylor's June 27, 1854, Account of the Martyrdom," *BYU Studies Quarterly*: Vol. 50 : Iss. 3 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol50/iss3/3>

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

# John Taylor's June 27, 1854, Account of the Martyrdom

*Transcribed by LaJean Purcell Carruth  
Introduced and Edited by Mark Lyman Staker*

On Tuesday, June 27, 1854, a large congregation of Latter-day Saints gathered in what has since become known as the Old Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. The meeting served as an extension of the annual April general conference and was scheduled to mark the tenth anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. As the day grew miserably hot, Brigham Young directed the bishops in the audience to provide fifty buckets of water from City Creek at the doors in order to pass drinking ladles into the crowded, perspiring congregation.

John Taylor was the featured speaker and would give what appears to be his first public address sharing his eyewitness account of the events leading up to and including the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Two scribes, George D. Watt and Thomas Bullock, recorded the meeting, including Brigham Young's introductory sermon on Joseph Smith followed by John Taylor's historical narrative detailing the martyrdom.

George D. Watt's high skill level with Pitman shorthand enabled him to work quickly. He recorded these sermons virtually verbatim, only occasionally missing a few words as he strove to keep up with the speakers. Most of what Watt recorded survives in his 1854 papers in a bound notebook. The title to this book is written in Deseret Alphabet, a phonographic writing system Watt helped develop earlier that same year, and reads: "Note book June 27th 1854 Contents." Underneath this, written in Pitman shorthand, is a brief description of the contents of the notebook: "Sermon by President Brigham Young on the death of Joseph testifying of him. A description of the murder of the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum his

brother by John Taylor. See note book mark, part of the description of the murder of Joseph Hyrum.”<sup>1</sup>

The booklet includes Brigham Young’s entire morning sermon in which he bore a lengthy testimony of Joseph Smith, his prophetic call, and their close relationship. Parts of the transcription of Brigham Young’s sermon are included in the footnotes to provide background to some of John Taylor’s comments. The rest of the notebook has roughly two-thirds of John Taylor’s sermon. The “note book mark” referred to in the title is an asterisk at the end of the text along with a brief note that the remainder of the sermon is in another book even though there are several empty pages at the end of the volume. Unfortunately, the second notebook with the remaining portion of the Watt transcription is missing. It likely served as the basis for John Taylor’s later published account since Watt at times discarded his shorthand records after transcribing them into longhand. The missing Watt material is replaced here with Thomas Bullock’s record of the last one-third of the sermon.

Unlike the Watt record of the sermon, Bullock’s account was primarily in longhand but included shorthand for conjunctions, prepositions, and many words that could be produced with a single dot or flick of the hand. His account only summarized the narrative, however, and, even when it reads as a seamless sentence, when compared to the Watt material it is clear that Bullock often combined three or four spoken sentences into a single phrase as he wrote, leaving out significant details. Bullock also wrote in the middle of his manuscript that he stopped recording briefly because of a nosebleed, but he recovered in time to record the historical narrative included here. A digital copy of the Bullock recording of the sermon is readily available as part of the Selected Collections series published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>2</sup>

### Significance of the Document

John Taylor’s June 27, 1854, sermon followed Willard Richards’s death on March 11 and Church Patriarch John Smith’s death on May 23 of that same year. Although John Smith had visited his nephews Joseph and Hyrum at Carthage Jail, Willard Richards had been their close companion throughout the events of their last few days and kept a journal during the days

---

1. George D. Watt, “Note book June 27th 1854 Contents,” George D. Watt Papers, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. The shorthand manuscript of John Taylor’s sermon is found in this book.

2. Richard E. Turley Jr., ed., *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002).

and hours leading up to the martyrdom. The journal focused heavily on recording the time events occurred, however, with only brief notes as to what happened, so Richards could go back and fill in the details later.<sup>3</sup> The journal was useful to the person who had written it as an aid in recalling the sequence of events, but because of its cryptic, sketchy nature it was not as useful for others who wanted to learn about those events. Both of these deaths represented a loss of knowledge about events surrounding the martyrdom.

George A. Smith was called in April 1854 to replace Willard Richards as Church Historian. He moved rapidly to collect Church history, specifically that which focused on the martyrdom. Edward A. Bedell, an aide-de-camp to Illinois Governor Thomas Ford at the time of Joseph and Hyrum Smith's martyrdom, was then in the Utah Territory as an Indian agent and was interviewed in the Historian's Office during April 1854. Thomas Bullock recorded brief notes of Bedell's memories, some of which were written down in Pitman shorthand. Transcriptions of Bullock's shorthand are reproduced in the following paragraph in italic font to distinguish them from transcriptions of the longhand text in standard font.<sup>4</sup>

---

3. Dean C. Jessee, "Return to Carthage: Writing the History of Joseph Smith's Martyrdom," *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981): 3–20. For more information about the Martyrdom and Nauvoo during this difficult time, see Ronald K. Esplin, "Life in Nauvoo, June 1844: Vilate Kimball's Martyrdom Letters," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (1979): 231–40; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Road to Carthage Led West," *BYU Studies* 8, no. 2 (1968): 204–15; Stanley B. Kimball, "Thomas L. Barnes: Coroner of Carthage," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 2 (1971): 141–47; Lyndon W. Cook, "William Law, Nauvoo Dissenter," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 1 (1982): 47–72; Steven G. Barnett, "Wilson Law: A Sidelight on the Expositor Incident," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 2 (1979): 244–46; Joseph L. Lyon and David W. Lyon, "Physical Evidence at Carthage Jail and What It Reveals about the Assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *BYU Studies* 47, no. 4 (2008): 4–50; Dan Jones, "The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith and His Brother Hyrum," trans. Ronald D. Dennis, *BYU Studies* 24, no. 1 (1984): 78–109; Jan Shipp, "A Little Known Account of the Murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 3 (1974): 389–92; Steven C. Harper and Jordan Watkins, "'It Seems That All Nature Mourns': Sally Randall's Response to the Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *BYU Studies* 46, no. 1 (2007): 95–100; Richard Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "The Joseph/Hyrum Smith Funeral Sermon," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 1 (1983): 3–18; Warren A. Jennings, "The Lynching of an American Prophet," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 1 (2001): 205–16; Paul D. Ellsworth, "Mobocracy and the Rule of Law: American Press Reaction to the Murder of Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 1 (1979): 71–82; Timothy Merrill, "'Will the Murderers Be Hung?': Albert Brown's 1844 Letter and the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 88–99.

4. Edward A. Bedell, Report, April 17, 1854, holograph, George A. Smith collection of Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60, Church History Library.

Bullock recorded significant details by Bedell on what happened outside the jail during the attack at Carthage. When asked about Mormon Warsaw militia member William M. Daniels's July 4, 1844, account, he confirmed "*in the main Daniels statements are correct.*"<sup>5</sup> He provided in his affidavit information about the Warsaw militia's intention to kill Joseph Smith, their movements on the prairie, and their role in the deed. Bedell also agreed with Daniels's account that "Joseph after *he* jumped out of the window lived some time." This assertion was supported by an independent account given the evening after the murder by a citizen of Warsaw and written August 13, 1844. Henry Matthias, who lived on Mr. Pinchback's farm four miles east of Warsaw village, testified: "Charles Gullier said he then shot him [Joseph] at the window, from the door, or near the door, and Vorus shot him from the outside of the prison; and he fell out upon the ground; and that Vorus saw him stretch out his hand towards the well curb, when he laid hold on him and turned him on his back, and struck and said, you are the damned old Chieftain, we have him after a long time. Now go and see your spiritual wives in hell."<sup>6</sup> Joseph was then shot until dead.

---

Citations from shorthand transcribed by Mark Staker are included in italics. See an explanation in the text of editing procedures.

5. The Daniels account was later elaborated and expanded with information not provided by Daniels but included by the publisher, Lyman O. Littlefield, who distributed the pamphlet *A Correct Account of the Murder of Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith, at Carthage, on the 27th Day of June, 1844; by Wm. M. Daniels, an Eye Witness* (Nauvoo: Littlefield, 1845). Dean Jessee addresses issues of accuracy in this account in "Return to Carthage," 14–18.

6. Henry Matthias shared what he knew with his friend of more than fifteen years, Jeremiah Willey, and Willey related the account on August 13, 1844, agreeing to testify in court if called on to do so. Matthias was in Warsaw at the time of the murders, but when Thomas Sharp arrived in Warsaw and convinced Mr. Pinchback to take a wagon to pick up the wounded who arrived at dark, Matthias joined them all for dinner at Mr. Hosford's house while Doctor Adams treated the wounded. It was here that Matthias joined in conversation with his neighbors. "A man by the name of Willis was shot in the hand and wrist; Willidin was shot in the shoulder; Chas. Gullier received a slight wound on the cheek. These three said that they were the first at the prison door; and they could not open the door. One of these three then shot through the door; they then burst the door open, when they received these wounds from Joe's pistol; and Joe then went to the window; Charles Gullier said he then shot him at the window, from the door, or near the door, and Vorus shot him from the outside of the prison; and he fell out upon the ground; and that Vorus saw him stretch out his hand towards the well curb, when he laid hold on him and turned him on his back, and struck and said, you are the damned old Chieftain, we have him after a long time. Now go and see your spiritual wives in hell. Vorus then left him, when there were more guns fired at him. These men then started for the woods." Jeremiah Willey, Statement, August 13, 1844, Joseph Smith history

Grafton Owen, a thirteen-year-old boy sitting on the rail fence near the well looking toward the jail, years later confirmed some of the Bedell account as he also saw the men coming over the prairie. "Some of these men had on horns; some wore masks, and other queer things." He observed Joseph Smith "riddled with bullets, jumped from an upper window" but did not stay around long enough to see the details observed by Bedell.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to conducting the Bedell interview, George A. Smith moved quickly to gather information about the events that occurred inside the jail and contacted John Fullmer, Cyrus Wheelock, Stephen Markham, and Dan Jones, encouraging them to write down their memories of the days leading up to the martyrdom.<sup>8</sup> While these accounts provided important

---

documents, 1840–60. Matthias listed the names of the individuals involved in the murder as: William Vorus, Charles Gullier, Joseph Snare, John Frasier, Thomas Crompton, William Riens, Doc. Adams, \_\_\_ Willis, and \_\_\_ Warner. Men not at the dinner but also involved in the murder included Benjamin Chandler and Selvenis Hapson. Edward A. Bedell confirmed in his interview the names of "Gallagher of Warsaw" and "Voorheis of Green Plains." He suggested a division in the sentiments of the men of Warsaw. As Ford's aide-de-camp, Bedell, observed the governor's actions carefully and recalled, "Ford ordered Sgen Knox at Warsaw to march with 2 field pieces to Nauvoo & meet Ford on *the wa[y]* –after going 2 ½ miles *from* Warsaw orders were countermanded at 9 a m *to* return to Warsaw the troops under Williams refused to go scattered & agn [again] gath[ered] *there* at Preintice's railroad station at 10 ½ a m *where* they concocted *the* attack on Carthage jail *he* next sent agn [again] for *the* 2 cannon to blow *the* jail down Knox still continued *the* command of *the* artillery *and* returned them *to* Warsaw." He later added in his report, "Nearly all *the* Warsaw ppl [people] went *to* Carthage." Bedell, Report, April 17, 1854.

