

Missouri Persecutions: Petitions for Redress

Paul C. Richards*

When the Latter-day Saints first appealed to the U. S. Government in 1839-1840 for redress of wrongs committed against them in Missouri, Church President Joseph Smith said, "About 491 individuals gave in their claims against Missouri, which I submitted to Congress" ¹ More than 200 of these same claims or affidavits plus other important original documents relating to Mormon history in Missouri have been uncovered by the Institute of Mormon Studies at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

These affidavits, sworn to by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shortly after they were driven from Missouri in 1839, constitute a veritable gold mine of first-hand accounts covering the 1831-1839 period of LDS Church history on the western frontier. They document the persecutions, depredations and murders committed against the Saints, but at the same time, raise a few questions about traditional LDS views of that period of history. They point up the need for a new look at Mormon history in Missouri.

The new document find contains affidavits, letters, and petitions from 229 individuals, including affidavits from twenty-eight women and several children.² Only a few of these documents have been published in the *History of The Church*

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¹Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City, 1966), 4:74. Hereafter cited as *HC*.

²These names are listed alphabetically in the accompanying Appendix.

J. Edmund Durfee, Jr. solemnly
 declare that sometime in October in Year of our
 Lord One Thousand eight Hundred and thirty
 eight the Militia under the command of
 Generals Lucas Wilson & Clark took possession
 of a house belonging to Uriah B. Pond contrary
 to his wish & likewise that they the said militia
 burned a barn belonging to me for that I had
 moved on to the City Farm for a dwelling house
 Edmund Durfee Jr

State of Illinois }
 McDonough County } J. M. Campbell
 Clerk of the County Commissioners Court
 in and for said County do Certify that on
 this day Edmund Durfee Jr. came before
 me and took and subscribed the
 above and foregoing affidavit

At Testimony whereof
 have hereunto set my
 hand and the seal of
 said Court at Mexico
 this fourth day of January
 A.D. 1840

James M. Campbell
 By W. S. Head Clerk

This affidavit by Edmund Durfee, Jr., written 4 January 1840, has a plot plan scribbled on the back. All of the affidavits sent to Washington by the Mormons were notarized. This one was done by James M. Campbell, clerk of the County Commissioners Court, McDonough County, Illinois.

of *Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*³ and in other works, leaving the rest as essentially untapped, primary-source documents covering this period. Even in the case of the printed materials, it is valuable to have the originals to make comparisons and to see what editorial changes have been made. Among the collection is an affidavit of Bishop Edward Partridge describing the time he was tarred and feathered at Independence (not the same document as in *HC* 1:390-91), more than ten affidavits from witnesses of the Haun's Mill massacre, and numerous other personal accounts covering almost every phase of Church history in Missouri.

The collection also shows that the Latter-day Saints made two more redress appeals in Congress following the well-known, unsuccessful 1840 appeal. As already pointed out, Joseph Smith submitted affidavits from 491 individuals during that first attempt. These documents were retrieved by LDS delegate Elias Higbee at the conclusion of the four-month appeal before the Senate Judiciary Committee. On 24 March 1840, Higbee wrote to Smith, who had already returned from Washington to Nauvoo, Illinois:

Dear Brother:—Our business is at last ended here. Yesterday a resolution passed the Senate, that the committee should be discharged; and that we might withdraw the accompanying papers, which I have done. I have also taken a copy of the memorial, and want to be off for the west immediately.⁴

The original memorial or petition, from which Higbee took his copy, remained in Washington and today is filed in the National Archives under Senate Record Group Number 46. It is a twenty-eight page, handwritten document (two different hands), dated 27 January 1840, at Washington, and signed by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Elias Higbee. This petition appears in *HC* 4:24-38, but with numerous editorial changes which will be discussed later.

The Latter-day Saints sent another delegation to Washington in 1842, this time to appeal before the House of Repre-

³*HC* contains affidavits from more than forty persons, written in 1839 and 1840 about the Missouri persecutions (See *HC* 3:183, 323-325; 4:49-71). The two which are duplications of documents in the new find are from Joseph Young (*HC* 3:183) and Amanda Smith (*HC* 3:323-325). *HC* also contains the petition which the Saints sent to Congress (*HC* 4:24-38). The original of this is in the new document find.

⁴*HC* 4:98-99.

sentatives in the newly seated 27th Congress. Major LDS historians are silent on this second appeal.⁵ Again the effort was unsuccessful, but this time the affidavits were not retrieved. Instead, they were kept by the House, and eventually filed in the National Archives with the 1842 House of Representatives Collection (HR 27A-G10.1), where they are now. Unfortunately, the collection contains less than half the affidavits that were submitted during the first appeal. It might be assumed that all were not used in the second appeal except for the fact that a note on one of the document folders indicates some papers may have been misplaced.⁶

Other documents pertaining to the 1842 appeal are also filed in this collection. They are as follows:

1. A twenty-four page, handwritten petition which is a copy of the 1840 memorial, except that it is dated 10 January 1842, and signed by Elias Higbee, John Taylor, and Elias Smith.

