

Missouri State Archives: Finding Aid 5.1

Mormon War Papers, 1837-1841

[Full-text transcription of: Witness Sampson Avard, Leader of Danites]

*Copies of Part of the Evidence taken in the
Examination of the Mormon
Prisoners before Judge King.*

Not to be opened

Copy of the testimony given before Honle Austin A. King Judge of 5 Judicial circuit in the State of Missouri at the Court house in Richmond. before a criminal court of inquiry begun Nov 12th. 1838. State vs. Joseph Smith Jr, Hiram Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, Amazy Lyman, Geo. W. Robinson, Caleb Baldwin, Alanson Ripley, Washington Voris, Sidney Turner, John Buck hannon, Jacob Gates, Chandler Haldbrook, George W. Harris, Jesse D. Hunter Andw Whitlock, Martin C. Alred, Wm Alred, Geo. Grant, Darwin Chase, Elijah Newman, Alvin G. Tippetts, Zedekiah Owens, Isaac Morley, Tho Beck Moses Clawson, John J. Tanner, Dan'l Shearer, Dan'l I Thomas, Alexander McRay, Elisha Edwards, John S. Higby, Ebenezer Page, Benjm Covey, Ebenzer Robinson, Lyman Gibbs, Jas M. Henderson, David Pettigrew, Edward Partridge, Francis Higby, David Frampton, George Kimble, Joseph W. Younger, Henry Zabriskiey, Allen J. Stout, Sheffield Daniels, Silas Manard, Anthony Head, Benj Jones, Dan'l Carn, John T. Earl and Norman Shearer, who were charged with and several crimes of high treason against the State, murder, burglary, arson, robbery, and larceny. Sampson Avard, a witness, produced, sworn, & examined, on behalf of the state, deposeth & saith: That about 4 months ago, a band called the Daughters of Zion, since called the Danite band, was formed of the members of the Mormon church, the original object of which was to drive from the county of Caldwell, all those who dissented from the Mormon church; in which they succeeded admirably, and to the satisfaction

of all concerned. I consider Joseph Smith, Jr as the prime mover and organizer of this Danite band_ The officers of the band, according to their grades, were bought before him, at a school house together with Hiram Smith & Sidney Rigdon, the three composing the first presidency of the whole church. Joseph Smith then blessed them xc then he prophesied over them, declaring

that they should be the means in the hands of God of bringing forth the millennial kingdom It was stated by Jos Smith Jr. that it was necessary this band should be bound together by a covenant. That those who revealed the secrets of this society should be put death. The covenant taken by all the Danite band was as follows, to wit: They declared, holding up their right hands, “In the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God I do solemnly obligate myself “ever to conceal and never to reveal the secret purposes of this society, called the Daughters of Zion, Should I ever do the same, I hold my life as the forfeiture.” The prophet Joseph Smith Jr, together with two his counsellors, Hiram Smith & Sidney Rigdon were considered as the supreme head of the church and the Daniete band feel themselves as much bound to obey them as to obey the Supreme God. Instruction was given by Joseph Smith Jr that if any of them should get into difficulty, the rest should help him out, and that they should stand by each other, right or wrong, This instruction was given at a danite meeting, in a publick address. As for Joseph Smith Jr and his two counsellors, the witness does not know they ever took the Danite oath He knows that all the rest of the defendants are danites, except Sidney Tanner, Andw Whitlock Zedah Owens, Thos Rich, John I. Tanner, Dan’l S Thomas, David Pettigrew, Geo. Kimble, Anthony Head, Benj. Jones, and Norman Shearer At the election last August, a report came to Far West that some of the brethren in Daviess cty were killed. I called for 20 volunteers to accompany me to [“Adam ondi Ahmon Mr Joseph Smith in company” crossed out] Davis to see into this matter. I went, and about 120 Mormons accompanied me to Adam ondi Ahmon Mr. Joseph Smith, Jr in company. When we arrived there, I found the report exaggerated. None were killed. We visited Mr. Adam Black—about 150 or 200 men of us

armed. Jos Smith was commander, and if Black had not signed the paper he did, it was the common

understanding & belief that he would have shared the fate of the dissenters. Sidney Rigdon and Lyman Wight were at Adam when we went to Blacks & advised the movement.

As regards the affair at DeWit, I know little personally, but I heard Mr. S. Rigdon say they had gone down to DeWitt, where it was said a mob had collected to wage war upon the Mormons residing in [~~“Caldwell”~~] Carroll county, and that Joseph Smith, Jr, with his friends went down to De Witt to give aid & help to his brethren.

