

CHAPTER II.<sup>1</sup>

**HISTORY FROM THE FOUNDING OF NAUVOO TILL 1843.**

*Rapid growth of Nauvoo—Apparent prosperity—“The vultures gather to the carcass”—Crime, polygamy and politics—Subserviency of the Politicians—Nauvoo Charters—A government within a government—Joe Smith twice arrested—Released by S.A. Douglas—Second time by Municipal Court of Nauvoo—McKinney’s account—Petty thieving—Gentiles driven out of Nauvoo—“Whittling Deacons”—“Danites”—Anti-Mormons organize a Political Party—Treachery of Davis and Owens—Defeat of Anti-Mormons—Campaign of 1843—Cyrus Walker, a great Criminal Lawyer—“Revelation” on voting—The Prophet cheats the lawyer—Astounding perfidy of the Mormon leaders—Great increase of popular hatred—Just anger against the Saints.*

A CITY rose as if by magic. Temporary in character as most of the buildings were, rude log houses or frame shanties, they served to shelter the rapidly gathering Saints. The first house on the new site was erected June 11th, 1839, and in eighteen months thereafter there were two thousand dwellings, besides school houses and other public buildings. The new city was named Nauvoo, a word which has no signification in any known language, but in the “reformed Egyptian”<sup>2</sup> of Joe Smith’s imaginary history, is said to mean “The Beautiful.” The site was indeed beautiful, but not the most feasible they could have selected. Instead of locating immediately at the head of the Rapids, where there was a convenient landing at all seasons, they chose a spot one mile below, only approachable by steamboats at high water. The temporary structures, in no long time, gave way to more permanent buildings; improvements multiplied on every hand, and Joe Smith had almost daily revelations directing how every work should be carried on. Here, it was foretold, was to be built a great city and temple, which should be the great gathering place of “Zion,” and central rendezvous of the sect, “until such time as the Lord should open the way for their return to Zion, indeed”—Jackson County, Missouri; and from here were to spread gigantic operations for the conversion of the world. One by one most of the Missouri apostates came creeping back into the Church; Orson Hyde was

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<sup>1</sup> Original chapter page numbers: 58-88.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Smith, Jr.—circa 1829, *The Book of Mormon Printer’s Manuscript* (Palmyra, NY: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830), 427.

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

restored to his place as apostle, and was able to explain his apparent defection. A missionary board was organized, and arrangements perfected for foreign missions embracing half the world. On the 29th of August, Orson Pratt and Parley P. Pratt set out on a mission to England, followed, September the 20th, by Elders Brigham Young, H.C. Kimball, George A. Smith, R. Hedlock, and T. Turley. Brigham had been appointed "President of the Twelve Apostles" in 1836, in place of Thomas B. Marsh, the apostate. They landed at Liverpool the 6th of April, 1840, and entered with zeal upon their work. Brigham assumed entire control of the enterprise, established various missions, baptized numerous converts, labored among the common people, preached, prayed, wrote and argued, lived hard, and travelled hundreds of miles on foot. May the 29th, 1840,<sup>3</sup> he established and issued the first number of the *Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, a periodical never suspended since. He organized a number of flourishing churches, and early in 1841 returned to Nauvoo, bringing with him seven hundred and sixty-nine converts. Shortly before this time, Sidney Rigdon had addressed a memorial to the Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania, praying for redress for the alleged losses of the Saints in Missouri, and calling upon the Congressional delegation from that State to move the General Government in their behalf; and in October, 1839, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Elias Higbee and Orrin Porter Rockwell set out for Washington, delegated to seek redress. They reached the Capital, November the 28th, and were admitted forthwith to an audience with President Van Buren, who heard them through, and, according to their report, replied, "Gentlemen, your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you," adding, in undertone, "I should lose the vote of the State of Missouri."<sup>4</sup> By his own account this last remark was, "The General Government cannot interfere in the domestic concerns of Missouri." Nothing resulted from either application; but the at-

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<sup>3</sup> 27 May 1840.

<sup>4</sup> According to Joseph Smith, Jr's. account, President Van Buren said, ["*What can I do? I can do nothing for you! If I do anything, I shall come in contact with the whole state of Missouri.*["] See Dan Vogel's *History of Joseph Smith and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - Volume 4* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2015), 40.

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

tion of the country was attracted to Nauvoo. The rapid growth of the city excited the wonder of eastern people, and numerous curiosity hunters, correspondents and tourists hastened to visit it. They were treated with extreme complaisance, and in their reports the city lost nothing of its wonders. In October, 1840, a petition with many thousand names was forwarded for an Act of Incorporation for Nauvoo, and about the same time Joe Smith had another revelation that the Temple must be commenced at once, and ground was broken therefor October the 3d. The sudden and surprising prosperity of the sect attracted to them a number of ambitious and unscrupulous men, of whom four deserve particular notice.

Dr. Isaac Galland,<sup>5</sup> was, in the early part of his life, a notorious horse-thief and counterfeiter, belonging to the "Massac Gang," as it was called, on the Ohio river. He had then nominally reformed and moved into Hancock County, where he was in 1834, a candidate for the Legislature, but was defeated by a small majority. Soon after, he came into possession of a large tract of land, and induced Joe Smith to settle on a part with a view to enhancing the value of the rest.