7. Thomas Grafton Owen (born July 30, 1830) reported in a later account brought to our attention by Mark Ashurst-McGee: "It must have been sixty-five years ago, for I know it was before I had sense enough to resist the temptation to run away and go to Carthage twelve miles away, though I knew I should get a licking for it when I got back at night. The licking was deserved, no doubt, but only think of what I saw! I was sure there were several million soldiers marching around, and while sitting on the fence by the jail, I saw, coming over the prairie, a lot of queer looking men with guns in their hands. Some of these men had on horns; some wore masks, and other queer things. They came straight to the jail where they began to yell, and to fire blank cartridges at the guards, who returned their fire in the same manner, it being a put up job. They soon entered the jail, and I heard firing in there, and groans as if somebody were in great pain. A few moments later Jo Smith, riddled with bullets, jumped from an upper window and fell close to where I sat on the fence. That was war enough for me, and when the smoke lifted, I was not to be seen, for I was on the home stretch." T. Grafton Owen, *Drippings from the Eaves* (Seattle: Lowman and Hanford Company, 1911), 40–41.

8. John S. Fullmer wrote back that he had written a long letter detailing the events surrounding Joseph's death not long after it occurred and had planned on sending it to the *New York Herald* for publication but did not. He shared that

information about the days leading up to the martyrdom, John Taylor was the only person alive who could share memories of the fateful event from within the jail, and his June 27, 1854, sermon served an important role in providing that perspective.

Taylor had written a few hymns expressing his feelings shortly after the martyrdom<sup>9</sup> and is widely considered the author of the account “To seal the testimony of this book” that is published as Doctrine and Covenants section 135 even though evidence suggests Willard Richards was probably primarily responsible for that account with possible limited assistance from Taylor and others.<sup>10</sup> This suggests the 1854 sermon represents Taylor’s first public recounting of those events from his perspective. It also served as the foundation for John Taylor’s formal account of the martyrdom written under the direction of Church Historians George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff in 1861 and first published the following year as appendix III in Richard Burton’s *The City of the Saints*.<sup>11</sup> The 1861 account was subsequently reprinted several times.<sup>12</sup>

Although the 1854 and 1861 accounts relate the same events, there are some differences in content. The two accounts were produced for different audiences. The sermon was given extemporaneously<sup>13</sup> and delivered to faithful members of the Church, while the published account was intended for general distribution and was carefully crafted and reviewed. The difference in audience may have influenced subtle shifts in focus between the two

---

information with George A. Smith. John S. Fullmer to George A. Smith, November 27, 1854, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60; Cyrus Wheelock to George A. Smith, December 29, 1854, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60; Stephen Markham to Wilford Woodruff, June 20, 1856, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60; Dan Jones, “The Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith,” January 20, 1855 (filed by Thomas Bullock), Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60; Dan Jones published an account in Welsh that has been translated and made available in English by Ronald D. Dennis in Dan Jones, “The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith and His Brother Hyrum,” *BYU Studies* 24, no. 1 (1984): 79–109.

9. John Taylor wrote both “The Seer” and “O Give Me Back My Prophet Dear.” See Michael Hicks, “Poetic Borrowing in Early Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 18 (Spring 1985): 139–40.

10. See the sidebar on page 31.

11. John Taylor, “Appendix III, The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith,” in Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1862), 517–47.

12. Mark H. Taylor, “John Taylor: Witness to the Martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” in *John Taylor: Champion of Liberty*, ed. Mary Jane Woodger (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 2009), 45–61.

13. Evidence for this assertion comes from the sermon itself. Taylor changes direction several times midsentence, and he uses occasional words and phrases that suggest a spontaneous recollection.



### Authorship of Doctrine and Covenants Section 135

Regarding the authorship of section 135, much can be said. Heber J. Grant noted in 1933: "I have understood that this splendid account of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith was written by President John Taylor." (Heber J. Grant, in *One Hundred Third Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1933], 7; see also section heading for Doctrine and Covenants 135.) President Grant did not explain how he came to this understanding. If Taylor did write the piece, he almost certainly participated in a larger joint effort with others rather than writing as sole author. Since John Taylor was the editor and publisher of the 1844 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, it seems likely he played some role in producing the account. Evidence suggests the influence or contributions of others to the document, however.

After the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the public clamored for information, and the city newspaper *Nauvoo Neighbor* obliged by publishing an *Extra* on June 30, 1844, which was repeated verbatim in several subsequent editions of the *Nauvoo Neighbor* and *Times and Seasons* ("Awful Assassination!" *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Extra Sunday, 3 o'clock P.M., June 30, 1844; and "Awful Assassination of JOSEPH AND HYRUM SMITH!" *Times and Seasons* 5 [July 15, 1844]: 1). Although the account was printed over the signatures of Willard Richards, John Taylor, and Samuel H. Smith, Samuel Smith was not at the jail during the mob attack and John Taylor was recovering from his wounds in Carthage at least until July 3. The newspaper reported he was finally able to travel on a couch in an "easy carriage" on that day and was expected to arrive back in Nauvoo sometime that evening. ("The Editor," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 3, 1844, 2.) But William Hamilton, who helped his father care for Taylor at the Hamilton Hotel, remembered that Taylor stayed under his care for ten days. (William Hamilton, *Portrait and Biographical Record of Hancock, McDonough and Henderson Counties, Illinois* [Chicago: Lake City Publishing, 1894], 135–36.) This would have placed Taylor in Carthage until July 6.

Not only were Samuel Smith and John Taylor not in a position to provide much information, but the details included in the June 30 story parallel Willard Richards's journal. This initial published



account, which placed the attack at about six o'clock, was picked up and reported by the national press. This time can be found in Richards's journal where he noted a conversation he and Joseph Smith had as occurring at about 5:20, followed by the jailor's son bringing in some water shortly before the attack "~~in a few minutes & before 6 o'clock~~." (Willard Richards journal, June 27, 1844, holograph, Willard Richards Papers, Church History Library.) Since the 6 o'clock time is crossed out in Richards's journal, and the next account published under Richards's name on July 3 placed the attack at "about half past five o'clock," he may have used Taylor's watch, then in Richards's possession, to adjust the timing of events. ("The Editor," 2.)

Although the *Nauvoo Neighbor* reported the following week that "Mr. Taylor is recovering as fast as can be expected [and that] his wounds do very well," he was still not fully recovered from his injuries when the next edition of the *Times and Seasons* came out on Monday, July 15 ("Wilful Murder!" *Times and Seasons* 5 [July 1, 1844]: 1), with the beginning concepts of what would develop into section 135. Since the article would have taken some time to write and typeset before it came out, it is likely that others played a role in producing the piece. The article, titled "The Murder," focused on Joseph Smith and his contributions but included a few details of the actual murder and some events that led up to it. Taylor was specific in his later account that the last words he heard Joseph Smith speak to him before his death were: "That's right, Brother Taylor; parry them off as well as you can." (Taylor, "Appendix III," 537.) But this article included what was identified as "Joseph's last exclamation . . . 'O Lord my God!'" a phrase spoken a few moments later and one Taylor had not heard because bullets were striking him as he lay under the bed. The July 15 account also summarized some of Joseph Smith's accomplishments achieved "in the short space of twenty years," alluding to the angel Moroni's first visit a little over twenty years earlier in September 1823. The article noted Hyrum's noble characteristics as he "lived godly and he died godly" and died, along with his brother Joseph, an innocent man. The article refined the time of the martyrdom to "5 o'clock, 16 minutes and 26 seconds," a detail clearly drawn from John Taylor's damaged watch but without identification of who had the watch at that point, and included

a few other details of the actual event including information from a "friend" who shared with the author Joseph's statement given "two or three days" before the murder, "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." John M. Bernhisel was likely the friend who shared this information. He later signed an affidavit recalling hearing this statement from Joseph Smith and quoted a version that is closer to the one printed in the July 15 account than the version published later in the Doctrine and Covenants. (John M. Bernhisel to George A. Smith, September 11, 1854, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60.) Although Richards likely played a significant role in contributing information to this article, there is evidence he was not the sole author. The article used a British phrase near the beginning, "murdered in cool blood," that may have come from John Taylor or one of the other British immigrants then working in the printing office.

A week later the *Nauvoo Neighbor* published the only detailed chronological account of what actually took place moment by moment in the jail, with Richards listed as the sole author. Richards's account, entitled "Two Minutes in Jail," gave the timing of the event and Joseph Smith's last words as published in the July 15 article. On August 1, "Two Minutes in Jail" was reprinted in the Church newspaper *Times and Seasons*. Although John Taylor later noted having stereotype plates of the Doctrine and Covenants that he had prepared to send east for their protection before going to Carthage (Taylor, "Appendix III," 528), his wounds received during the June 27 attack delayed publication of the Doctrine and Covenants until later that year. (Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," 3 vols. [PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974], 3:1794–96.) When the new edition appeared, it included a section placed at the end of the book after the appendix labeled "Section CXI." (The Doctrine and Covenants [Nauvoo, Ill.: John Taylor, 1844], 444–45.) No one living at the time ever identified an author or authors for this section, which is now canonized as Doctrine and Covenants section 135. It included information and wording that had appeared earlier in the articles "The Murder" and "Two Minutes in Jail" and added general details about the lives and missions of the two martyrs that were already widely familiar to Church

members. Some of the editing in the canonized version suggests the involvement of an American writer, such as the inclusion at the end of Joseph Smith's "Lamb to the Slaughter" statement the phrase "and it shall yet be said of me, he was murdered in cold blood," but this does not preclude some involvement by John Taylor in the production of the text.

Brigham Young, who knew under what circumstances the Doctrine and Covenants account was produced, did not identify its author but clearly shared the ideas presented in the account. In his June 27, 1854, sermon that preceded John Taylor's address, he described Joseph Smith as "one of the greatest prophets ever lived; one of best men ever lived." He added during the sermon: "He did go like a lamb to the slaughter and like a sheep to be shorn. Opening not his mouth [he] went to go and be slain and was slain and I am a witness of it. I was not in jail, to be sure, when he was shot. But he died. Aye and I saw his body since his death and saw where the bullets pierced him and Brother Hyrum. I am a witness of this." (Brigham Young, Sermon, June 27, 1854, in Watt, "Note book June 27th 1854," Carruth transcription of Watt shorthand.)