The company, as I presume, were armed, they returned armed. Hiram Smith & Geo. W. Robertson were in the company. Amazi Lyman went to see what was going on. I heard these persons say they were in Hinckle's camp at De Wit several days -When the Mormons returned from De Wit, it was rumoured that a mob was collecting in Davis cty. Jos Smith Jr, the Sunday before the late disturbances in Davis, at a church meeting, gave notice that he wished the whole county collected on the next day (Monday) at Far West. He declared, on Sunday or Monday, I don't recollect which), that all who did not take up arms in defense of the Mormons of Davis should be considered as Tories, and should take their exit [~~“out”~~] from the county.

At the meeting on Monday, when persons met from all parts of the county of Caldwell, Jos Smith Jr took the pulpit, & delivered an address, in which he said that we had been an injured people, driven violently from Jackson cty, that we had appealed to the Governor, magistrates, judges & even to the President of the U. States, & there had been no redress for us, and that now a mob was about to destroy the rights of our brethren of Davis cty and that it was high time that we should take measures to defend our own rights.

In the address he related an anecdote about a captain who applied to a Dutchman to purchase potatoes, who refused to

sell

sell. The captain then charged his company, several different times, not to

touch the Dutchmans potatoes, In the morn-
-ing the Dutchman had not a potatoe left in
his patch. This was in reference to touching
no property in our expedition to Davis
Cty, that did not belong to us, but he told
us that the ["people" crossed out] children of God did not go to war
at their own expense. A vote was taken
whether the brethren should embody and go
down to Davis to attack the mob, this ques-
-tion was put by the prophet Jos Smith Jr
and passed unanimously, with a few exceptions
Captains Patten and Brunson were appoint-
-ed commanders of the Mormons by Jos Smith Jr
to go to Davis, he frequently called these men
generals. I once had a command as an
officer but Jos Smith Jr removed me from it
& I asked him the reason & he assigned that he
had another office for me; afterwards Mr.
Rigdon told me I was to fill the office of
Surgeon to attend to the sick & wounded
After we arrived at Diahmon in Davis a
council was held, at night composed of Jos
Smith Jr., Geo W. Robertson, Hiram Smith
Captains Patton & Brunson, Lyman Wight
Prest R Cahoon, P.P. Pratt and myself &
perhaps Mr. Hinckle- Prest. Rigdon was
not present, he remained at Far West: a
correspondence was kept up between him &
Jos Smith Jr. I heard Mr Rigdon read one of
the letters from Smith which as I remember
was about as follows That he knew from
prophecy & from the revelation of Jesus
Christ that the enemies of the Kingdom were
in their hands, & that they (the mormon church)
should succeed-Rigdon on reading the
letter said it gave him great ("satisfaction" crossed out) consolation
["that" crossed out) to have such authority that the kingdom
of God was rolling on. In the above
referred to council Mr Smith spoke of the
grievances we had suffered in Jackson, Clay,
Kirtland & other places, declared that we must

in future stand up for our rights as citizens
of the U. States. & as Saints of the most high
God. & that it was the will of God we
should do so. That we should be free and
independent, and that as the State of Miss-
-ouri and the U.. States would not protect us
it was high time that we should [] up as the
saints of the most high God & protect ourselves

& take the kingdom Lyman Wight observed that before the winter was over he thought we would be in St. Louis & take it. Smith charged them that they should be united in supporting each other. Smith said on some occasion that one should chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight. That he considers the U. States rotten, he compared the mormon church to the little stone spoken of by the prophet Daniel & that the Dissenters first & the State next was part of the image that should be destroyed by this little stone The Council was called on to vote the measures of Smith, which they did unanimously. On the next day Capt Patton who was called by the prophet Capt Fear naught, took command of about 100 armed men & told them that he had a job for them to do & that the work of the Lord was rolling on, & they must be united. He then led his troops to Galatin, saying he was agoing to attack the mob there. He made a rush into Gal-

-atin, dispersed the few men there and took the goods out of Stollings' store. & carried them to De ahmion. & I afterwards saw the store house on fire. When we returned to Diahmon the goods were deposited in the Lords storehouse under the care of the bishops Vincent Knight Orders were strictly given that all the goods should be deposited in the Lords store house no individuals were to appropriate anything to themselves until a general distribution should be made- Jos. Smith Jr was at Adam ondi Ahmon giving directions about things in general connected with the war when Patten returned from Galaten to Adam ondi Ahmon, the goods were divided or appor