Jacob Backinstos<sup>6</sup> came to Hancock from Sangamon County, where he had got credit for a stock of goods, sold them, and defrauded his creditors; after which he came over to the Mormons seeking his fortunes. His brother married a niece of Joe Smith, but Backinstos held off and took rank as a "managing Democrat," a sort of local politician. In this capacity he rendered some service to Judge Stephen A. Douglas, who, in turn, appointed him Clerk of the Hancock Circuit Court, this giving him great political power with the Mormons. By them he was at different times elected Sheriff and member of the Legislature, and continued a "Jack Mormon" to the end of the chapter.

"General" James Arlington Bennett [*sic*]<sup>7</sup> was an adventurer of some talent, whose "range" was from Virginia to New York City, where he had an occasional connection with the press. He

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<sup>5</sup> Isaac Galland (15 May 1791 – 27 September 1858).

<sup>6</sup> Jacob B. Backenstos (8 October 1811 – 25 September 1857).

<sup>7</sup> James Arlington Bennet (21 December 1788 – 25 December 1863).

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

early wrote to Joe Smith, proposing a religious and political alliance, adding, with refreshing candor, "You know Mohammed had his *right hand man*" Joe replied in a tone of good humored sarcasm, adding, however, a sort of offer for Bennett [*sic*] to visit Nauvoo.

The latter came soon after, and was baptized into the church,<sup>8</sup> but not being trusted to the extent he desired, soon departed.

Dr. John C. Bennett<sup>9</sup> was usually considered "one of the greatest scamps in the Western country." He was a man of real talent, some ambition, overbearing zeal, and all engrossing lust; at the same time rather good looking, of smooth manners and easy address. Besides being a medical graduate and practising physician, he had acquired considerable military and engineering skill, and had been Adjutant General of the State of Illinois. He now brought his talents and rascality to an alliance with Joe Smith; for a year and a-half he was his intimate friend and trusted counselor, when, as has often happened before, a beautiful woman set them at outs, and forever put an end to this touching friendship. These, and a score of others of like character, attached themselves to the rising sect and became Joe Smith's unscrupulous tools and allies. As for the common Saints, the pliable mass, though not nearly so foolish and fanatical as in Jackson County, they were quite as obsequious and worked steadily to build up the material interests of "Zion."

The missions in England, Wales and Scotland, prospered greatly, and many thousands of foreign Saints arrived in Nauvoo; some remained, but the majority were scattered in settlements through the country, which the Prophet called "Stakes of Zion." They were not to rival the great city, but to be its feeders and tributaries. The swamp land adjacent to Nauvoo was drained, and the site rendered quite healthy; the rapids were surveyed by J.C. Bennett, and a wing dam projected which was to make a commodious harbor in front of Nauvoo, and secure driving power sufficient to turn all the factory wheels of a vast commercial city.

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<sup>8</sup> Bennet was baptized on 30 August 1843 by Brigham Young.

<sup>9</sup> John Cook Bennett (4 August 1804 - 5 August 1867).

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

These were the palmy days of Joe Smith; this was the "Golden age" of Mormonism. The former was no more the wandering lad, with "peep-stone" and hazel rod, or the fugitive vagabond fleeing from Missouri rifles; he was at the head of a now consolidated and rapidly augmenting sect; he was courted and flattered of politicians; he was absolute ruler and main proprietor of a city already populous, and destined to be rich and powerful. Bright visions of future aggrandizement and wealth floated through his brain, and he confidently looked forward to the time when he should be virtual dictator of a powerful State. But into the very noon of this halcyon day floated the faint rumbling of a distant earthquake, and afar upon the political and social horizon appeared a little cloud, "no bigger than a man's hand," which stayed not till it darkened the whole heaven of the future, and dashed this proud fabric to the ground.

There now devolves upon me the narration of a change in public sentiment, swift and violent, almost without parallel in America; and the reader will learn with surprise that in a brief period hatred took the place of friendship, and the same people who had received the Mormons with gladness were in hot haste to drive them out at the bayonet's point. The consideration of what caused this unprecedented change in public sentiment, and the intense hatred against the Mormons, presents some points of pertinent inquiry to politicians, and perhaps some lessons to religious sects. The various causes which led to the Mormon troubles in Illinois, and their final expulsion, may be grouped under three heads:

### I. Criminal. II. Moral and Social. III. Political.

I. In the first, it may well be said, the Mormons were destined to experience, in all its bitterness, the force of the homely adage in regard to giving a dog a bad name. The Mississippi Valley, from St. Louis to Galena, had been for years unusually infested with reckless and blood-stained men. The whole of southeastern Iowa and much of northeastern Missouri was in a comparatively wild and lawless state; the "half-breed" tract of the former, from unsettled land titles and other causes, was appropriated as a refuge for and overrun by coiners, horse-thieves and robbers; and the latter section, adjacent, was little if any better. The law was en-

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

forced with slackness, or the combination of rogues was too great for the ordinary machinery of justice; people had but little confidence in courts and juries, and, in more atrocious cases than common, satisfied themselves with lynch law.

The islands and groves farther up the river, near Davenport and Rock Island, were the hiding places of regularly organized bands of marauders; as also were the bayous and hollows west of Nauvoo. The writer was but a boy, but remembers well the thrills of horror that ran through the West at the murder of Miller and Liecy in Lee County, Iowa, of Col. Davenport at Rock Island, of an entire family of five persons in Adams County, and others too numerous to mention. Long afterwards, while the writer was travelling through Hancock, Pike, and Adams counties, no family thought of retiring at night without barring and double-locking every ingress; and the names of John Long, Aaron Long, Granville Young, Robert Birch, the Hodges and Foxes, and dozens of other murderers, were as common as household words.