Several decades later, John Taylor shared a more reserved assessment when he said, "Joseph Smith revealed more in relation to the kingdom of God, and was a greater Prophet than perhaps any other man who ever lived except Jesus. I do not know how far Enoch and perhaps some others on this continent went; if we had further records from the Book of Mormon they might throw more light on subjects with which we are not at present very well acquainted." (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86], 17:47 [April 19, 1874].)

Several Church leaders, including John Taylor, continued to use the statement roughly as found in D&C 135:3 in later sermons but never identified an author. (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:326–27 [December 31, 1876]; John Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:231–32 [April 8, 1857]; Joseph F. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:8 [October 29, 1882]; and Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 16:327 [December 28, 1873].) It seems probable, however, that if Taylor contributed to that statement, it was not intended as a formal account of the martyrdom from his perspective on the level of Richards's account in "Two Minutes in Jail."

accounts since the initial account began with events in 1841 and emphasized the role plural marriage played in the martyrdom, while the later account began with events in 1844 and emphasized sectarian and political influences.

John Taylor's June 1854 sermon includes a lengthy introduction not in the later account that begins with his testimony of Joseph Smith and an assessment of Joseph's character. He mentions specifically seeing Joseph after his death but does not give details about the time, place, or nature of this experience. In discussing the role of plural marriage, Taylor said that the introduction of that practice "was not that very nice, pleasing thing some people thought about it." But he does not identify who the "some people" were who saw it differently than he or most of his associates. His discussion of some of the activities of John C. Bennett and others as well as his mention of Joseph Smith's attempt to make adultery illegal in Nauvoo suggest the failed efforts to direct and keep quiet the practice that contributed to the murders.

As he moved into narrating the events of the martyrdom, Taylor condensed some events into a short summary that made it sound as though the events had occurred in a narrower time frame than was the case. He placed the introduction of "new doctrine," which he said "used to be called then 'spiritual wifery,'" to a period "soon after" the Apostles returned from a mission to England in the summer of 1841. He then transitioned quickly into a meeting of the city council where Taylor initiated legislation to deal with adultery in response to the "corruptions" to plural marriage introduced by John C. Bennett and his associates. This probably happened almost a year later in early 1842. Taylor then shifted from this event to the creation of a newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, by individuals he described as Bennett's accomplices, which did not occur until the spring of 1844—two years after the laws dealing with adultery were passed. After this quick succession of events, John Taylor then went into great detail about events that took place within just a few days preceding the martyrdom. Although the events surrounding the introduction of plural marriage are only in the 1854 account, Taylor's 1861 account covered the few days leading up to the martyrdom in greater detail than the 1854 sermon. Yet the 1854 account provides occasional details and a slightly different perspective of the events of the last days before the martyrdom than can be found in any other source. Taylor, who indicated he was the one who first recommended destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, still believed the way this was done by acting legally through the city council was the best course of action even though, as he remembered it, Governor Thomas Ford suggested they should have organized a mob to destroy the press and entirely avoided trouble. Taylor insisted, "If [I] had the things to do over again ten thousand times, I would do it ten thousand times under the same circumstances . . . we acted strictly according to law."

The 1854 account preserves many small additional details that can best be distilled by comparing it with his later published account. Each one of those small details is significant in that it helps enrich our understanding of one of the most important events in the history of Mormonism. But the greatest strength of this account is probably Taylor's unwavering and forceful testimony of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling. He testified, "I know that he was a good man; that he was an honest man; that he was a man of integrity; that he was a prophet of the Lord; that he lived in that capacity and died in that capacity and maintained his integrity to the end."

### Editing Conventions

Although the original users of Pitman shorthand regularly transcribed their materials and published them, transcribing shorthand versions of early sermons recorded by someone else is unusual. Because our efforts represent an attempt to access a new source of information, scholarly conventions as to how this should be done have not yet developed. We have looked to the discipline of documentary editing for a model to follow, but we have made some modifications since shorthand is usually an uncommon item in a document, while here it is the primary source of information.

LaJean Purcell Carruth transcribed the shorthand sermon. Mark Staker then independently verified the shorthand transcription and transcribed the Bullock longhand and shorthand. Silvia Ghosh independently verified the Bullock transcriptions. Because shorthand does not distinguish between homonyms, we have relied on context to provide the most likely spelling of several words, including numerous instances of "council" or "counsel," with the goal to reproduce as complete and accurate a transcription of the material as possible on all levels. In a few instances, a word cannot be recovered. These cases are noted with angle brackets and italics such as <illegible>. Where the shorthand is ambiguous, with more than one interpretation possible, the most likely word or phrase, based on context, is provided in angle brackets accompanied by a footnote with additional possibilities.

Pitman shorthand allows for some variation in the way sounds are joined into a single character. As Watt worked, he sometimes began to write a word in one way only to cross it out or scribble over it and write the word differently. At other times, he worked so rapidly that a word came out automatically that may have had nothing to do with the narrative at hand but was used so often it was produced as a "typo" rather than a reflection of a thought process or the editing of what was written, as sometimes happens in documentary sources. An example of this is the word "doctrine" that was crossed out and rewritten as the less common "doctor." These instances of strikeouts were all reproduced and represented by a line through the

reconstructed word if it is recoverable or by a simple line in angle brackets if the word is not recoverable, such as <—>.

Pitman shorthand provides a way to include punctuation and capitalization, but Watt did not use these characters even though he occasionally left small spaces between some of the phrases that appear to be indications of periods or breaks in the narrative. Watt would have added paragraphing, punctuation, and capitalization when he transcribed the sermon. We have included these elements where they seemed appropriate for clarity. Ellipses are inserted as a punctuation device to indicate where John Taylor changed direction in midsentence while speaking and do not represent an editorial abridgement. Quotation marks have been included as part of the punctuation, relying on context, especially when Taylor recounted dialogue between himself and Governor Thomas Ford. In addition, articles (a, an, or the) or other connecting phrases sometimes do not appear in the text where English usage requires them. Since these articles are used by John Taylor with greater frequency in other sermons recorded by Watt than here and regularly appear in his published material, it is not clear if this phenomenon captured the sermon as Taylor delivered it or was a reflection of Watt's shorthand reporting. In order to aid the reader in making this material accessible, we have elected to include a few appropriate words in brackets to enhance readability.

The Thomas Bullock material differs from that of Watt in that most of Bullock's version is recorded in longhand with occasional Pitman shorthand used to supply conjunctions, articles, or other elements that could be quickly and habitually reproduced. Since Bullock provided punctuation and capitalization as he wrote in longhand, the transcription of his sermon has included punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, and spelling errors exactly as he originally produced them. Since Thomas Bullock's record of the sermon used a mixture of longhand and shorthand, both of these methods of writing have been carefully distinguished in the portions of his account reproduced by using a standard font for the Bullock longhand and an italic font for the shorthand.

---

LaJean Purcell Carruth, PhD ([carruthlp@ldschurch.org](mailto:carruthlp@ldschurch.org)), is a Church History Specialist at the LDS Church History Department with over thirty years' experience transcribing Pitman Shorthand, Taylor Shorthand, and Deseret Alphabet documents.

Mark Lyman Staker, PhD ([stakerml@ldschurch.org](mailto:stakerml@ldschurch.org)), is Lead Curator of Church Historic Sites at the LDS Church History Department. He has received both the Mormon History Association and John Whitmer Historical Association's Best Book awards in addition to the Mormon History Association's J. Talmage Jones Award of Excellence for an Outstanding Article for "Thou Art the Man: Newel K. Whitney in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003): 74–138.



Detail from *The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith* (ca. 1893) by Edward Stevenson and C. C. A. Christensen, oil on canvas, 36" x 48", courtesy of the Church History Museum, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. In 1888, Edward Stevenson joined Andrew Jenson and Joseph Black on a mission to collect history in places where Joseph Smith once lived. Stevenson joined the Church in 1834 and lived in Kirtland, Far West, and Nauvoo before traveling to the Great Salt Lake Basin in 1847, so he was familiar with most of the places the group visited, where they took photographs, talked with local residents, and confirmed data they had gathered. In 1893, Stevenson published a short history of Joseph Smith and commissioned artist C. C. A. Christensen to help him produce images to illustrate his history and public lectures he gave on the Prophet Joseph's life. The painting was based on a photograph and on Stevenson's recollections and input. The original was recently donated to the Church History Museum by the Charles Gibbs Fox and Louise Stevenson Fox family and has been conserved for exhibition in Carthage, Illinois.



## Transcript of George D. Watt's Pitman Shorthand Recording of John Taylor's Sermon, June 27, 1854

Tabernacle afternoon June 27th 1854.

John Taylor

I am called upon to address the congregation a little this afternoon. I do so with pleasure, although at the same time the things we have heard this morning and the reflections that have revolved through my mind in relation to these matters produce rather painful feelings. For the things referred [to] by President Young this morning seemed as it were to be fresh before my mind—things of late and old circumstances and things of other nations would seem <as it were><sup>14</sup> and obliterated unless our minds were again refreshed by that.<sup>15</sup>

There is something very pleasing about these matters, pleasing to me and to my brethren. It is pleasing to know that we are the disciples of as good a man as Joseph Smith was; of a man that lived in the fear of God and taught his fear, who was faithful all his life long, and [remained faithful] unto the death.<sup>16</sup> It is pleasing to reflect upon our associations with men of this kind and also with Brother Hyrum—it is to me. And I am happy to be associated with the church and kingdom of God. I feel thankful to my Heavenly Father that I live in this day and age [of the] world when the light and truth of [the] everlasting gospel has shone forth. I consider it one of [the] greatest blessings and *pr* privileges that can be proffered upon me as an individual, next to the spirit of God so brooding upon my mind as to cause me to yield obedience to that gospel and to participate in blessings associated therewith.