-tioned out amongst those engaged, and these affairs were conducted under the superintendency of the first presidency. A part of the goods were brought to Far West, on their arrival under the care of Capt Fear naught. prest Rigdon and others shouted three hozannahs to the victors- On the day Patten went to Galatin. Col. Wight went to Mill Port, & I understood. I saw a great many cattle, beds, furniture &c brought into our camps by the mormons. After we returned to Far West, the troops were constantly kept in motion: and there was

a council held at the house of Prest Rigdon to determine who should be chiefs. It was determined that Col Wight should be commander in chief at Adam ondi ahmon. Brunson Capt of the flying horse of Davis, Col Hinckle should be commander in chief in chief of the Far West troops. Capt Patton Capt of the flying horse or cavalry, and that the prophet Jos smith Jr should be commander in Chief of the whole Kingdom. the Council was composed of Jos Smith Jr Capt Fear naught alias Patton col. Hinckle, Col Wight & Prest Rigdon- the object of the council was in furtherance of the scheme proposed in council in Davis Cty refered to above__ after this council Fear naught dis-puted as to the chief commander of the far west troops & had a smart altercation about it with Hinkel but Smith proposed that they agree to disagree and go on for the good of the Kingdom. The troops were kept together until the militia came out lately: there was from 500 to 800 men as I should sup-
-pose under arms. It was about this time that the militia came, out lately to Far West under Genl Lucas that our prophet, assembled the troops together at Far West into a hollow square and addressed them and stated to them that the Kingdom of God should be set up & should never fall, and for every one that we lacked in numbers, of those who came against us the Lord would send angles, who would fight for

us & that we should be victorious-- After the militia had been near Far West awhile, in an address Smith said that those troops were militia, & that we were militia too, and both sides clever fellows, & that he advised them to know nothing of what had happened, to say nothing & to keep dark:- that he Smith had forgotten more than he had ever known_
After it was ascertained that the militia had ar-
-rived, intelignce was immediately sent to Diahmon to Col Wight_ next morning Col Wight arrived in Far West with about 100 mounted [~~“and”~~ crossed out] armed men
The troops were constantly Kept prepared, and in a situation to repel attack- The evening the militia arrived near Far West, it was the general understand-
-ing in the mormon camps that they were militia legally called out, [~~“previous”~~ crossed out] and indeed previous to their arrival it was ascertained that there were mi-
-litia on their way to Far West.__ Some months ago I received orders to destroy the paper concerning

the Danite Society, which order was issued by the first presidency, and which paper being the constitution for the government of the daniete Society, was in my custody, but which I did not destroy__ It is now in Genl Clark's possession__ I gave the paper up to Genl Clark after I was taken prisoner__ I found it in my house, where I had previously deposited it, and believe it had never been in any person's possession after I first reced it_ This paper was taken into prest Rigdons house and read to the prophet & his counsellors, and was unanimously adopted by them as their rule and guide in future_ After it was thus adopted I was instructed by the council to destroy it, as, if it should be discovered, it would be considered treasonable_ This constitution, after it was approved of by the first presidency was read, article by article to the Dan-ite band and unanimously adopted by them_ This paper was drawn up about the time that the Danite band was formed_ Since the drawing up of the paper against the dissenters, it was, that this constitution of the Danite band was drafted- but I have no minutes of the time, as we were directed not to keep ["no" crossed out] written minutes_ which constitution above refered to is as follows_

“Where as in all bodies laws are necessary, for the permanancy, safety, and well being of society, We the members of the society of the daughters of Zion, do agree to regulate ourselves under such causes as in righteousness shall be deemed necessary for the preservation of our holy religion, and of our most sacred rights, and the rights of our wives and children, But to be explicit on the subject, it is especially our object, to support and defend the rights confered on us by our venerable sires, who purchased them with the pledges of their lives, their fortunes, & their sacred honours - And now to prove ourselves worthy of the liberty confered on us by them, in the providence of God, we do agree to be governed by such laws, as shall perpetuate these high privileges, of which we know ourselves to be the rightful possessors, and of which priviledges wicked and designing men have tried to deprive us, by all manner of evil, and that purely in consequence of the tenacity we have manifested in the discharge of our duty towards, our God, who had given us those rights and privileges, and a right in common with others to dwell on this Land- But we not having the priviledges of others allowed unto us. have determined, like unto our fathers to resist tyranny whether it be in

Kings, or in people It is all alike unto us our rights we must have, and our rights we shall have in the name of Israels God.

Article 1st

All power belongs originally, and legitimately to the people, and they have a right to dispose of it as they shall deem fit_ But as it is inconvenient, and impossible to convene the people in all cases. the legislative powers have been given by them from time to time into the hands of a representation, composed of delegates from the people themselves_ This is and has been the law, both in civil and religious bodies, and is the true principle

Article 2nd

The executive power shall be vested in the president of the whole church and his counsellors__

Article 3rd

The legislative powers shall reside in the president and his counsellors, together and with the generals and

Article 3rd

The legislative powers shall reside in the President and his counsellors, together and with the Generals and Colonels of the society By them all laws Shall be made regulating the Society

Article 4th

All officers shall be during life and good behavior or to be regulated by the law of God