To all that class the bad name given the Mormons in Missouri was so much capital, and it gathered around them, with the real vulture instinct. Hundreds of licentious villains, cut throats, and robbers made their way into Nauvoo, were baptized into the Church as a convenient cover for their crimes, and made that their secret headquarters. Property stolen far up the river, or east of the city, was run through and concealed in the western bayous, or hastily disposed of to innocent purchasers, so that the owners generally found it among the Mormons. The criminals were, in many instances, traced directly to Nauvoo; but once within the charmed circle, all power to punish them was gone.

Their secret confederates were ready to "swear" them clear, and too often the cry of "persecution" was sufficient to mislead really honest Mormons, and cause them to defend one who, though really guilty, claimed the name of a Saint. Thus, while the Mormons could truly say there was less crime *in* Nauvoo than in most other cities of its size, it was still true that more criminals issued thence than from any other.

How many of the real Mormons were concerned in these depredations it is impossible to say, probably very few; but the fact remained that the criminals had most of them assumed the name

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

of Mormons, that they were not thrust out and punished, and that the really innocent portion obstinately refused to entertain any charge against the guilty, making the Church a complete cover and exemption for crime. An angry people could not be expected to go into their city and discriminate between them; they struck blindly at the whole community, and thus while two-thirds of them were probably guiltless of crime, all suffered alike. In the outer settlements there was actual cause to complain of the foreign Saints; thousands of them had "gathered" in great haste and extreme poverty; they had nothing, and knew not how to rapidly accommodate themselves to their new pursuits, and at the same time very naturally refused to starve in a plentiful country.

Their doctrines virtually invited them to take what they needed, and they did.

As to the heads of the Church and their newly-acquired allies, enough has been said to show that much of their conduct was on the very border-line of rascality, if it did not altogether step over it.

II. Of the second class of causes, but little need be added to the history of polygamy, to be more fully recited hereafter. Of the ten thousand intrigues of Smith, Bennett, Rigdon and other leaders, it is useless to speak, except to give their public results. While the established denominations of Illinois were threatened, and her political stability endangered, her people were also shocked by the introduction of new, and to them, revolting vices.

III. But the great cause of popular hostility, which finally led to the worst result, was the Mormon system of voting solidly, at the dictation of a few men.

They have always insisted on this principle, pretending that there would be no union in their Church, if the members were allowed to vote by individual will. Such a course must ever have one effect, to cause the Church to be regarded as a mere political entity, to be fought accordingly, and in time, arouse the fiercest opposition. It will hardly do to say no church has a *right* to so direct its vote, and yet, if persisted in, it must be a constant source of faction. Any such church would constitute a dangerous power in a republican government; and would soon have arrayed against it all those who were defeated by its vote, all who failed to

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

get its support, all who disdained to stoop to the arts necessary to obtain it, and all those who clearly saw the evil tendency of such a system. In two years after he entered Illinois, Joe Smith was absolute master of three thousand votes; practically, he might just as well have been allowed to cast so many himself. The offices of the county were in his gift; no man could hope to reach Congress from that district, without his favor, and it was highly probable, that by the next election, his simple will would determine who should be Governor of the State.

Such power in the hands of a corrupt man, used with a singular perfidy and in the interests of the worst clique ever assembled, would alone be almost sufficient to determine the people upon the expulsion of him and his fanatical sect. The particular situation, at the time, rendered this evil ten-fold more apparent. For the first time since its organization, the Whig Party had a fair prospect of carrying the State and the nation; but Illinois was doubtful.

If Henry Clay should again be the nominee of the Whigs, Kentucky, Louisiana and other Southern States were considered certain for that party, and, in certain very probable contingencies, Illinois would turn the scale one way or the other. It was quite certain the Mormons would, by 1844, give the casting vote in Illinois, and Joe Smith had perfect control of the Mormon vote. Such contingencies are liable to frequently occur in our politics, and henceforth set it down as an American axiom, that any church assuming to cast its vote as a unit, for its own interests, under the dictation of its spiritual head or heads, is the deadly foe of our liberties, and justly an object of distrust and dislike to every lover of his country. With this digression, I resume the thread of history.

The "Harrison Campaign" of 1840 was in full tide, and the politicians gathered thick around Joe Smith. His people had been driven from a Democratic State by order of a Democratic Governor, and himself denied redress by a Democratic President; while his "memorial" against Missouri had been introduced and countenanced in the Senate of the United States by Henry Clay, and in the House by John F. Stuart, both Whigs.



## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

He felt friendly to them, but finding he had great power, determined to use it well and took good care not to commit himself. When wined, dined, toasted, and feasted by managers of both parties, he stated in general terms that he felt no particular interest in politics; he had tried the Yankees of New York, and the "free soilers" of the Western Reserve, and had met with rough treatment; he had gone thence to the pro-slavery Missourians, and had met with rougher treatment; the Democrats had robbed him, and the Whigs refused him redress, and he had little confidence in either.

But there were certain things absolutely necessary for his city to receive from the Legislature, to protect him and his people from mobs, and the party that could most certainly give him these would obtain his support. This cheerful frankness was met by renewed protestations of respect and good-will, and both parties were eager to grant him favors.