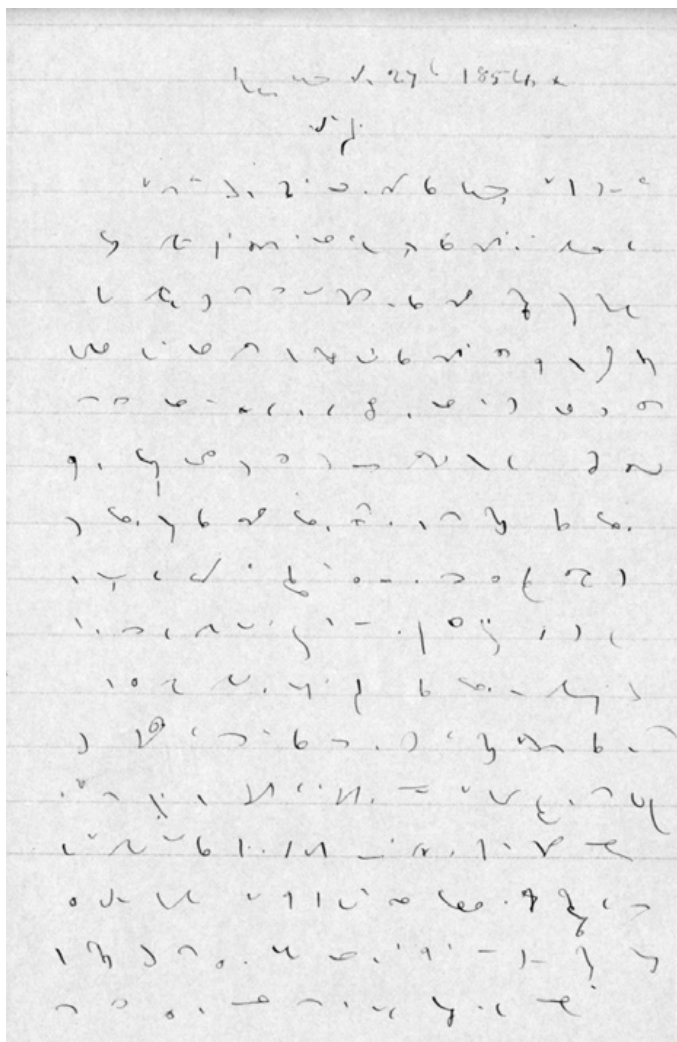
I was blessed to be associated with Brother Joseph Smith and, as President Young said he knew him, so did I. I have been with him under all kinds of circumstances—when the thick clouds of darkness gathered around and

---

14. This is the most likely reading, but the shorthand is awkwardly written.

15. Brigham Young had noted during the morning meeting the purpose of adjourning the April 6 general conference and reconvening it on June 27 was “more especially in consequence of bringing to mind, to our brains, to realize and to contemplate what the Lord has done for us in the last days.”

16. Brigham Young stated that morning: “It is impossible for the natural man to understand the things of God. They are spiritually discerned. They are taught to man by the revelations of His Spirit. Now, when I seek it, I receive the light of [the] Holy Spirit in visions and revelations. And the Holy Ghost helped my natural understanding that I did know by all the knowledge that I have to testify by all the power that I am in possession of that Brother Joseph Smith was a true man of God, a true prophet of [the] Lord, a true apostle of Jesus Christ, as far as I have told you and did know that Jesus now lives and I am his apostle to testify of him. That is what I have got up here for this morning is to testify of Joseph.”



The John Taylor June 27, 1854, sermon. Shorthand recorded by George D. Watt. This is the first page of John Taylor's formal sermon on his recollections of the events surrounding martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Courtesy Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

the earthquakes seemed to bellow and threaten destruction; when the forces of [the] earth were rallied against him; and in times of prosperity. I have heard him, as many of you have, speak in public to advance the principles of eternal truth, plead with the people to observe the laws of God, and keep his commandments that they might be prepared for a celestial inheritance. I have also been with him in private council so that I have had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with his feelings, ideas, views, with his morality, with his truthfulness, with his integrity. And I know that he was a good man; that he was an honest man; that he was a man of integrity; that he was a prophet of the Lord; that he lived in that capacity and died in that capacity and maintained his integrity to the end. I was not only with him living but with him ~~dead~~ dying and this is my testimony concerning Joseph Smith. I know before God and the holy angels. I do not think it; I know it.

I know that he was a servant of God and prophet of the Lord and lived and died in the faith. I not only know it by my natural sight but by the revelations of God. And I know by the same way<sup>17</sup> that he yet lives because I have seen him and I know he yet lives. And therefore I rejoice in the testimony that I can bear concerning him. And I know he will live and I know also that he is a friend of this people and watching over their interests. And I know also that he is a friend of President Young and watches over him and he is interested in the welfare, the happiness, and the exaltation of the saints of the Most High. And having a knowledge of these things, ~~it is~~ it sustains my mind and comforts my heart and strengthens me in the faith of the new and everlasting gospel and in the principles of truth that we continue to hear from day to day. And I rejoice myself exceedingly to be associated with brethren such as I am with at the present time, men that fear God, that keep his commandments, men whose first desire is to keep the law of God, to roll forth his purposes, and to benefit the human family in order that they may be prepared by and by to enter into [a] more extensive field and participate in blessings in wait for them.

I ~~<view>~~<sup>18</sup> esteem it one [of the] greatest blessings conferred upon me to anticipate<sup>19</sup> in this priesthood, that is the government of God in the heavens and upon the earth, that rules and regulates and controls all affairs in the eternal worlds, and when the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven that it will rule and control and regulate all the forces of this earth.

---

17. Because of his later reference in the sentence to having “seen” Joseph, it appears that his use of “the same way” is a reference to “natural sight” and not “revelations of God” in the previous sentence.

18. This word may also be read as “have.”

19. Taylor may have said or intended to say “participate” here, but the shorthand reads “anticipate.”

I rejoice then to participate in the blessings of this gospel and priesthood, and I look upon everything else as short lived, as temporal; whether it is riches or poverty, ease or pain; whether it is prosperity or adversity; no matter what the circumstances may be in which I or which you may be placed. It is a matter of very little importance unto us if the circumstances that we are placed in have a tendency to lead us nearer to God, to make us more susceptible to his laws, to make us obedient to his command that we may fulfill our destiny on earth and be prepared to join with Joseph, Hyrum, and with those who have lived in the faith and died in the faith of the Son of God. For Hyrum was a good man and a servant of the living God and a man of integrity and truthfulness and I saw him fall when he fell in prison and heard the last words he spoke. And I know that the desire of Joseph and of Hyrum was to promote peace, whatever may have been the feelings of those that were around. Whatever views they well have had in relation to their conduct, in relation to their course, in relation to their views, their ideas, or their private and public feelings, was to promote the happiness and well being of the human family. That was the worst feeling I ever saw manifested by either of them. It was to procure the happiness and well being of the human family as far as God should give them ability to do it and these were their private and public feelings—the feelings they manifested before the public congregation, before the world, in private council, and under all circumstances. And although there are thousands of falsehoods in circulation concerning them, and although many of them are believed by the people, yet this was the bona fide feeling of these servants of God while they lived upon the earth; and I know it!

Did ever anybody hear them teach unrighteous principles? No. Did ever anybody see them practice unrighteous conduct? No. As President Young said, they were men and they were perhaps the best men that lived. They might have some little weaknesses and foibles like other men, but if they had been better than that they would not [have] been fit to associate with people.<sup>20</sup> But they were men of God and lived and died in faith of that

---

20. Brigham Young said in the morning session, “You recollect, many of you, that the brethren would complain of Joseph that he was rude, wild; he was not as sober, gracious, so dead-long-faced, and religious as he ought to be. [A] great many used to complain of him because he was cheerful. Yet Joseph took his own course. You recollect what he used to tell the people once? “Why,” says he, “brethren and sisters if I was as pure, as holy, and sanctified as you wish me to be (have you not got light enough in you to see?), I could not be in your society. The Lord would not let me stay here. If I was as pure and holy as you demand at my hands (do not you see?), I must be one with you. And, if you can produce a man or woman that has got more righteousness than I, that is [as] sanctified as you wish me to be, let me have that person here before you to show up his iniquity.”

gospel. They preached and did it sincerely with honest hearts before God and men. And, therefore, I feel pleasure in testifying of these things. I have borne the same testimony I have done here in different nations and before large public congregations. I know some people don't like especially abroad to say it is, but these have been my feelings here and will be to the day of my death and through eternity.

In relation to some of these events, I can relate some of the outlines of these things. There was a time, some time, little time before these persecutions commenced; there was a time that was particularly trying to the people—new doctrine of ~~what is called~~ what used to be called then “spiritual wifery” (and the doctrine was first introduced of men having more wives than one). It was a thing new to the whole of us. Yet it was a thing that was substantiated by scripture and made manifest also by revelation, and it only needed men to have the spirit of God or women to know and to understand the principles that Joseph communicated unto them. I remember being with President Young and Kimball and I think one or two others with Brother Joseph soon after we had returned from England. He talked with us on these principles and laid them before us. It tried our minds and feelings. We saw it was something going to be heavy upon us. It was not that very nice, pleasing thing some people thought about it. It is something that harried up our feelings. Did we believe it? Yes, we did. I did. The whole rest of the brethren did. But still we should have been glad to push it off a little further. We [would have] been glad if it hadn't come in our day; but that somebody else had something to do with it instead of us. But then at the same time, if we was called upon we felt to do what God required of us. I know what my feelings were and ~~thought~~<sup>21</sup> thought I understand what some of the rest of the brethren's feelings were.

About this time John C. Bennett<sup>22</sup> commenced some of his operations. He made use of some of those principles to corrupt to destroy not only himself but others. And as it was impossible ~~almost~~ together to come out and teach correct principles before the public in those days, some of those men got an inkling of these things and corrupted themselves—were full of <lasciviousness><sup>23</sup> and abomination, and corrupted their own bodies—and sought to destroy others. And they succeeded in great measure with many.

---

21. The placement of the shorthand character (above, on, or across the line of the page) often indicates a vowel. Watt wrote the symbol for “thought” on the line in the wrong position for the vowel, crossed it out, and wrote it in the correct position, above the line.

22. John Cook Bennett (1804–67) served as an Assistant President in the Church during 1841–42 and played a prominent role in Nauvoo's history.

23. This is the most likely reading, but the transcription is uncertain.

I could name the names of many: John C. Bennett, the two Higbees,<sup>24</sup> and some others I could name [but] do not feel disposed [to do so]. But they had to be handled and brought before the high council and the council had to sit with closed doors because of the corruptions there manifested. It was pretty generally known the course that was pursued. Joseph came out strongly against John C. Bennett. He was naturally a corrupt man and given to it.<sup>25</sup> The first trouble that ever we met with was in the city council. I was present [in] the city council of Nauvoo and Joseph wished an **ordinances** ordinance to be introduced there upon adulterous practices. This militated so much against John C. Bennett, he began to go away from that time and to be Joseph's enemy. ~~and~~ He then began to publish and circulate.<sup>26</sup> And finally those other men associated with them—there were [a] number of them, and some perhaps who didn't know the iniquity of the parties. They asserted, "We believe Bennett's stories about the ladies, that white veil, black veil story."<sup>27</sup> They joined with him and purchased a press; called it the *Nauvoo Expositor*.<sup>28</sup>

---

24. The two sons of Judge Elias Higbee, Chauncy Lawson Higbee (1821–84) and Francis (Frank) Marion Higbee (1819–56), were residents of Nauvoo and later helped establish the *Nauvoo Expositor*.

25. This may be a reference to Bennett's activities before he joined the Mormons. See Andrew F. Smith, "Introduction," John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints or, an Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), xxii.