Article 5th

The Society reserves the power of electing all its officers with the exception of the Aides and Clerks which the officers may needs in the various stations. The nominations to go from the Presidency to his second and from the Second to the third in rank and so down thru all the various grades each branch or department retains the power of electing its own particular officers

Article 6th

Punishment Shall be (~~“inflicted”~~ administered) administered to the guilty in accordance to the offence and no member shall be punished without law or by any others than those appointed by law for that purpose The Legislature Shall have power to make laws regulating punishments as in their judgments Shall be wisdom and righteousness

Article 7th

There shall be a secretary whose business it shall be to Keep all the Legislative records of the Society and also to Keep a Register of the names of any member of the Society also the rank of the officers

He shall also communicate the laws to the Generals as directed by laws made by the regulation of such business by the Legislature

Article 8th

All officers shall be subject to the Commands of the Captains General given (“to the” crossed out) through the Secretary of War And so all officers shall be subject to their superiors in rank according to laws made for that purpose.

“Where as in all bodies laws are necessary, for the permanent, safety and well being of society, We the members of the society of the Daughters of Zion do agree to regulate ourselves under such laws as in righteousness shall be deemed necessary for the preservation of our holy religion, and of our most sacred rights, and the rights of our wives and children, But to be explicit on the subject, it is especially our object to support and defend the rights conferred on us by our venerable sires, who purchased them with the pledges of their lives, their fortunes, & their sacred honours. And now to prove ourselves worthy of the liberty conferred on us by them, in the providence of God, we do agree to be governed by such laws, as shall perpetuate these high privileges, of which we know ourselves to be the rightful possessors, and of which privileges wicked and designing men have tried to deprive us, by all manner of evil, and that purely in consequence of the tenacity we have manifested in the discharge of our duty towards, our God, who had given us these rights and privileges, and a right in common with others to dwell on this land But we not having the privileges of others allowed unto us. have determined, like unto our fathers to resist Tyranny whether it be in Kings, or in people it is all alike unto us our rights we must have, and our rights we shall have in the name of Israels God.

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Article 4th

[“The society reserves the power of electing all its officers with the exception” crossed out] All offices shall be during life, and good behavior, or to be regulated by the law of God.

Article 5th

The society reserves the power of electing all its officers, with the exception of the aids and clerks which the officers may need in the various stations. The nominations to go from the presidency to his second & from the second to the third in rank, and so down through all the various grades each branch or department retains the power of electing its own particular officers

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All officers shall be subject to the Commands of the Captain General, given through the Secretary of War And so all officers shall be subject to their superiors in rank according to laws made for that purpose”

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In connection with the grand scheme of the prophet his preachers and apostles were instructed to preach to and to instruct their followers, (who are estimated in Europe & America at about 40,000) that it was their duty to come up to the Stake called Far West and to possess the Kingdom, that it was the will of God that they should do so, & that the Lord would give

give them power to possess the Kingdom_ There was another writing drawn up in June last, which had for its object to get rid of the dissenters, and which had the desired effect. (this is the paper drawn up against

the dissenters referred to above by the witness) _ Since that time, and since the introduction of the scheme of the prophet made known in the above constitution, I have the prophet say that it was a fortunate thing that we got rid of the dissenters, as they would have endangered the rolling on of the Kingdom of God, as introduced and to be carried into effect by the danite band, That they the dissenters were great obstacles in the way, and that unless they were removed, the aforesaid Kingdom could not roll on__ This paper against the dissenters was drafted by Sidney Rigdon and is as follows:

“ Far West June 1838

“To Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer William. W. Phelps, and Lyman E. Johnson, greeting Whereas the citizens of Caldwell county have borne with the abuse received from you at different times and on different occasions, until it is no longer to be endured, neither will they endure it any longer, having exhausted all the patience they have and conceive that to bear any longer is a vice instead of a virtue We have borne long and suffered incredibly, but we will neither bear nor suffer any longer, and the decree has gone forth from our hearts, and shall not return to us void_ Neither think gentlemen that in so saying we are trifling with either you or ourselves for we are not. There are no threats from you, no fear of losing our lives by you, or by anything you can say or do will restrain us, for out of the county you shall go, and no power shall save you_ And you shall have three days after you receive this communication to you, including twenty four hours in each day for you to depart, with your families peaceably, which you may do undisturbed by any person, but in that time if you do not depart we will use the means in our power to cause you to depart, for go you shall_ We will have no more promises to reform

as you have already done, and in every instance violated your promise, and regarded not the covenant which you had made, but put both it and us at defiance We have solemnly warned you, and that in the most determined manner, that if you did not cease that course of wanton abuse of the citizens of this county, that vengeance would overtake you sooner or later, and that when it did come, it would be as furious as the mountain torrent, and as terrible as the beating tempest, but you have affected to des