After secret consultation with his counselors at Nauvoo, Joe had a revelation to support the Whig ticket, which the Mormons did unanimously in 1840 and '41. In the Legislature of '40-'41, it became an object with the Democrats to conciliate them, and at that session Dr. J.C. Bennett came with a charter, mainly drawn up by himself and Joe Smith, for the incorporation of Nauvoo. The charter was referred to the Judiciary Committee who reported favorably, the ayes and noes were called in neither house, and the charter passed without a dissenting vote.

The annals of ancient and modern legislation might be searched in vain for a parallel to that Nauvoo Charter. It gave all the powers ever granted to incorporated cities, and gave them power to pass all laws "*not repugnant to the Constitution of the United States, or of this State,*" which was afterwards interpreted to mean that they might pass local ordinances contrary to the laws of the State. It provided for a Mayor, four Aldermen, and nine Councillors, and established a Mayor's Court with exclusive jurisdiction of all cases arising under the city ordinances.

It also established a Municipal Court, to be composed of the Mayor as Chief Justice, and four Aldermen as associates, and gave this court the power to issue writs of *Habeas Corpus*. And this not only to try the sufficiency of writs issuing from any oth-

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

er court, which is a power rarely granted a Municipal Court, but to go beyond that and try the original cause of action. Hitherto none but Judges of the Supreme and Circuit Courts could issue such writs, and there were just nine persons in the State empowered to do so; but this Act at one fell swoop conferred it upon the five judges of this Municipal Court, and those the persons above all others most liable to abuse it. It also incorporated the militia of Nauvoo into a body to be called the "Nauvoo Legion," independent of all other militia officers in the State, except the Governor as Commander-in-Chief. It established a court-martial for this Legion composed of the commissioned officers, entirely independent of all other officers, and in the regulations *not governed by the laws of the State!*

This Legion was to be at the disposal of the Mayor in executing the ordinances of the city. Another charter incorporated a great tavern to be known as the Nauvoo House. "Thus," says Governor Ford, "it was proposed to re-establish for the Mormons a government within a government; a legislature with power to pass ordinances at war with the laws of the State; courts to execute them with but little dependence upon the constitutional judiciary, and a military force at their own command, to be governed by its own laws and ordinances, and subject to no State authority but that of the Governor.

"The powers conferred were expressed in language at once ambiguous and undefined; as if on purpose to allow of misconstruction. The great law of the separation of the powers of government was wholly disregarded. The Mayor was at once the executive power, the judiciary, and part of the legislature. The Common Council, in passing ordinances, were restrained only by the Constitution. One would have thought that these charters stood a poor chance of passing the Legislature of a republican people jealous of their liberties. Nevertheless they did pass unanimously through both houses. Messrs. Little and Douglas[s] managed with great dexterity with their respective parties. Each party was afraid to object to them, for fear of losing the Mormon vote, and each believed that it had secured their favor [...] A city government, under the charter, was organized in 1841, and Joe Smith was elected Mayor.

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

“In this capacity he presided in the Common Council, and assisted in making the laws for the government of the city; and as Mayor, also, he was to see these laws put into force. He was *ex-officio* judge of the Mayor’s Court, and chief justice of the Municipal Court, and in these capacities he was to interpret the laws which he had assisted to make. The Nauvoo Legion was also organized, with a great multitude of high officers. It was divided into divisions, brigades, cohorts, regiments, battalions and companies. Each division, brigade and cohort had its General, and over the whole, as Commander-in-Chief, Joe Smith was appointed Lieutenant-General. These offices, and particularly the last, were created by an ordinance of the Court-martial composed of the commissioned officers of the Legion.

“The Common Council passed many ordinances for the punishment of crime. The punishments were generally different from, and vastly more severe than the punishments provided by the laws of the State.”<sup>10</sup>

Elder Howard Coray, who was at that time a confidential clerk of Joe Smith’s, states that he was present at the time Smith and Bennett were constructing this Charter; that Bennett objected to certain clauses as being “too strong,” to which Smith replied, “We must have that power in our courts, for this work will gather of all mankind; the Turk, *with his ten wives*, will come to Nauvoo, and we must have laws to protect him with these wives.” Elder Coray, now a devoted Brighamite, at Salt Lake, advanced this to disprove the statement of Joe Smith’s sons that their father did not establish polygamy. It merely proves, as will hereafter be shown, that he was in that practice long before the date of his pretended revelation.

It was, indeed, necessary for him to fence out the Missourians with strong ordinances, for his old enemies in that State were busy in schemes against him. In the fall of 1841, the Governor sent a requisition to Illinois for Smith’s arrest, and after some evasion it was executed. A writ of *Habeas Corpus* was sued out before Judge S.A. Douglas, whose circuit embraced Hancock. On

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois* (Chicago, IL: S.C. Griggs & Co., 1854), 265-266.