26. After Bennett left Mormonism, he published a series of newspaper articles and an exposé, *The History of the Saints* (Boston: Leland and Whiting, 1842), that attacked the Latter-day Saints. Parley P. Pratt, like Taylor, believed Bennett's motive was vengeance for embarrassment over his activities, although Pratt does not mention the attempt to make adultery illegal. He observed in a letter to his cousin shortly after Bennett was excommunicated and began to attack Nauvoo's citizens in print: "His object was vengeance on those who exposed his iniquity." Parley P. Pratt to John Van Cott, May 7, 1843, holograph, Church History Library. Shortly after the book appeared, Pratt wrote: "As to Bennett or his book I consider it a little stooping to mention it. It is beneath contempt. . . . There is not such a thing named among the saints here as he represents. & his book or name is scarcely mentioned. & never except with a perfect disgust." Pratt may have had reference to Bennett's story of the veils as addressed by Taylor in his sermon.

27. Taylor references here an account that appears in Bennett's *History of the Saints*, 220–25, which described how women of different moral character wore different-colored veils in Mormonism, where those women condemned for immoral behavior were forced to wear white veils, those who "indulge[d] their sensual propensities, without restraint" were applauded and wore green veils, and those set apart as "secret, spiritual wives" wore black veils as the special favorites of heaven.

28. There is no evidence that John C. Bennett helped purchase and operate the *Nauvoo Expositor* press. He was not in Nauvoo at the time.

This press went to work to defame the character of the sisters of Nauvoo and of the brethren. And there were some of the most scandalous things published in it that was ever published in any paper, having a tendency to abominably defame, and destroy the character of the females of [the] City of Nauvoo.<sup>29</sup> And at the same time there was not a more Zion, pure, and honorable community in the world, with some few exceptions, of course. There were some exceptions, but those were not the exceptions they made; they were the things they called honorable, that is, they loved corruption and hated correct principles. And that when they found they could not carry out their design, which was tending to destroy and contaminate society, then they went to work with all the power and venom of the devil to suffocate and berate and destroy and truly to obliterate, if possible, the Latter-day Saints. The thing was brought before the a city council. Some people thought that that council acted improperly, that they did that which they had no right to do, namely, to pass a law to destroy the press—that is this *Expositor*. It may be well here perhaps for me to give an explanation of some matters in relation to that matter. It may be of use to elders abroad, as I was on that council and I believe made perhaps the first move towards the destruction of it.<sup>30</sup> It may be well to give [the] reasons why here.

But as it regards the legality of things is a question some people may not fully understand. We possessed in the city of Nauvoo a city charter, and there was embedded in it an article like this—it gave us power to declare what is a nuisance and to remove that nuisance.<sup>31</sup> I don't profess to be much

---

29. The *Nauvoo Expositor* promised to reveal information in future issues but did not publish the “scandalous” details in its first issue, as Taylor suggests here. It appears that this accusation is an outgrowth of Taylor's connection in this account of Bennett's earlier publishing activities in 1842 with those of the later *Expositor* press. Bennett did publish numerous scandalous accounts, including his details about the colored veils worn by the women of Nauvoo. Much of this information was repeated in his exposé *The History of the Saints*.

30. Taylor later noted, “I think, but am not certain, that I made a motion for the removal of that press as a nuisance,” Taylor, “Appendix III,” 520.

31. The specific reference to nuisance in the ordinance Taylor references is found in section 7 of the regulation of the city council. That section authorizes the council “to make regulations to secure the general health of the inhabitants, to declare what shall be a nuisance and to prevent and remove the same in the streets for the extinguishment of fires, and convenience of the inhabitants.” This appears to be primarily intended as an ordinance to protect the safety of inhabitants rather than protect them from something that may “injure” feelings, but Taylor considered that Blackstone included a scandalous newspaper in this classification. Section 16 of the city charter also designated the mayor and aldermen “conservators of the peace” with all the powers of justices of the peace. 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), 4:239–49 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).



of a legal mind myself; but Blackstone<sup>32</sup> ~~one of great~~, one all our lawyers refer to, he states in his writing that a scandalous newspaper may be considered as [a] nuisance.<sup>33</sup> The city charter of Nauvoo gave unto us power to declare what was a nuisance and remove it. We did so. We considered that was a nuisance and that it was calculated to injure, destroy [the] community. We passed a law accordingly and ordered the City Marshal<sup>34</sup> to remove<sup>35</sup> it, which was done, as most of you know. It was removed, destroyed, and the type scattered to the four winds. And if had the things to do over again ten thousand times I would do it ten thousand times under the same circumstances ~~the circumstances~~. My mind never altered about it in life or death staring me in my face. My feelings, views in that matter never ~~charged~~ changed. We acted strictly according to law ~~and~~ in that thing, and laws are made for the punishment ~~of~~ of wrong and protection of right.

I know what the feelings of many men are in these days. It is a thing got by zeal handled by men that were not men of understanding. They thought we were attacking the great bulwark of America—the freedom of press—in destroying these few types and destroying their office. That we were attacking one of the great bulwarks of American freedom, that was the idea entertained by many. But there is a difference between freedom and abuse of it. Freedom, as I understand it, don't go any further in any country

---

32. William Blackstone's four-volume work, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, the first volume of which was originally published in 1766, influenced America's Constitution, its reliance on the British Common Law, and its whole legal system. Lawyers throughout the nation in 1844 considered it one of the legal standards by which they argued law, and book 3, "Private Wrongs," included an entire chapter (13) devoted to nuisance. It did not address newspapers but primarily discussed offensive trades such as that of a tanner or tallowchandler and discussed how these could be considered a nuisance and abated. John Taylor seems to suggest the city council broadened these arguments to include a newspaper.

33. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the Nauvoo Expositor," *Utah Law Review* 9 (Winter 1965): 890–91. The author argues that even though there was "considerable basis in the law of their day for their action in characterizing the published issues of the *Nauvoo Expositor* as a nuisance . . . there was no legal justification in 1844 for the destruction of the *Expositor* press."

34. The city marshal was John Portineus Greene (1793–1844), a Latter-day Saint who had been ordained a high priest in Kirtland, Ohio. John Lytle later related that he was the one who opened the door of the *Expositor* office "using the sledge hammer for a key." John Lytle, statement about June 10, 1844, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60.

35. In his 1861 account, John Taylor wrote, "The press was removed or broken, I don't remember which, by the marshal, and the types scattered in the street." Taylor, "Appendix III," 521.

than people being free to do right. There is no country, no place under the heavens that freedom will extend further than that. <—> Many people do wrong, of course, all the time; but there is no freedom that will allow me to interfere with the rights of my brethren. There is no country I can go to that will allow me to interfere with the rights of citizens in that country. If I was attacked individually by a press, I have a right to punish ~~him~~ as editor as libel[ous]. We stood in municipal capacity at that time and had a right to put an end to the <engine><sup>36</sup> that caused it. I must tell you what Governor Ford's<sup>37</sup> views was upon this thing. I talked with [him] about it. Says he, "Mr. Taylor, I was sorry you destroyed that;" "yet," says I, "it was legal." "That is nothing but it comes in contact with the prejudice of people." "Do you know the law about that? Yet, what were we to do then? Were we to be trampled upon? Is there a city in the union that ever did?" "No." "What were we to do then?" "I would have got up a mob to destroy it and that would have cleared the city council."

We had honest integrity enough to maintain the truthfulness of law but the governor of state so afraid of the what the people say but let us get up a mob to destroy the damned thing. We knew we were right and did it. That was the belief we acted upon. In that case what was the result of it? The whole country was aroused and there was Thomas C. Sharp,<sup>38</sup> the editor of [a] newspaper in Warsaw, and the anti-Mormon body of men combined together [to] seek to destroy the Latter-day Saints. These parties with their newspapers circulated every story that human ingenuity or malice of [the] devil could invent. [They] fabricated every kind of falsehood in order to inflame and irritate the public mind, and they succeeded in great measure in doing it. "But," say some, "how is it possible?" (I have been spoken to abroad by men of intelligence), "how is it possible that circumstance of that kind could be brought about and that such things could be raised against you? So many thousand people in his armies and full ~~in~~ of integrity. How is it possible if you had done no wrong?" I tell you how it ~~was~~. I told them there were two or three reasons. In the first place, our religion [was] not popular religion. It was opposed to their religion.<sup>39</sup> And theirs to ours. We had met them in argument but they could not withstand them. It was

---

36. This word may be "engine," but the shorthand is not clear. It appears to be either *ntine* or *njine*.

37. Thomas Ford (1800–50) served as governor of Illinois from 1842 to 1846.

38. Thomas Coke Sharp (1818–94) became the owner, editor, and publisher of the newspaper *Warsaw Signal* from 1841 to 1842 and regained ownership of the newspaper in February 1844, shortly before the events described here occurred.

39. Brigham Young spent much of his sermon earlier in the day addressing this issue. He argued, "Christ and Baal can't be good friends."

not possible for them to maintain their position as religion under those circumstances. Consequently, some other plan must be adopted [with a] feeling of right, naturally <inside><sup>40</sup>—just the same as has been the case under all circumstances where religion has been at stake and where there has been [a] difference of sentiment. When ~~st~~ argument failed, persecution stepped in. But did this religion believe those things? No.

There was another party, which was a political party. We possessed the power of the votes in that county, and we got control in a great measure by going into one of the schools at the time. But, [as has] been mentioned, we could put it down either way. As American citizens, we had to vote. If we voted for the Whigs, the Democrats were our enemies; if for the Democrats, the Whigs were our enemies. Now it was the policy of Joseph Smith to take a middle ways and consolidate as far as possible the feelings of people. Hence, we could have voted in all the officers in the county having the power to do so through our votes. We didn't do it. We had voted them on city council in Nauvoo in order to do away with prejudice. There was several persons in it not in the church—Squire Wells,<sup>41</sup> Barnett,<sup>42</sup> Warrington<sup>43</sup> and those were.<sup>44</sup> I speak of these things in order to show the conciliatory spirit Joseph Smith made use of in order to calm the troubled feelings of people and do away with the strong antipathy that generally ~~privileged~~ prevailed in relation to <—> politics, where every body knows<sup>45</sup> with regard to American politics how strong the feelings of each party [is] against [the other].

I remember an anecdote, reading it in [a] French paper: each party set the other down as [the] most infamous, scandalous in existence—setting the ~~the president~~ person down as ~~being~~ who was putting up for [another] person.<sup>46</sup> The ~~<frch>~~ French editor says, “bet they could find an honest man in

---

40. This is the most likely reading.

41. Daniel Hanmer Wells (1814–91) was baptized into the Church on August 9, 1846, and later became an Apostle.

42. John Tipton Barnett (1809–1905) moved to Knox County, Illinois, shortly after Joseph Smith was killed, where he remained for the rest of his life.

43. Benjamin Franklin Warrington (1810–50) was elected to the Nauvoo city council on February 6, 1843, and was also a member of the Nauvoo Legion. Warrington, along with non-Mormons Daniel H. Wells and Hiram Kimball, had also developed property and sold lots in Nauvoo.

44. The crossed-out material could also be read “and this way.” Hugh McFall (1799–after 1860) was another non-Mormon elected to the city council, who also served as adjutant general of the Nauvoo Legion. Hiram S. Kimball (1806–63) was elected as a non-Mormon but was baptized on July 20, 1843.

