

Missouri State Archives: Finding Aid 5.1

Mormon War Papers, 1837-1841

[Full-text transcription of: Petition from William Dryden, J.P., of Daviess County to Governor Boggs, Jefferson City, MO]

To His Excellency Lilburn W. Boggs
Governor of the State of Missouri
Your petitioner William Dryden
an acting Justice of the peace within and for
Daviess County would respectfully represent
that the Counties of Daviess, Caldwell and
Livingston are settled by in part a denomination
of people called Mormons. These Mormons to
the number of about fifteen hundred men have
associated themselves together, and have resisted
and do resist with force and arms legal [process]
against persons belonging to their denomination.
Your petitioner further states that on the 29th day
of August last past, Adam Black appeared be-
fore me and made oath, that Andrew Ripley,
George Smith and others, had been guilty of a
[illegible line]
follows to wit, that on or about the 8th day of
August 1838 in Daviess County , there came an
armed force to his Blacks house in said county
among whom the said Ripley and Smith and other
persons named in said affidavit were a part, and
then and there with deadly weapons made an assault
upon him the said Black, and then and there
threatened him Black (who was then an acting
Justice of the peace with in the and for Daviess County

aforesaid) with instant death if he did not sign a cer-
tain instrument of writing binding himself as a Justice
of the peace of said County of Daviess not to molest the
people called Mormons, and threatened the lives of him-
self the said Black & others, and said they intended to
make every citizen of said County sign such obligation xc.

Your petitioner further states that he immediately
issued a writ pursuant to law, for the arrest of the
said Andrew Ripley, George Smith, & others, commanding
[] with the []
after the arrest, to bring the Bodies of the persons there
in named forthwith before your petitioner, to answer the
complaint, and farther to be dealt with according to
law. There being no constable within the township of
which I am Justice, he having been driven from the

County by and through fear of the Mormons, and your petitioner believing that said writ would not be executed, unless a special Deputy was made for that purpose. Your petitioner then and there appointed Nathaniel H. Blakely a special Deputy, to serve said writ, and said appointment was endorsed on said writ and signed by myself officially, and then and there delivered to the said Blakely. Your petitioner further states that the said Blakely took said writ and summoned a Guard consisting of ten men, who went in search of the persons named in said writ for the purpose of executing the said writ, but the said constable returned that the persons named in said writ, were

not found in said County by reason of himself and Guard having been driven by force from the Town in said County in which the offenders were supposed then to be. The said affidavit, writ, and return are herewith respectfully submitted to your Excellency.

Your petitioner further believes and represents, that the Mormons are so numerous and so well armed within the limits of the Counties of Caldwell and Daviess that the power of the County is wholly unable to execute any Civil or Criminal process within the limits of either of said Counties against a mormon or mormons as they each and every one of act in concert and outnumber the other Citizens. They also declare that they are independent, and your petitioner verily believes, that the said mormons hold in utter contempt the institutions of the Country in which they live.

Your petitioner further represents that the some time about the 8th Sept "Inst. that three individuals were arrested by the said mormons in Caldwell County and held in Custody, and your petitioner represents, that he believes they are still in confinement without any warrant of law. Your petitioner further represents that he verily believes, that no Civil officer of the State could cause to be executed any legal process within either of said Counties of Caldwell or Daviess

Your petitioner would therefore respectfully pray your Excellency to furnish the Civil officers

within and for the Counties of Daviess & Caldwell, a sufficient number of troops to enable them to execute the law of the land and bring the offenders aforesaid to Justice to this end your petitioner will ever pray &c

15th September 1838,

William Dryden
Justice of the Peace
Daviess County

Executive Dept City of Jefferson

The Adjutant-Genl

Sept 15th 1838

Sir

You will issue an order directed to

Major Genl. Atchison Commanding the 3rd Division of the Militia of the State, and direct – him to cause a sufficient force of the Troops under his Command to aid the Civil officers within the County of Daviess in executing such writs or process as may be legally within the province of their respective duties. And especially to furnish the officers charged with the service of the writ mentioned in the foregoing petition of William Dryden Justice of the Peace of Daviess County with a force sufficient to enable him to execute said process and bring the offenders to Justice.

L. W. Boggs

Commander in Chief