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

technical grounds Douglas released Smith, which the latter considered a great favor from the Democrats. Again, in 1842, Smith was arrested on a requisition, and this time forcibly rescued by his followers. The election of 1842 was approaching; the Whigs nominated Joseph Duncan for Governor, and the Democrats Thos. L. Ford. After an immense amount of wire pulling, Joe Smith issued a proclamation to his people—there seems to have been no revelation this time—pronouncing “Judge Douglas a master-spirit,” and commanding the people to vote the Democratic ticket. Ford was elected, and assumed the duties of Governor, late in 1842. He has embodied the official acts of his Administration in his “History of Illinois,” and throughout this part of my narrative the quotations are from that work, unless otherwise credited.<sup>11</sup>

The Democrats would almost certainly have carried the State without the Mormons; but in 1843, there was to be an election for Congressman in their district, and therein they were absolute. But the great reaction had set in, and the Mormons were fast becoming odious to the body of the people. After the political account, the reader will be interested in the anti-Mormon account, and I quote from the narrative of R.W. McKinney, Esq., before alluded to, a witness of the facts:

“The preaching of Mormonism was a greater success than could have been reasonably expected in so enlightened an age, and one to a great extent inclined to skepticism. A new spirit of emigration was excited, and every convert was urged to hasten to where he could gaze upon the divine face of the Prophet, and where the wealth of the Gentile world would flow in upon them. Two years had not elapsed since the first fugitives arrived at Nauvoo before the Mormons outnumbered the old settlers. The latter began to think they had enough for the present. None of the promised advantages had accrued from the settlement of the Mormons among them. They had created but little trade or commerce, had made no improvement of the rapids, had established no manufactories, erected no school-houses, organized no institu-

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<sup>11</sup> Governor Ford’s work: Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois* (Chicago, IL: S.C. Griggs & Co., 1854).

tions for instruction, and made no provision for the support of the poor. They were pressed into Joe's service, and employed upon the erection of a temple of an order of architecture such as the world had never seen. They now assumed a haughty bearing and arrogant speech towards their old friends and protectors, and the latter were constantly sneered at as blind and erring Gentiles, whose steps were tending downward to the deepest pit of hell. The Saints were to possess the earth and the Gentiles be crushed beneath their footsteps. This doctrine had a fearful effect upon the common Mormon; he looked upon the old settler much as the followers of Moses and Joshua looked upon the Canaanites. If the earth was to be delivered to the Saints with the fullness thereof, why not take possession at once, or so much of it as to supply present wants? The old settlers began to feel that the inflated declarations of the Prophet meant something more than idle gasconade. Their cattle, which had pastured safely on the broad prairies, now failed to come up; their poultry took wings and flew away to some undiscovered country, never to return, and their barns and granaries were depleted with unheard of rapidity. If one visited Nauvoo in search of estrays, if by accident he peeped into the shambles or slaughter-pens of the Saints, he was rudely rebuffed as a disturber of the peace of Zion. He was fortunate if he escaped arrest, and did not often escape annoyance. The Mormons prided themselves on their genius in devising modes of annoyance by which a suspicious stranger could be driven away without resort to violence; the Prophet had systemized annoyance, and reduced it to a science. He had organized clubs of loafers and boys into what he called 'whittling deacons.'

"They were composed of the lowest grade of vagabonds in Nauvoo, and were stationed around the streets and corners, armed with pieces of pine board and sharp dirk-knives, always ready for instant service. If a stranger were seen on the streets, the first thing was to find out if he were obnoxious. An experienced spy was placed upon his track, who followed him until it was ascertained what the stranger was. If he appeared hostile to the Saints, if he spoke disparagingly of the Prophet or his religion, 'the whittling deacons' were put at his heels.



“They would surround him with pine sticks and dirk-knives, and whistling gravely, keep up a continual whittling, the shavings flying into the face and over the person of the obnoxious one, and the sharp knives being flourished dangerously close to his ears. If timid and nervous he retreated soon; but if he faced the music, the whittling was more energetic, the whistling louder and shriller, the knives approached closer and flashed more brightly, till his retreat was a necessity. Strange that a person who claimed to be commissioned as a Prophet, could have authorized such low and disgraceful work; but we have the authority of the Saints that it was Joe Smith’s own invention, and was considered a brilliant stroke of genius. If the suspected person was contumacious and stood out against the ‘whittling deacons,’ his case was referred to a higher tribunal, the ‘Danite Band.’ The ‘whittling deacons’ were composed of Saintly loafers, this of Saintly ruffians. Many of them were outlaws, criminals who had fled from justice and who sought and received protection from Joe. No man was too deeply stained with crime to gain that protection, if the Prophet could use him. If a fugitive from justice proved a worthless and inefficient tool, he was given up with a great flourish of trumpets, and

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

with glowing comments by the newspaper press as to what an orderly and law abiding people the Mormons were.

“Who ever heard of Joe Smith giving up Porter Rockwell, or that he ever lost any respect on account of his crimes. This lawless banditti went after the contumacious stranger with bowie-knives and Colt’s revolvers. Their business was to terrify and insult him, to salute his ears with strange oaths and blasphemies, to menace him with threats of instant death and to flourish their deadly weapons in his face. But were there no police to appeal to? These assailants were themselves the police, powerful only for evil. If the suspected was still fool-hardy enough to refuse to leave, his case was reported to a higher tribunal, who gave secret and mysterious warnings, written in mystic characters and stained with blood, which were dropped in the way of the suspected, were found in his bed-room, under his pillow or about his person. Dire was his fate if he disregarded this last solemn admonition. He would never again be heard from; the mission of the ‘destroying angel’ was sudden, sure and complete.

“The Prophet’s ambition and love of display had been sated by a shower of civic honors thrust upon him by the Corporation Act. His love of power and desire for vengeance were gratified by a review of his solid squares of infantry, his squadrons of cavalry and parks of artillery. He was the only man of his age beneath the rank of Grand Duke, that could summon a well-equipped army from his retainers. But he had other vices to gratify besides ambition and love of display.