45. Written “noise”; the obvious intent is “knows.”

46. In other words, condemning a person who supported someone else.

America." Of course we must have a strong<sup>47</sup> party of that kind opposed to us; put the religion in and <that in>.<sup>48</sup>

Then there was another set of rabble—pickpockets, cutthroats, black-legs—which would go [to] any length to accomplish his purpose who could be <hired> hired to kill a man for [a] small sum and perjure himself any day for [a] glass of grog. Some of these politicians gave a lot of such men as these a little grog; says they should damn all Mormons; let's go and destroy them; and the <illegible> party would wink at it, saying they were opposed to our religion. If we could get up a posse, get them out of [the] way—they we would not like to be among us. Yes, we put them on a litter. Thus, their influence with the devil at their head was the great cause of this animosity and trouble excited in that place. It was not any Joseph Smith or any Hyrum, not any one of the elders or authorities that lived in Nauvoo, for there never was a city of men in this world that were more desirous to seek peace and promote it than the authorities and politicians of that city. Here the plan, <—> the <blame><sup>49</sup> commenced. The spirit of persecution began to rage. A road was cut out against the city council, against the mayor and city council—Joseph Smith was mayor—for destroying this press. The excitement ran very high. Mobs got up in different parts of the county and they commenced to burn houses in the neighborhood that Brother Morley<sup>50</sup> lived [in] out at Lima.<sup>51</sup> And around in that district they began to bear away

---

47. "Strong" is written over illegible shorthand.

48. "That in" could also be read "hold on."

49. This is the most likely reading. This word could also be read "flame."

50. Isaac Morley (1786–1865) was president of the stake centered in Lima, Illinois.

51. Matthew Caldwell confirms Taylor's account. He recalled many individuals settling in his neighborhood after they were driven from Nauvoo. "Most of my neighbors by this time were Mormons. . . . I well remember these burnings. . . . One morning I counted fourteen Mormon homes burning at the same time. . . . After these burnings there was not a house left standing within seven miles from my home. On June 24, 1844, the sheriff, Levi Williams, rode up to my place early in the morning while I was doing my chores and said, 'I have a "Fortwith" for you.' 'What does that mean?,' said I. 'It means for you to be in Warsaw by ten o'clock today.' . . . On the evening of June 26, 1844, the old Mob leader, Col. Levi Williams, with Tom Sharp, the editor of the Warsaw Sentinel, had a few new wagons rolled out from under a shed and placed a two inch plank on the box of one of the wagons. Col. Williams then climbed on the box and gave orders for the captains of the militia to form their companies facing the wagon.

"As soon as the orders were obeyed, Col. Levi Williams said, 'Boys, the governor is not going to do anything for us. All that is in favor of going to Carthage in the morning step out three paces in front. Those contrary stand fast.' At the word, 'March,' all but six men stepped out. The names of the six were: Matthew Caldwell, George Walker, William Guymon, Platt Fairbanks, Eldred Hailey, and

and<sup>52</sup> destroy the property of the brethren. When they did so, rumors kept coming in every day to Joseph Smith. He wrote to the governor and wanted to know what he was to do. He received word back he was to maintain the peace as lieutenant general of [the] Nauvoo Legion. He did so. And in order that the governor might not be misinformed in relation to the matter, when the excitement began to rage in great extent, he sent messengers for a number of days in succession with affidavits and testimony concerning the events taking place all around, asking his counsel and laying before him the position of things and of the people—among other things requesting him to come down. Brother Hunter<sup>53</sup> went on one of these expeditions [with a] number of others whose names I have forgot. It was s[pring] time; heavy rain. Set<sup>54</sup> out as parties here or there were<sup>55</sup> [on the] way to meet the governor. He on ~~has~~<sup>56</sup> his way, they missed each other.

In [the] midst of this burning, the sheriff called upon Backenstos.<sup>57</sup> He called out a posse of men to put down the men who was stirring up this commotion and take out the company. And as soon [as] they came in their neighborhood they made tracks and cried for more. I rather think, perhaps in this skirmish, there may be some few persons killed. I do not remember the detail of these circumstances but merely the outlines. The governor by and by made his appearance at Carthage, and he sent a deputation down to Joseph Smith requesting him to send out a deputation to him to wait upon him in Carthage to acquaint him with [the] state of affairs in Nauvoo.

Joseph Smith appointed Doctor Bernhisel,<sup>58</sup> who is now in Washington, and myself to go with the deputies of the governor and meet him in Carthage and to take with us the papers. We had the documents, affidavits, testimonies, etc., that had been presented before Joseph Smith of acts of

---

an old English gentlemen by the name of Zilburn.” Caldwell later talked his two brothers out of participating in the action. Matthew Caldwell, Autobiographical sketch, holograph, Church History Library. See also Matthew Caldwell, Testimony of Matthew Caldwell, January 15, 1908, holograph, Church History Library; punctuation standardized for clarity.

52. “Bear away and” inserted above line.

53. This was probably Edward Hunter (1793–1883), who was a bishop in Nauvoo.

54. Likely reading for this word.

55. Could also be read “that were.”

56. Probably an attempt to write “his.” The symbols are the same, but “his” is placed above the line and “has” is placed on the line.

57. Jacob B. Backenstos (1811–57) was clerk of the Hancock County, Illinois, Circuit Court and was elected to the Illinois legislature in 1844. He was elected sheriff of Hancock County in 1845.

58. John Milton Bernhisel (1799–1881) was Joseph Smith’s personal physician and friend.

violence that had been sworn to by different individual[s] as they came and made their cases known to him. I believe Squire Wells took a good many of them. We went to the governor and found everything there in [the] greatest state of excitement. All the blacklegs, murderers (though some of them I was acquainted with and believe them to be such from our testimony), apostates, and greatest enemies that Joseph Smith and Mormonism had in the country were there; and as it is said about Brutus having his right hand men, many of them seemed to me to be the right hand men of the governor. We did not obtain an interview with him immediately, but perhaps it might be well here to relate a little incident occurred about the time we arrived there about 11 at night.

We went right to the hotel the governor stayed at and took up our quarters there. We had not been in there ten minutes when there was a soldier came in and he knew that one of our brethren, Brother Carns<sup>59</sup> of German descent, as good [a] man [as] anywhere, <knew><sup>60</sup> he had been committing some great misdemeanor, he [the soldier] said. And naturally that it was necessary he [Carns] should be imprisoned. But they felt bowels<sup>61</sup> of compassion towards him, being [the] man held, and they wanted one of us to go and give bail for them. It struck me to be [a] rather curious kind of night to take up prisoners to give bail, and we knew our documents to be laid before the governor. I said, "I don't believe your statement about Carns, but if bail is necessary, tomorrow morning <we><sup>62</sup> [will] go and see him and it will all be right." We passed along and went to our lodging, and as we were going into our room we passed through another room and we saw laying in that room a man by the name of Jackson,<sup>63</sup> a repeat murderer. Our bed was placed beside<sup>64</sup> his, just two board posts between. We had with us arms.

---

59. Daniel Carn (1802–72) was American born but raised in the German communities of Pennsylvania.

60. This word could also be read "owned."

61. This is the most likely reading. It may also be "balance."

62. This word could possibly be read "I."

63. This is probably Joseph H. Jackson, whose name Willard Richards included first on his list of individuals involved in the murder of the martyrs. See Willard Richards, List, ca. 1844, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60. In April 1854, shortly before Taylor's sermon, Thomas Bullock went through the list and made notations about the current whereabouts of these individuals. Joseph L. Heywood noted that on May 12, 1844, Joseph Smith received an anonymous threat letter that he suspected had been written by Joseph H. Jackson, calling on Joseph "to make his peace with God—he would soon have to die." Heywood believed it was because Jackson had been refused the privilege of marrying the daughter of Hyrum Smith. Joseph L. Heywood, Statement, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60.

64. This word could also be read "opposite."

I had a good six shooter. I did not sleep any that night. Thought I would be on the alert as nobody else was. So we had just got into bed when [a] rap came to tō [the] door and Chauncey Higbee came [in].

Many of you know him, a notorious scamp, as black [an] apostate and full of [the] devil as anybody. He came there and knocked at our door and of course he thought it would be of no use speaking to me after what has taken place now. ~~Doctrin~~ “Doctor, it is a pity Carns should be in.”<sup>65</sup> Believe him to be a good sort of fellow. Sorry to see him lying in jail. Would it not be better to go and liberate him?” Talked with the doctor and he thought he would go. Chauncey went out of [the] room until he got his clothes on. Says I, “You ~~may~~ better stay where you are. Don’t you know, we have papers and documents? [Their] very purpose [is to] part us to destroy ~~us~~ either one of us.” We stayed together that night. Towards the next night we had an interview with the ~~governor~~ ~~he~~ when we went into the room he was surrounded with just such characters [as] I had mentioned. And if it had not been [that] I was going on public business, if I had been on private instead of public, I should have turned around and said, “Governor Ford, if you choose to [be] with such characters as these, I shall withdraw.” But it was necessary we should do our business in [a] public capacity.

I said we had been sent by General Smith, that we had with us documents to inform him of [the] position of the country and all what was going on generally. He took our documents and commenced reading them, but while he was reading ~~another~~ one [would] say, “That is a lie,” another, “That is a damned lie,” another, “That is a God damned lie.” But his Excellency did not hear it. Perhaps he thought it very polite. It passed off comfortably with him. The result of it was he told us he would prepare a letter for us. He did so sometime late on in the evening. We got a letter and went back to Nauvoo with it.

When Joseph Smith read the letter, he believed there was mischief intended by the governor and the parties. And we talked over the matter for [a] length of time in the Nauvoo Mansion. And finally there was some gentlemen came in, some relation of the late president, and wished to see Joseph Smith and have some little conversation with him.<sup>66</sup> As it was very late, and we had been up for one or two nights before, I went ~~out~~ off and left

---

65. This is the most likely reading. This word may also be “not.”

66. Charles Francis Adams, the son of President John Quincy Adams, and his cousin Josiah Quincy Jr. visited with Joseph Smith on May 15, 1844, a little more than a month before the other events Taylor describes. See Jed Woodworth, “Josiah Quincy’s 1844 Visit with Joseph Smith,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 71–87. This may well have been the relation to the “late president” Taylor referenced.



him ~~that~~ that evening. In the morning I heard Hyrum and Joseph [and] one or two others crossed the river and thought it [the] best thing to go.

I crossed but did not see him until sometime [the] next day when I got word from him. Brother Elias Smith went to search [for] Joseph [and] brought me word that Joseph and Hyrum had concluded to go to Carthage and requested me to come and go along. I had peculiar feelings at the time. I had not seen them, but I had been arranging my business to leave in half an hour. I should have been started east except if I did not find them over the river I should meet them by there.