-pise our warnings, and pass them off with a sneer,
or a grin, or a threat, and pursed your former course,
and vengeance sleepeth not, neither does it slumber,
and unless you heed us this time, and attend to our re-
-quest it will overtake you, at an hour when you do
not expect, and at a day when you do not look for
it. and for you there shall be no escape, for there
is but one decree for you, which is depart—depart,
or a more fatal calamity shall befall you-

After Oliver Cowdrey had been taken by a States War
-rant for Stealing and the Stolen property found concealed
in the house of William W Phelps in which nefarious
transaction John Whittmer had also participated, Oliver
Cowdrey stole the property conveyed it to John Whitmer
and John Whitmer to William W Phelps and there the officer
of the law found it. While in the hands of the officers
and under an arrest for this vile transactions, and
if possible to hide your shame from the world like
criminals which indeed you were, you appealed to
our beloved brethren President Joseph Smith Jr, Sid=
=ney Rigdon men whose characters you had endeavour
-ed to destroy by every artifice you could you could invent, not
even the basest lying excepted, and did you find them
Revengeful?-- no but notwithstanding all your scanda
lous attacks still such was the nobleness of their character
that even vile enemies could not appeal to them in vain,

They enlisted as you well know their influence to save
you from your just fate, and they by their influence deli=
=vered you out of the hand of the officer, while you were
pleading with them you promised reformation, you
bound yourselves by the most solemn promises that you
would never be employed again in abusing any of the
citizens of Caldwell, and by such condescensions did you
attempt to escape, the work house. But now for the

Sequel . ?Did you practice the promised reformation? you
Know you did not, but by secret efforts, continued to prac-
-tise your iniquity, and secretly to injure their character
notwithstanding their Kindness to you.! are such
things to be borne, you yourself would answer that
they are insufferable If you were to answer according
to the feelings of your own hearts. As we design this
paper to be published to the world we will give an
epitome of your scandalous conduct and treachery for
the last two years. We wish to remind you that Oliver Cowdery
and David Whitmer were among the principal of those who
were the means of gathering us to this place by their testimony
which they gave concerning the plates of the book of Mormon;
That they were Shown to them by an Angel which testimony
we believe now as much as before you had so scandalous

=ly disgraced it; You commenced your wickedness by heading a party to disturb the worship of the Saints in the first day of the week and made the house of the Lord in Kirtland to be a scene of abuse and slander, to destroy the reputation of those whom the church has appointed to be their teachers and for no other cause only that you were not the persons.

The Saints in Kirtland having elected Oliver Cowdery to be a justice of the peace, he used the power of that office to take their most sacred rights from them and that contrary to law

He supported a parcel of Blacklegs and in disturbing the worship of the saints, and when the men whom ("you" crossed out) the church had chosen to preside over their meetings endeavoured to put the house to order, he helped (and by the authority of his Justices office too) these wretches to continue their confusion and threatened the church with a prosecution for trying to put them out of the house, and issued writs against the Saints for endeavouring to sustain their rights, and bound themselves under heavy bonds to appear before his honor, and required bonds which were both inhuman and unlawful, and one of these was the venerable father who has been appointed by the church to preside, a man of upwards of seventy years of age, and notorious for his peaceable habits, Oliver Cowdery David Whitmer and Lyman E Johnson united with a gang of counterfeiters, thieves, liars, and blacklegs of the deepest dye to deceive, cheat, and defraud the saints out of their property, by every act and stratagem which wickedness could invent, using the influence of the vilest

persecutors to bring vexatious lawsuits, villainous prosecutions, and even stealing not excepted, In the midst of this career, for fear of the saints would seek redress at their hands, they breathed out threatenings of mobs and actually made attempts with their gang to bring mobs upon them. Oliver Cowdery and his gang, such of them as belonged to the church, were called to an account by the church for their iniquity. they confessed repentance, and were again restored to the church, But the very first opportunity they were again practising their former course, while this wickedness was going on in Kirtland, Cowdery and his company were writing letters to Far West in order to destroy the character of every person that they thought were standing in their way, and John Whitmer and William W. Phelps were assisting to prepare the way to throw confusion among the saints of far West. During the full career of Oliver Cowdery & David Whitmer's Bogus money business got abroad in to the world that they were engaged in it, and several Gentlemen were preparing to commence a prosecution against Cowdery he finding it out, took with him Lyman E Johnson, and fled to far West with their families, Cowdery stealing property, & bringing it with him, which has been, within a few weeks