“How to gratify his licentious desires became with him a great study. To overcome the virtue of his female followers and establish prostitution as a religious rite, he had a revelation. None of his compeers or successors could compete with him in revelations. His son Joe,<sup>12</sup> who claims to be his legitimate successor, has been so reticent as to receive from the Brighamites, and deserve, the title of the ‘dumb Prophet.’ The elder Joe, had revelations on all sorts of subjects; building houses, plowing lands and selling merchandise, and now authorizing him to seduce and degrade his female devotees. His elders were now instructed that the time

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<sup>12</sup> Joseph Smith III (6 November 1832 – 10 December 1914).

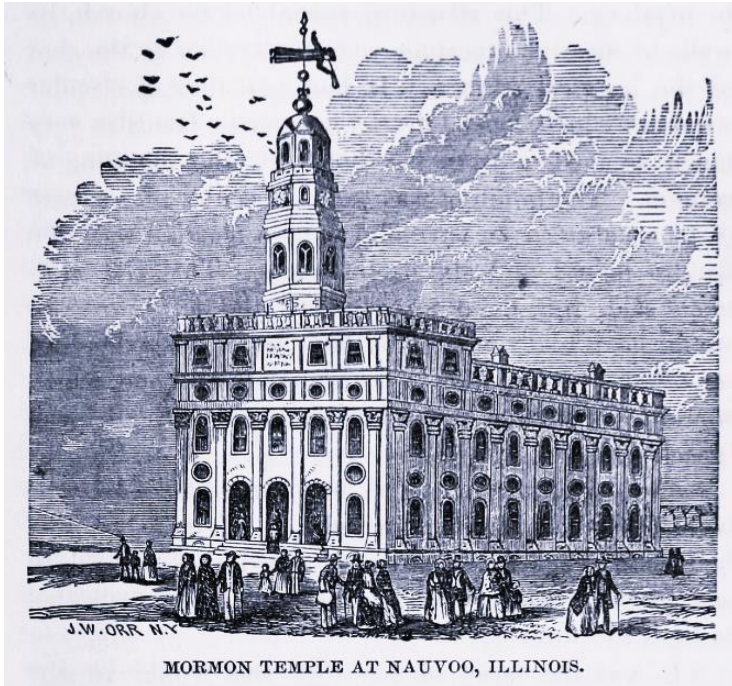
had arrived when seven women should take hold of one man; that no woman could be saved unless united to a husband in a spiritual sense; that such union was enjoined by divine authority, and to resist it was to resist the ordinance of God. Here was the dilemma for the female Saint: she must succumb to a libidinous priest, or be sent to perdition; she must accept prostitution or damnation, and there was no escape. It was at first claimed that this connection was purely spiritual and platonic; but the admissions of incautious Saints, and the testimony of many women, soon left no doubt in any intelligent mind that the system was one of complete concubinage.

“The two young Smiths, who lately made a raid into Utah, denying that their father practiced polygamy, ought to know, as every intelligent person does know, that the will of Joe Smith was absolute in Nauvoo, and all the councils, sanhedrims [*sic*] and priests in the city could never have established polygamy there, if he had but shook his little finger in opposition.

“The Mormons were not only introducing a new religion, but striving to introduce a new civilization; or rather laboring to abolish all civilization, and to reestablish a barbarism old as the infancy of the world. If an old patriarch, who lived immediately after the earth emerged from the deluge, through ignorance married a sister or an aunt, the Mormon assumed the same right. If another patriarch armed his numerous servants, and invaded the tented city of a rival, carried his wives and children into captivity, and drove away his sheep, cattle and oxen, it was a divine precedent which the Saint would do well to follow. As in those remote ages the whole people labored and toiled for the aggrandizement of their chieftain in erecting castles for his protection, or guarding the flocks and herds in which his wealth consisted, so the Mormon chieftain employed his retainers in the erection of a gorgeous temple. The anti-Mormons saw that the Mormons were industrious, and saw too that much of their labor was misdirected, and that they derived no benefit from it, more than the enslaved multitudes who toiled on the Egyptian pyramids in the traditional ages of the world. They saw that Hancock County, under the control of the dominant sect, was receding to the remotest and most barbarous ages of the world. They farther un-



derstood that the multitudes who lived in shanties, and worked without pay, were not likely to starve as long as they were taught that the earth and all things therein belonged to the Saints of the Lord. It was thought high time to impose some barrier to the further increase of the dominant Mormons. No one then thought of violence or war; there had been no lawless demonstrations prior to the Mormons' arrival, and in justice to the old settlers it should be noted there has been none since their expulsion. Every one considered that most of the evils resulted from the power vested in the Prophet by the Mormon Charter; and the creation of the Legion. It was, therefore, thought best to constitute a new political organization, uniting all anti-Mormons without regard to previous predilections, having for its object united opposition to the Mormons, and repeal of all the Mormon Charters and disbanding of the Nauvoo Legion. A general mass-meeting was called, and was fully attended. Whigs and Democrats fraternized and rivalled each other in their zeal to rid the country of the growing incubus. But when it came to county nominations, unfortunately there were more aspirants than offices. Those who received nominations were content; but the rejected ones affected to consider themselves badly abused men. Among them were two who went right over with their influence to Joe Smith. The first was a Reverend Thomas Owens, a renegade Baptist preacher, and the other Jacob C. Davis, a lawyer, too indolent to labor or study, but the political oracle of the red-eyed loafers who congregated together in the low grogeries of the town where he lived. This brace of worthies wended their way to Nauvoo, and informed the Mormon autocrat of the combination against him; but tendered him their sympathy and support, offering to run as the Mormon candidates for the Legislature. The Prophet chose Jacob Davis as his candidate for the State Senate, and Bill Smith, his own brother, and Thomas Owens, his candidates for the Lower House. The rest of the county ticket was filled out by the Prophet from his own Mormon tools.