There was peculiar feelings among many of the brethren in relation to it.<sup>67</sup> I was not there during the whole of those deliberations. As I said, I was preparing to arrange my business for the east. Hyrum extended a strong wish to return and stated his feelings precisely, and Joseph gave way to his brother's feelings. Joseph had told them in [a] public speech before, says he, "brethren I will stand by you to the death." Some of <em><sup>68</sup> went and

---

67. Jason R. Luce recalled the conversation between a man named Powers and a Mr. Davis when a group met on June 11, 1844, to discuss the men returning over the river and going to Carthage. "Powers said they would attempt to kill Joseph—Mr. Davis replied No I think not,—Yes say Powers they will by God & you know it by—God." Willard Richards, Minutes, ca. 1844, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60, Church History Library; punctuation as in original. This is reminiscent of Jonathan Wright's recollection of a conversation between him and Colonel Enoch C. March between the Mansion House and Richard Briersier's Ferry Landing on Water Street in Nauvoo on June 26, 1844, at about 5 p.m., after he met with George T. M. Davis, editor of the *Alton Telegraph*, when March's soldiers had come looking for Joseph and were unable to find him. After Wright bore witness to March that he had a testimony of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling, "Col. March Replied. Mr. Wright—you are mistaken—& I know it—you do not know what I know. I tell you—they will kill Jo Smith before he leaves Carthage & I know it—and you never will see him alive again—said I Enoch, I do not believe it. he is in the hands of God—and God will deliver him—says he I know better—when you hear of him again—you will hear he is dead & I know it—and I will tell you why I know it—The people at Carthage wanted permission from the Gov. to kill you all—and burn up your city—and Ford (the Gov.) asked me if I thought it was best to suffer it—I replied—No no—for Gods sake Ford—don't suffer it—that will never do—no never—Just see for a moment Ford what that would do—it would be the means of murdering 1000s of Innocent men women & children—and destroying, Thousands of Dollars worth of property—and that never would do. it would not be sanctioned—it would disgrace the nation—you have now got the Principal men—here under your control—they are all you want, What more do you want When they are out of the way, the thing is settled & the people will be satisfied & that is the easiest way you can dispose of it & Gov Ford thought upon the whole that was the best policy & I know it will be done." Jonathan Calkins Wright, Affidavit, January 13, 1855, Joseph Smith history documents, 1840–60.

68. Shorthand reads only "m," but this is an apparent abbreviation for "them."

asked him if he was going to leave them now, so I heard. I do not know the particulars of course. Then he turned around and said, “Die? Yes, I am a man of honor and integrity. I stand up to my post if the devil stand in the way.” There was nothing of cowardice in him. ~~Rest~~ Lots of brethren others here say no one<sup>69</sup> sought to destroy the brethren. He went out with <100><sup>70</sup> men to meet in the prairie to meet 2500—no, nothing of cowardice. But he thought it would be better to ward off the blow a little while and trust to pardon to regulate things when the storm should be [a] little abated. These, I believe, were his feelings in going over the river. We had been . . . I believe . . . Before that, I must mention a circumstance here.

That the city charter of Nauvoo possessed the right of a writ of habeas corpus, which gave the parties the privilege of being taken from before an officer, if they considered there was injustice going to be done them, and receive a trial in another place. Before this mob came—before [the] governor came—Brother Joseph, Brother Hyrum, and all of the city council appeared before Squire Wells, who was then one of the magistrate[s] to answer to this charge brought ~~them~~ against them. The municipal [court] issued a writ of habeas corpus, and the city marshal took us out of [the] hands of [an] officer sent from Carthage, and we was brought before Squire Wells. Why? Because he was not in the Church at that time and they could not have any reasonable objections for us to be tried before him in order to conciliate the people.<sup>71</sup> We were acquitted, but we<sup>72</sup> were not satisfied.

Now I return to where I left off. We agreed to go to Carthage. Joseph said very little when we went, but he did talk [of] feelings on leaving home. I remember a remark that President Young made down at North Ogden [one] day a while ago in speaking about Brother Joseph. He said at that time, he believed the spirit of God was withdrawn from it at the time and he was left to grapple with the powers of darkness. I believe it. I believe it from the statement he made. Somebody asked him as we were journeying to Carthage, says they: “Joseph what will be the upshot of this matter?” “Well,” says he, “I do not know anything about it. Do not talk to me about matters now. I have given up my office and calling for the time being.” Made some remark like that. “I do not profess to guide this people now while I am in [the] hands of officers. Somebody else must do it.” This is [the] body of meaning, [the] spirit of [the] words, if not the exact words.

---

69. Shorthand for “one” is awkwardly written.

70. “1” is written over “2”; the number originally read “200.”

71. This word could also be read “plea.”

72. This word is written “we,” but context suggests Taylor may have meant to say “they.” The symbol for “they” is almost the same as that for “we” but much larger.

He went to Carthage, and it was not Joseph and Hyrum alone [that were] implicated in that matter but all the city council. I was one of them. ~~we went to~~ Our brother the governor sent for Joseph Smith. He pledged to us his honor and the honor of the state that these men should be protected and should not be injured. He gave it to us as delegates that had been sent out by Joseph to convey this message to him. We spoke about the position of [the] country. We told him we were abundantly able to defend ourselves. We neither asked his help nor any other. We had at that time 5000 men in arms, and we could have taken one fourth of it and whipped out the governor's posse and his mobocrats. Consequently, it was not because we could not defend ourselves but to be subject to the law of the land and conciliate the feelings of people. "Shall we go forward and bring posse?" "No," says the governor, "don't bring any." "What shall be the situation of Joseph and Hyrum and those with them?" "I pledge my honor and honor of [the] state they shall be protected and no harm shall come to them." I deviate [a] little in detail—perhaps because [of] things that occur to me which I have passed over.

When we got there we had a hearing in the hotel. We stayed at the same place the governor stayed in. [The] man's name that kept it was Hamilton.<sup>73</sup> However, as there was so much excitement at that time abroad, it was thought best we should go early [and] have our appearance another time. That was thought the best course to pursue by the lawyers and all parties concerned. And as that was legal, we thought we would give our bail, have [an] appearance another time, and go at another time not in that excitement. We went bail for one another and that thing was cleared for the time being.

In speaking of this bail, I must refer back to the bail that was required of me and Brother Bernhisel in relation to Carns. It is a little disconnected, but I wish to put the thing in as it was and show you why I came to such opinions about their proceeding. Next morning we went and waited [upon] Squire Smith.<sup>74</sup> When we waited upon him, we spoke about this case of

---

73. Artois Hamilton (1795–1875) operated a hotel in Carthage, east of the county jail.

74. Robert F. Smith, captain of the Carthage Greys, was also the local judge and was so busy during this period that he did not have time to sleep during the night leading up to the martyrdom. His wife left the following account of that last day. "That day [June 27, 1844] I was unusually depressed and out of sorts. [I] had been living in almost constant ~~dread~~ terror of the Mormans for years and never knwen from day to day and hardly from one hour to another, what dreadful catastrophe would happen and when the rumor reached me about half past two P.M. that a mob had collected on the prairie ~~some~~ a few miles out and were on the road to Carthage.

Carns and told him we had come to give bail for him. Says he, "I do not know whether I should be authorized to receive bail from any inhabitants from [the] City of Nauvoo, seeing things [are] in such a troublesome state." Before either one of us would have done it. This time both were there. He did not think they he would be justified. "We have both got property in the county," says I. "Search the records." "Well, says he, "I do not think, finally, [it is] best for me to take bail. But it would have done if one night before."

Now I go back to where I left. We gave bail to for one another and it was not opposed and could not be rejected. The next thing was there was two ruthless characters. I don't suppose anybody would have trusted them in death. I shall not mention any names about these. One of them I have forgot. The other matter [is] of little moment, let it pass. Suffice it to say they were men in whom could be placed no confidence. They went and made affidavit to the same Smith. All referred to that Joseph Smith and Hyrum were guilty of treason against the United States. They had been put up to this by one of the lawyers. They did this because treason was not aailable case and they thought they would get them into prison where they could accomplish their designs upon them. As soon as I heard of this, a constable, a ruffian came into the room and was for bearing them off first.

After<sup>75</sup> I told him to hold on and asked him what he was after, Brother Phelps and others was present, I went to the governor's room [and] says, "Governor Ford, are you aware that [a] writ has been issued against Joseph and Hyrum Smith accusing them of treason and [there is a] constable

---

Some thought they were Mormans coming to liberate the Smiths from jail and and [*sic*] would destroy the town and every thing in it. My neighbors began to make preparations to leave their homes with their families and the part of town where I lived was soon entirely deserted but myself. . . . [My husband] had not been home a single night for two weeks. He with his men had been keeping guard of the town day and night all that time. . . . [She dressed and sent her six children to friends' houses one block away and about an hour later she heard gunfire.] [I] was powerless to move for a minute or so. When I became conscious there was a Mormon girl, who lived in the neighborhood, standing in the door. I was holding on to the bench of my chair and she was ringing her hands and saying 'Oh my God! Mrs. Smith they are shooting the men down at the jail and throwing them out of the window. . . . All brought word of what terrible revenge the Mormans were going to take on the Carthage people for killing the Smiths. They were frightened and beleaved all the stories they heard." Mrs. Robert F. Smith, "A Short Sketch of the Trials of Mrs. R. F. Smith at the Killing of the Smiths, The Mormans Prophet," holograph, SC 1434, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois. (Misspellings in title and numerous transpositions of letters and misspellings in narrative retained as in original.)

75. Shorthand is ambiguous for this word.

now wishing to put them into prison? I call upon you to use your official authority and liberate them." "I am sorry," says he, "that the thing should occur. But," says he, "it is a thing [that] belongs to the judiciary, and the executive [has] nothing to do with it." Says I, "Did not you pledge me your word of honor and faith of [the] state [that] you [would] see these men protected?" "So I will," says he. "Are you going [to] allow them to be thrust into prison at the insistence of felons like these?" "It is a thing [that] belongs to the judiciary; it would not hurt them for one night. Gentlemen, I expect different things from you."

I went. Outran <mocking> and saw some of our party readying to <mock> them back.<sup>76</sup> To a soldier I say, "Will you go and tell your captain I wish to see him immediately, and if not see him bring the first captain"? He came and brought me his captain. "I believe there is a design to murder these men, and here is a ruffian wanting to <illegible><sup>77</sup> them among the people. I wish you [to] bring your company to protect them." "I will do so," says he. And just as quick as the constable got them to the door, the company arrived to escort them to the jail. Everything was excited at **time**. Another circumstance about this I mention. I do not know who he was. I suppose he was in the militia—perhaps a friend to the Mormons. He came and whispered to my ear. Says he, "Remember me." But I never saw him from that time to this. I should like to come across him. He did all he could to save them.