past obtained by the owner, by means of a search warrant and he was saved from the penitentiary by the influence of two influential men of the place. He also brought notes with him upon which he has received pay and made an attempt to sell them to Mr. Arthur of Clay County. And Lyman E Johnson on his arrival reported the he has a note of one thousand dollars against a principal man of this church, when it was a palpable falsehood, and he had no such thing, and he did it for the purpose of injuring his character. Shortly, after Cowdery and Johnson left Kirtland for far West they were followed by David Whitmer, on whose arrival a general system of slander ("ing" crossed out) and abuse was commenced by you all, for the purpose of destroying the characters of certain individuals whose influence & their regard for righteousness you dreaded, and not only yourselves but your wives and children, led by Yourselves were busily engaged in it. neither were you contented with slandering and vilifying here but you Kept up continual correspondence with your gangs of marauders in Kirtland, encouraging them to go on with their iniquity which they did to perfection by swearing false to injure the characters and property of innocent men stealing cheating, lying, instituting vexatious lawsuits selling Bogus money and also Stones and Sand for bogus in which nefarious

business Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Lyman E Johnson were engaged while you were there. Since your arrival here you have commenced a general system of the same Kind of conduct in this place, You set up a nasty, dirty, pettifoggers office pretending to be Judges of the law, when it is a notorious fact that you are profoundly ignorant of it, and of any other thing which is calculated to do mankind good, or if you know it you take good care never to practise it. And in order to bring yourselves into notice you began to interfere with all the business of the place trying to destroy the character of our merchants and bringing their creditors upon them and break them up, In addition to this you stirred up men of weak minds to prosecute one another for the vile purpose of getting a fee for pettifogging for one of them. You have also been threatening continually to enter into a general system of prosecuting, determined as you said to pick a flaw in the titles of those who have bought city lots and built upon them not that you can do any thing but cause vexatious lawsuits

And amongst the most monstrous of all your abominations we have evidence, which when called upon we can produce that letters sent to the post office in this place have been opened, read, and destroyed, and the persons to whom they were sent never obtained them thus ruining the business of the place. We have evidence of a very strong character that You are at this very time engaged with a gang of counterfeiters coiners and blacklegs, as some of those characters

have lately visited our city from Kirtland and told what they had come for, and we Know assuredly, that if we Suffer you to continue we may expect and that speedily to find a general system of stealing counterfeiting cheating and burning property, as in Kirtland, for so are your associates carrying on there at this time and that encouraged by You by means of letters you send continually to them, and to crown the whole you have had the audacity to threaten us, that if we offered to disturb you you would get up a mob from Clay and Ray Counties for this insult if nothing else and your threatnings to shoot us if we offered to molest you we will put from the county of Caldwell so help us God! the above was signed by some 84 Mormons

Far west June

1838

To Oliver Cowdrey David Whitmer John Whitmer William W Phelps and Lyman E. Johnson Greetings Whereas the Citizens of Caldwell County have borne with the abuses received from you at different times and on different occasions until it is no longer to be endured, neither will they endure it any longer, having exhausted all the patience they have. We have borne long and suffered incredibly, but we will bear nor suffer any longer and the decree has gone forth from our hearts and shall not return unto us void. Neither think gentlemen in so doing we are trifling with either you or ourselves for we are not. There are no threats from you, no fear of lossing our lives by you or any thing you can say or do will restrain us for out of the County you shall go and no power shall save you, and you shall have three days after you receive this our Communication to you including twenty four hours in each day for you to depart with your families peaceably which you may do undisturbed by any person But in that time if you do not depart we will use the means in our power to Cause you to depart for go you shall. We will have no more promises to reform as you have already made and in every instance violated your promises and regarded not the Covenant which you had made, but put both it and us at defiance We have Solemnly warned you and that in the most determined manner, that if you did not Cease that course of wanton abuse of the Citizens of this County that vengeance would overtake you sooner or later, and that when it did

Come it would be as furious as the Mountains

torrent and as terrible as the beating tempest
But you have affected to despise our warnings
and pass them off with a sneer or a grin or a threat
and still pursued your former course. Vengeance sleeps
not neither does it slumber; and unless you heed us
this time, and attend to our request, it will overtake
you at an hour where you do not expect it and at a
day when you do not look for it_ and for you there
shall be no escape; for there is but one decree for you
which is depart depart or else a more fatal calamity
Shall befall you After Oliver Cowdrey had been
taken by a States warrant for stealing and the stolen
property found Concealed in the house of William
W Phelps; in which nefarious transaction John
Whitmier had also participated. Oliver Cowdrey
stole the property Conveyed it to John Whitmier
and John Whitmier to William W Phelps and
there the officers of the law found it. While in the
hands of the officers and under an arrest for this
vile transaction and if possible to hide your shame
from the world like criminals which in deed you
were, you appealed to our beloved brethren
President [~~“Rigdon”~~] Joseph Smith and Sidney
Rigden Men whose characters you had endeav=
=oured to destroy, by every artifact you could
invent not even the basest lying excepted
Notwithstanding all your scandalous attacks,
still such was the nobleness of their Characters
that even vile enemies could not appeal to them
in vain They enlisted as you well know other
influence to save you from your just fate and
they by their influence delivered you out of the
hands of the officer While you were pleading