“The issue was for the first time clearly drawn, the election in due time came off, and the Prophet was triumphant. He had elected everything on the county ticket. By his combinations he had completely defeated the anti-Mormon move, and had for county-officers his trusty friends, devoted to his interests. If his enemies chose to appeal from the decision of the polls, he was ready for them. His battalions were models of discipline, devoted to his service, numbered by thousands, and armed with an efficiency which distinguished no other troops in America. The walls of the Temple were progressing rapidly. The anti-Mormons looked upon the structure with many doubts and apprehensions. Everything the Mormons did was veiled in mystery. This structure resembled no church, its walls of massive limestone were impervious to the shot of the heaviest cannon. It had two tiers of circular windows which looked to the wondering Gentiles very much as if they were port-holes for the manning of cannon. The

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

building was near the center of a square of four acres, to be surrounded by a massive wall ten feet in height and six in thickness. This, the Mormons said, was for a promenade; the anti-Mormons would have told you, it could have been constructed for no other purpose than a fortification, and one which would have stood a heavy bombardment without being breached.

“Another charter provided for the erection of ‘a large hotel,’ and it was denominated the ‘Lord’s boarding house,’ to which a revelation is added that Joe Smith and his heirs were to have ‘a suite of rooms dedicated to their use forever.’

“It was the boast of Joe that this would be the great ‘Mission House’ of the world; that in its parlor he would entertain princes, kings and emperors from Europe and Asia, who would leave their distant homes to receive information and instruction from him in the new faith. So completely had Joe’s head been turned and so wild and visionary had he become, that it was not without reason that his wife, only a few years after his death, published a statement in the *Quincy Whig* that she had no belief in his prophetic character, and considered his pretended revelations the emanations of a diseased mind.<sup>13</sup> It may be some gratification to know that the apostolic dignitaries did not always agree among themselves, after the establishment of ‘spiritual wifery,’ in the distribution of female prizes. They had no disputes in polemic theology. The oracle Joe settled everything of that sort by immediate revelation. But when the face of a handsome female Saint was seen peering from under the curtains of an immigrant wagon, it was like throwing the apple of discord among the lascivious priests of the new religion; and however submissive the sacred college may have been to the settlement of a theological tenet, when the same oracle pronounced a verdict in regard to a female prize against one of them, his curses were loud and deep. In fact,

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<sup>13</sup> “I must now say, that I never for a moment believed in what my husband [Joseph Smith, Jr.] called his apparitions and revelations, as I thought him laboring under a diseased mind;” Emma Smith – signed letter dated 20 November 1845 to the *Quincy Whig* (Quincy, IL: Bartlett & Sullivan, 7 January 1846), 3. NOTE: After the letter was published 9 December 1845 in the *New York Sun*, Emma dismissed it as a forgery. Her rebuttal was not published by Gen. Arlington Bennett, *The New York Sun*, or the *Quincy Whig*, but appeared in the church approved *Times and Seasons*, in the 15 January 1846 edition.

## LIFE in UTAH; or, the MYSTERIES and CRIMES of MORMONISM

this system was soon the means of destroying the Mormon unity right at home; the entering wedge that divided Nauvoo into factions, and gave the anti-Mormons a clue to success.

“The name of Cyrus Walker had long been conspicuous in western Illinois. He was an eminent lawyer, who had acquired a great reputation in Kentucky, where he came into competition with Ben Hardin, John Rowan and the Wickliffs. He was past middle life, and had never been a politician; but in 1843 the Whigs needed a popular candidate, in the Hancock district, for Congress. There was no hope of his election unless Joe Smith and his followers could be manipulated, and thus balance the Democratic majority. Mr. Walker resided in the adjoining county of McDonough, and was thought to be just the man, as in a long criminal practice his mind had become a perfect storehouse of expedients, artifices and dodges. He was nominated, and accepted in the full belief that he was a match for the tricky Prophet. His chances were rather doubtful, as the Whigs had been most active in the anti-Mormon Convention. Owen and Davis, Democrats, had deserted to the Mormon camp; but no Whig had been guilty of such defection. But it was confidently anticipated Walker could out-general the common-place Mr. Hoge, the Democratic candidate. Meanwhile the peace of the Mormon Zion was disturbed. Men who had toiled without remuneration began to murmur, and the families of those who went forth to preach the gospel, without ‘purse or scrip,’ often suffered greatly in their absence. Dr. John C. Bennett, to whose instructions the Legion owed its admirable drill and discipline, had not risen to that high rank in the Hierarchy which he fancied his talents entitled him to, and had been slighted in the distribution of female prizes. He had seceded, and was a conspirator against the Prophet, denouncing him with a bitterness born of imaginary slight and wrong. He traveled through the West, secured large crowds wherever he lectured, of all who were attracted by the disgusting details of Mormon depravity. But at the same time the Prophet was engaged in exposing and denouncing him; while he proved Joe to be immoral and licentious, the latter proved the same thing against him, and the community soon became satisfied that it was a quarrel between two great rascals, and they were not called upon to