A whole lot of us went with Joseph, most of [the] city council and one or two strange gentlemen that went into prison at [the] same time. They considered abuse and outrage. There was a room full of us that night. In inquiring into the matter it was found they had <come><sup>78</sup> acted illegally in this matter. The officers had . . . They had committed them to prison under what is called a mittimus, as though they had been before them tried and proven guilty and they committed them to prison without a hearing. After having commenced [and] committed them to prison, the officer had no right to take them out of it unless they came to [a] county court and [were] brought out by right of habeas corpus. This was about the position of things. Well, they refused to go out. They appeared to before a court called the next day [by] this same officer Smith. He was captain of [a] company. He went

---

76. The words "mocking" and "mock" are written in the vowel position for "making" and "make," but the difference is less than 1/6 of an inch higher on the line, and since Watt wrote rapidly he was not always careful about his placement. The sentence reads awkwardly either way but "mocking" is the preferred reading.

77. This word is illegible but probably "push." Bullock wrote, in longhand, "Ruffian was for pushing them."

78. This word is awkwardly written in shorthand.

to the governor. Says he, "Joseph and Hyrum refused to go out of prison." "Have you not got a posse?" says he. "Do not you know what to do?" He could not interfere before in any capacity whatever to protect them, but he could tell the officer what he could do to take them out by force on the principle of mobbing <—><sup>79</sup> he spoke about before. Consequently, they were brought out as [a] company of men came and we all went out. There was no charges against any but Joseph and Hyrum. As witnesses could not be brought, they were remanded back to prison for two days until witnesses could be gathered and [a] proper hearing had.

The next day the governor, Governor Ford, went to Nauvoo and he took away all of the military, I believe, with the exception of a company which was under the command of Captain Smith. This same Smith, captain of Carthage Grays, the most blood thirsty men [that] could be found anywhere, and these were the guards of Governor Ford, as he said, to protect the lives of Joseph and Hyrum Smith when we were in jail remanded a second time. There was only one or two allowed to go into jail besides myself and Brother Willard Richards. We obtained liberty from the governor, Richards being Joseph's private secretary and myself as his friend. There was one or two others [who] were permitted to go in, and different people came to see us. And we were left alone pretty much with the exception of two or three individual that came now and again. One was Captain Jones,<sup>80</sup> as he is called, from Wales. Another was Brother Wheelock,<sup>81</sup> Brother Markham,<sup>82</sup> and some two 3 others.<sup>83</sup> There was a strong feeling manifested by individuals of the brethren who would have been glad to have been with Joseph.\*<sup>84</sup>

---

79. This appears to be an aborted attempt to write "principle."

80. Dan Jones (1810–62) left the prison to request legal assistance from Orville H. Browning in Quincy, Illinois. He published an account of the martyrdom in Welsh in July 1847 titled "Merthyrdod Joseph Smith At Frawd Hyrum!" See Dan Jones, "The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith and His Brother Hyrum," intro. by Ronald D. Dennis, *BYU Studies* 24, no. 1 (1984): 79–109.

81. Cyrus Hubbard Wheelock (1813–94) left the jail "on some errand" and was not allowed to return.

82. Stephen Markham (1800–78).

83. Others who were in the jail for part of the time included John Solomon Fullmer (1807–83), John Milton Bernhisel (1799–1881), John Smith (1781–1854), Hiram S. Kimball (1806–63), and several lawyers.

84. "\*" indicates the sermon was continued elsewhere, as noted in the introduction.

## Transcript of Thomas Bullock's Longhand Summary of John Taylor's Sermon, June 27, 1854 (concluding paragraphs only)

*[Staker's note: The surviving portion of George D. Watt's shorthand recording of the Taylor sermon ends here, and the remainder is filled in with Thomas Bullock's recording, with italics indicating where Pitman was used, as noted above.]*

We ad [had]<sup>85</sup> various conversations *on the curious spirit there. The mob had prevented all to come. The last one was sent out for a little wine. He was not allowed to come back. Bro W<sup>d</sup> [Willard] says, bro Jos[eph] if there is any scuffling to be done let me [get it] done and let you go and I s<sup>d</sup>. [said] if you will let me go[.]*<sup>86</sup> *in a few hours I will have enough men to liberate you even if we tear down the prison. He objected preferring peace. I rem[em]ber bro Hy[rum] requested me to sing a poor wa[y] faring man of grief which I done. He requested it the 2<sup>nd</sup> time. I then saw a crowd of men*<sup>87</sup> *with disfigured faces and came up to the door up stairs. I made a rush to the door. bro H[yrum] and bro R[ichards] got there first. They leaned ags<sup>n</sup>. [against] the door. some one fired a gun thro the key hole. He then walked a little distance. a ball came thro the door and struck him in his face. another thro the windows fired by the Carthage Greys. He fell on his back and s<sup>d</sup> [said] I am a dd [dead] man. Jos<sup>h</sup> [Joseph] came and s<sup>d</sup> [said] Oh my poor bro Hy.[rum.] Bro Wheelock gave the pistol to bro Jos[eph] [—]*<sup>88</sup>

*He pulled the pistol deliberately 6 times. 3 times whent [sic] of[f] and 3 didn't. I seized a thick hickory stick and bro Jos[eph] [was] behind me. I parried off the guns firing and the last I heard bro Jos[eph] sa[y] parry them of[f] as well as you can. In a few moments the door was full of bayonets. The window was open. I made an attempt to jump out of the windo.*

---

85. Thomas Bullock, who was British, as was John Taylor, frequently dropped the initial "h" in words as he wrote; he also commonly wrote "and" as "ad." To keep bracketed information to a minimum, these instances have all been silently corrected to "had" or "and."

86. Bullock leaves a space here to indicate a period.

87. Debra Jo Marsh, who has developed the most comprehensive and detailed list of individuals who participated in the attack to date, has argued that over two hundred individuals attacked the prisoners in jail. Debra Jo Marsh, "Respectable Assassins: A Collective Biography and Socio-Economic Study of the Carthage Mob" (master's thesis, University of Utah, 2009).

88. An illegible word was wiped out here.



I fell on *the* windo sill *and* fell inside. I recovered my feeling *and* crawled under *the* bed. I had given Dr. Richards my watch *and* money.<sup>89</sup> my watch was all broken up. *the* wa[y] I fell *in* was a par[ty] outside shot me *as* I was falling *and* the force of *the* gun threw me back. I was shot once or twice under *the* bed. *The* next I noticed was bro R[ichards] going *from* *the* windo *to* *the* door towards some cells. I s<sup>d</sup>. [said] D<sup>r</sup> come *and* take me along. He opened *the* door *and* dragged me along *the* two balls *in*<sup>90</sup>  
I was in excruciating pain. He put me *in* a cell *and* threw me under *the* mat-  
tress. He

they ma[y] kill me<sup>91</sup>

s<sup>d</sup>. [said] is it possible Jos<sup>h</sup> is dd [dead] <illegible> pray you may live *and* tell *the* story. they ret<sup>d</sup> [returned] *and* found *no* one *in* *the* room *and* they absconded. *the* coroner's jury was called *in* *the* room. I bel[ieve] Hy[rum] never moved. I heard Frank<sup>92</sup> Higby at mart<sup>d</sup>. [martyrdom] I s<sup>d</sup>. [said] Cap Smith I want you *to* have F H arrested for I swear my life ags<sup>t</sup> [against] him. *And* he left *and* another of men wanted me *to* go *to* *the* tavern. but I wo [would] not. *the* D<sup>r</sup>. was attending *to* *the* bodies. I s<sup>d</sup>. [said] this jail ma[y] protect me. . . .<sup>93</sup> I co<sup>d</sup> [could] not believe them. *In* ½ an hour *the* whole place was left. when D<sup>r</sup>. R[ichards] came along I consented *and* went.

these r [are] *the* outlines *and* mor[e] *as* I know them at *the* present time. I la[y] *in* *the* tavern till *the* next, mor[n]<ing>. when my wounds *were* dressed. we co<sup>d</sup> [could] only whisper *no*. I went *to* Nauvoo. we rd <cost><sup>94</sup>  
our P. O I suppose but was <illegible> *and* I suppose they r [are] better off *and* can act *in* that position *and* I expect we shall meet them *and* strike hands. it was a barbarous thing *and* a real stain upon them *and* they can't

---

89. Taylor makes the point in his later account that he gave his watch and money to Willard Richards after the attack was over while the surgeon was working on his hand. He probably mentioned this detail here to explain his notice of damage to the watch. Taylor concluded his watch had been damaged by a bullet, but the evidence suggests it was likely damaged when he fell against the window sill. Joseph L. Lyon and David W. Lyon, "Physical Evidence at Carthage Jail and What It Reveals about the Assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *BYU Studies* 47, no. 4 (2008): 36–37.

90. There is a long space here in the manuscript indicating Bullock could not keep up with the narrative and jumped forward in the sermon in an attempt to catch up with John Taylor's speaking.

91. Phrase is above the line without an insertion mark.

92. Frank was a nickname for Francis Higby.

93. Bullock leaves a long space here, indicating missing material.

94. This word is difficult to read, and the transcription is uncertain.



*Martyrdom of Joseph and Hiram Smith in Carthage Jail, June 27, 1844.* Tinted lithograph by C. G. Crehen based on an image by G. W. Fasel, for Nagel & Weingartner, and dedicated to Orson Hyde, New York, 1851. Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. This lithograph was made in September 1851 based on an image printed by William Daniels in 1845. Even though Daniels acknowledged during the subsequent trial of the murderers that his initial image and the scene it depicted was largely inaccurate, some details are consistent with John Taylor's account. Daniels's image was likely based on a now lost 1844 painting by an unidentified artist used in Daniels's presentations sharing what he observed outside the jail during the martyrdom.

get rid of it *in time and et<sup>r</sup>. [eternity] and they will be dd<sup>95</sup> and they are dd and we shall see it. they have not hurt Jos[eph] or Hy[um] but they have hurt themselves. There r [are] 100<sup>s</sup> in this cong<sup>r</sup> [congregation] who would have been glad to have been where we were. I know they lived and dd [died] men of God and will live for evermore and many of my bren [brethren] round about here*

95. The letters "dd" are sometimes used as a short form of "dead" but in this context may have been a shortening of "damned."

if they r [are] gone *there is others* in their places. I rem[em]ber Xerxes<sup>96</sup> had a C<sup>o</sup> [company] called *the Immortals*. if any *were* killed another twenty stept into *his* place *and* it was always kept full. it *is a* regular place *and as* soon *as* one steps out another steps *in and* that man that don't fill it *have* not *the* sp[irit] *of* God. *as* those *were* men *of* God so r [are] thos who r [are] *with* us. ~~from~~<sup>97</sup> it *is* all ri<sup>t</sup> [right] in t[ime] *and in* et.[ernity] God bless you all ever *and* ever Amen

---

96. Xerxes was leader of the Persians who attacked the Spartans at the Battle of Thermopylae.

97. This word appears to have been wiped out.