with them you promised reformations You bound
yourselves by the most solemn promises that you
would never be employed again in abusing any
of the Citizens of Caldwell and by Such conde=
=scentions did you attempt to escape the workhouse.
but Now for the sequel did you practice the
promise reformation. You Know that you did not
but by Secret efforts Continued to practice your in=
=equity and clandestinely to injure their Character
notwithstanding there Kindness to you. Are such
things to be borne? You yourselves would answer that
they are unsufferable if you were to answer accor=
=ding to the feelings of your own hearts. As we design
this paper to be published to the world we will
give an epitome of your scandalous conduct and
treachery for the last two years. We wish to remind

you that Oliver Cowdrey and David Whitmer were among the principal of those who were the means of gathering us to this place by their testimony which they gave concerning the plates of the book of Mormon, that they were shown to them by an Angel which testimony we believe now as much as before you so scandalously disgraced it. You commenced your wickedness by heading a party to disturb the worship of the saints of the first day of the week, and made the house of the Lord in Kirtland to be a scene of abuse and slander to destroy the reputation of those whom the Church had appointed to be their teachers and for no other cause only that you were not the persons. The saints in Kirtland having elected Oliver Cowdry to be a justice of the peace, he used the power of that office, to take their most sacred rights from them, and that

Contrary to law. He supported a parcel of Blacklegs in disturbing the worship of the Saints-and when the Men whom the Church had chosen to preside over their Meetings endeavored to put the house to order- Oliver Cowdry by the Authority of his office assisted those wretches in continuing their confusion and threatened the Church with a prosecution for trying to put them out of the house. And issued writs against the Saints for endeavoring to Sustain rights and bound them under heavy bonds to appear before his honour - and required bonds which were both inhuman and unlawful One of those injured men was a man upwards of Seventy years of age the venerable Father who had been approved by the Church to preside_ a man notorious for his peaceable habits Oliver Cowdry David Whitmer and Lyman E Johnson united with a gang of Counterfeiters thieves, liars, and Blacklegs of the deepest die to deceive, cheat and defraud the Saints out of their property by every act and stratagem which McKnip could invent using the influence of the vilest persecutors to bring vexatious lawsuits [~~“upon”~~ crossed out] vilanous persecutions and even steeling not excepted. In the midst of the career for fear the saints would Seek redress at their hands they breathed out threatening of Mobs and actually made attempts to with their gang to bring mobs upon them. Oliver Cowdry and his gang such of them as belonged to the Church were called to an account by the Church

for their inequity_ they confessed repentance and were again restored to the Church.

But the very first opportunity they were

again practicing their former course. while this wickedness was going on in Kirtland Oliver Cowdry and his gang were writing letters to Far West in order to destroy the Character of every person they thought were standing in their way And John Whitmer and William W Phelps were assisting to prepare the way to throw confusion among the Saints of Far West. During the full Career of Oliver Cowdry and David Whitmers Bogus money business it got abroad into the world that they were engaged in it, and several gentlemen were preparing to commence a prosecution against Cowdry He finding it out took with him Lyman E Johnson and fled to Far West with their families: Cowdry Stealing a property and bringing it with him; which has within a few weeks past been obtained by the owners by means of a search warrant and he was saved from the Penitentiary by the influence of two influential men of this place. He also brought notes with him upon which he had received pay and had promised to destroy them Since here he made an attempt to Sell them to Mr Arthur of Clay County. And Lyman E. Johnson on his arrival reported that he had a note of One thousand dollars against a principal man in this Church when it is a fact that it was a palpable falsehood and had no such thing and he did it for the purpose of injuring his character. Shortly after Cowdry and Johnson left Kirtland for Far West they were followed by David Whitmer on whose arrival a general system of slander and abuse was commenced by you all for the purpose of destroying the Character of certain individuals whose influence and strict

regard for righteousness you dreaded and not only you but your wives and children led by yourselves were busily engaged in it. Neither were you contented with slandering and vilifying here: but you kept up continual correspondence with your gang of Marauders in Kirtland encouraging them to go on with their inequity which they did to perfection by smearing falsely to injure the Character and property of innocent men-cheating stealing, lying, and instituting vexatious Law Suits, Selling bogus money, and also Stones and