decide which was the greater. Joe had apparently forgotten all about the indictment still pending against him in Missouri; but Bennett had not, and by his intrigues, a fresh requisition was issued, and Joe was arrested in Henderson County, at one of the 'Stakes of Zion,' some twenty-five miles from Nauvoo. But the officers soon found themselves surrounded by a detachment of the Nauvoo Legion, and the whole party was conducted in triumph to that city. The Municipal Court met to try the legality of the requisition and the regularity of the proceedings, and Cyrus Walker was called upon for his opinion. Their judgment was in no wise controlled by his arguments; but his approval of such jurisdiction was of great value to Joe Smith. He was profuse in his thanks to Walker, and promised earnestly to support him. Walker fully believed that this settled every Mormon vote in his favor, was satisfied he need do nothing more, and returned home to study up the political questions of the day, and fit himself for his future duties in Congress.

"But there was some 'wire-pulling' going on of which he little dreamed; there was a great deal of running to and fro of 'managing Democrats' between Nauvoo and Springfield, and suddenly the Mormons were called in a mass meeting, the second day before the election, when Hyrum Smith arose and announced that he had just received a revelation from heaven that the Mormons were to vote for the Democrat, Mr. Hoge! They were still in doubt till the Prophet arrived next day, when the whole voting population of Nauvoo again assembled to hear from him. He stated that he was not prepared to advise them with regard to election matters; he could only inform them that he had pledged his own vote to Mr. Walker, and would keep his pledge; but he had received no communication from the Lord on the subject; 'he had not seen the Lord, nor had he gone to seek the Lord about the matter. He was not disposed to call upon the Lord at the request or desire of any Gentile politician; if the Lord really wanted to see him, there was nothing to prevent His calling upon him. So far as he was concerned, the people might vote for Walker, Hoge, or the devil; it was all the same to him. But,' continued the Prophet, 'I am informed my brother Hyrum has seen the Lord, and has something to say to you. I have known brother Hyrum ever since

he was a boy, and never knew him to lie. When the Lord speaks let all the earth keep silent.' Thereupon brother Hyrum took the stand and boldly announced that he *had* seen the Lord, who had instructed him to support Mr. Hoge, 'and brethren, you are all commanded to vote for Mr. Hoge, for thus saith the Lord God Almighty.' This short address of the Patriarch was no doubt the most powerful and convincing 'stump speech' ever delivered. When the count was rendered next day, Mr. Cyrus Walker had one vote, whilst Hoge's counted by thousands. It is difficult to realize that in this enlightened age and most enlightened nation, any assembly could be found, so deplorably ignorant as to be controlled by two such blackguard impostors, yet so it was; they listened to these blasphemous deceivers as though God spoke from the heavens. Mr. Walker did not go to Congress. He withdrew forever from politics, devoted himself to his profession and grew rich. He heard the result of the Nauvoo election with deep mortification. He had been a match for the shrewdest and most cultivated members of his own profession; he was now tricked and sold by a miserable impostor, beneath the notice of any respectable man. Mr. Walker retired to his bed on that night the most bitter, uncompromising and persevering anti-Mormon in the State of Illinois."

To this interesting recital it is only necessary to add a few facts from the official record. Early in May, 1843, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, of Missouri, while sitting in the evening near an open window, was shot from without and seriously wounded in the head. By the testimony of various apostates it appears, that Joe Smith had frequently foretold the "sudden vengeance of God on the Nero of Missouri," who had used the State troops to expel the Mormons; and that about this time, Orrin Porter Rockwell was for some time absent from Nauvoo, and when Joe Smith was asked his whereabouts, he replied with a laugh, "O, just gone to fulfil prophecy." On these and other statements an indictment was found in Missouri against Smith and Rockwell, and soon after the officers of that State secured another requisition from Governor Ford for Joe Smith. He was arrested and released by his own Municipal Court, with the advice of Mr. Walker, as already related. The agents of Missouri went forthwith to make applica-

tion to Governor Ford, for a body of militia to enforce the writ, and Walker was sent by the Mormons as their attorney to resist the application. Governor Ford declined either to act at once, or to say how he would finally act; as he afterwards stated, because he was not clear as to his duty, and knew the politicians only wanted his decision to carry back to the Mormons. In this state of uncertainty the Mormon leaders sent "Jake" Backinstos to manœuvre at Springfield, and ascertain if possible what the Governor would finally do. Governor Ford was absent at St. Louis, and a prominent Democrat, in his interest at Springfield, gave the most solemn assurances in the Governor's name, that the militia would not be sent against the Mormons, *if they voted the Democratic ticket*. Neither Governor Ford nor any other responsible official knew aught of this promise in his name, till after the Mormons left the State. With this promise, Backinstos reached Nauvoo but two days before the election, with what result has already been seen. Such damning political treachery was not without due punishment. The Whigs now saw with amazement, that the most solemn promises meant nothing from Joe Smith; the Democrats generally felt that a sect of such political power, for sale every day and every hour in the day, and uncertain till the last hour of election, was no safe ally, and both parties awaked to the startling fact, that Joe Smith was actual dictator of their politics and chose their rulers. The anti-Mormon excitement was accelerated tenfold, and ceased not till their final and complete expulsion from the State. And disastrous as was that expulsion, terrible as were the sufferings of individual Mormons, it is scarcely too much to say they richly deserved it, for this one act of perfidy and folly.