Sand for bogus (word crossed out, money), in which nefarious business
You Oliver Cowdry David Whitmer and Lyman
E Johnson were engaged while at Kirtland- Since
your arrival here you have commenced a general
System of the same kind of conduct in this place
you got up a nasty dirty pettifoggers office pre
tending to be judges of the law When it is a no-
tritious fact that you are profoundly ignorant
of it. and of every other thing calculated to do
mankind good or if you know it you take good
care never to practice it. And in order to bring
yourselves into Notice you began to interfere with
all the business of the place trying to destroy
the Character of our Merchants and bring
their credetors upon them and break them up.
In addition to this you steared up men of weak
minds to prosecute on another for the vile pur-
pose of geting a fee for a pettifogger from them
You have ("been" crossed out) also been threatening Continually to
enter into a general System of prosecuting--determined
as you said to peck a flaw in the titles of those who
have purchased City lots and built upon them
not that you can do anything but cause vexatious

lawsuits. And among the most monstrous of all
your abominations we have evidence which when
Called upon we can produce; that letters sent
to the Post Office in this place have been opened
and read and destroyed, and the persons to
whom them were Sent never obtained them-
thus ruining the business of the place. We have
evidence of a very Strong Character that you
are this very time engaged with a gang of
Counterfeiters and coiners and blacklegs as Some
of those Characters have lately visited our city from
Kirtland and told what they had come for, and
we know assuredly that if we suffer you to
continue we may expect and that speedely to
find a general System of Stealings, Cheating, coun-
terfeiting, and burning property as in Kirtland
for so are your associates carrying on there at this
time and that encouraged by you by means of
letters you send continually to them.
And to crown to whole you have had the au-
dacity to threaten us that if we offered to dis-
=turb you-you would get up a mob from Clay
and Ray Counties-for this insult of nothing
else and your threatenings to Shoot us if we
offered to molest you We will put you from
the County of Caldwell So help us God

Sampson Avard Geo W Pitkin Mile Andrews
Ralp Cox Philo Dibble D B Huntington
Geo M Robinson Daniel Carn Ebenezer Robin
son Truman Brace Amasa Lyman Dani'l
Carter D Hunter Erastus Bingham
Alexander McRea Samuel Bent Israel
Barlow Elisha Evertt Silas Maynarde

Andrew Rockwell Elijah Averett Joseph Clark Jr
Lorenzo Barnes Joseph Corlay Levi M Hancock
Stephen Winchester John T Higbee Isaac
Higbee Chandler Holbrook Tad Yale Huntington
Johnson John Somy George P Dykes William
C. Gallagher Anthony Head Richard Howard
George Washington Vorheese John W Clunk
Hamron H Hills Cyrus Daniels Jothan
Maynard Benjamin Burson Squire Bozanth
Timothy B Foset Daniel Sheaver Sylvester
Hulet Solomon Daniel William Stringham
Andrew Moore Avrell Knight James B Isee
Dwight Hadding Ezekial Billington John
Fawsett John Crush Rufus Allen Norvil
M. Head Alfred Has Joseph Rose William
Hewatt Lewis Allen Herman Clark Jared
Carter Harvery Greene Seymour Bronson
James Hendrix James S Allen Ethan
Barrows Charles C Rich John Smith
Harloe Redfield Joseph Cooledge Edward
Seaky Jackson Smith Jacob Gates
Sydney Tanner James Brashear Joseph
Holbrook Mathaw Tanner Wensiers Carter
Hirarm Smith Nelson Maynard Phil Allen

About the time the dissenters fled, President Rigdon preached a sermon from the text "ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savor, where -with ("it" crossed out) shall it be slated? it is thewillforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden und -er foot of men." commonly called the salt sermon, in which the dissenters were ("compared to" crossed out) called the salt that had lost its savor, and that they should be trampled upon, and driven out by the saints, which was well understood by the danites to be a part of their duty to do.-- When Genl; Lucas' men marched up to Far West. Smith told me, as I un -derstood him, that he had said to one of the mili -tia captains, not to come any further as he might get into danger- Smith after erecting his bul -works, (the night after genl Lucas arrived) asked

me if I did not think him pretty much of a general and I answered in the affirmative-We were advised all the time to fight valiantly, and that the angels of the Lord would appear in our defense and fight our battles- In references to Bogarts battle, I know but little personally as to the start of the troops to fight Bogart- I was called upon to go along with the company (which was commanded by Patten) as surgeon this was about midnight, but as I thought a little sleep would do me more good than fighting I remained at home.--In the morning of the fight, about 6 o'clock I was called on by a Mr Emmet who informed me that Capt Fearnaught was wounded mortally--I went to Patton about 3 miles from the battle ground where I found Jos Smith Jr present laying hands on the wounded & blessing them to heal them-- Abraham OBanion was also mortally wounded. I heard the following of the prisoners say he was present in the fight to wit Norman Shearer