2. *History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by The State of Missouri Upon the Mormons*, a sixty-four page book written by Parley P. Pratt during his eight-month imprisonment in Missouri. This work was published in Detroit by Dawson and Bates in 1839.

3. *Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons or Latter-Day Saints from the State of Missouri under the "Exterminating Order,"* a forty-three page booklet by John P. Greene published in Cincinnati by R. P. Brooks in 1839.

4. *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, & C. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons: and the Evidence Given Before the Hon. Austin A. King* This 163-page document was published at Fayette, Missouri, by order of the Missouri General Assembly in 1841. Therefore, it

⁵The *Congressional Globe* also is silent on this second appeal, but a handwritten note on one of the containers holding the documents of this appeal reads:

"Document presented by Mormons May 10, 1842 and on May 21, 1842 to the House Judiciary Committee; and the petition of Elias Higbee, John Taylor, & Elias Smith delegates of the LDS (referred on Feb. 14, 1842, to that committee), setting forth certain grievances, and asking for the redress of them."

A check of the *Congressional Globe* on the dates above indicated shows no action on the matter by the main body of the House (See Blair and Rives, eds., *The Congressional Globe*, vol. 11, no. 15 [Washington, 1842]).

⁶The note reads: "Document Number 3 has not been located. It is possible that the Original papers comprising this file are scatter [sic] throughout the other documents in this group."

could not have been part of the documentation for the Saints' 1840 appeal before Congress.

Copies of items 2, 3, and 4 have long been available in Mormon Americana so their recent discovery in the National Archives is not particularly significant. However, it should be pointed out that items 2 and 4 were never trimmed during the book binding process. The pages are not separated at the top, thus indicating that the House Judiciary Committee, which handled the second appeal, never examined these documents.

One more document was uncovered which shows the Saints made still another appeal in 1844. Among the Senate records of the 28th Congress, first session (Sen. 28A-G7.2), is a fifty-foot petition containing 3,419 signatures from inhabitants of Nauvoo. The document includes about three pages of memorial giving an overview of the Saints' problems in Missouri and asking for redress. It was dated at Nauvoo 28 November 1843, and was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee on 5 April 1844.⁷

Copies of all these documents have been made and are filed in the Brigham Young University Archives as Manuscripts Collection 942. The collection totals more than 580 pages and is divided rather randomly into fourteen folders.⁸ It adds nothing earthshakingly new to the general, overall history of the Missouri persecutions, but contains many interesting, detailed accounts which augment and sometimes correct existing histories. For instance, compare the following two accounts concerning the death of William Carey, who was taken prisoner along with other Mormons near Far West in 1838. The first account is from *HC* 3:182, 190:

Tuesday, October 30.—The advance guard of the mob were patrolling the country and taking many prisoners, among whom were Brother Stephen Winchester, and Brother Carey, whose skull they laid open by a blow from a rifle barrel. In this mangled condition, the mob laid him in their wagon and went on their way, denying him every comfort, and thus he remained that afternoon and night.

Wednesday, October 31. — . . . After we arrived in the camp, Brother Stephen Winchester and eleven other brethren

⁷The *Congressional Globe* substantiates this appeal. (See entry for Friday, 5 April 1844, vol. 13, no. 32, p. 497).

⁸Hereafter, references are from MSS 942 and are cited according to folder number, e.g., MSS 942:7. The pages are not numbered within the folders.

who were prisoners, volunteered, with permission of the officers, to carry Brother Carey into the city to his family, he having lain exposed to the weather for a show to the inhuman wretches, without having his wound dressed or being nourished in any manner. He died soon after he reached home.

The second account is from the affidavit of John Smith:

. . . they placed several guns in our wagon we then Drove to their Camp about three miles after we came into their Camp they took up their guns and fired them of except one which missed fire—they layed it Down and left the gun locked; thirett Dunihue came along and got in to the Wagon to hand out the guns he picked up the gun that was locked and said, hear you Damd son of a bich; you have cocked your gun to shoot us; Carey replied I did not cock it; Said Dunihue, Dont you contradict me you damd Sone of a bich; you; by the time the words came out of his mouth he struck Mr Carey a full blow with the brich of his gun upon his head, I was Sitting by the side of Mr Carey upon the same Seat when he received the fatal blow Mr Carey pitched forward and would have falen out of the wagon; but I caught hold of him and raised him in the wagon; his head was split open the Sergon washed his wound . . . he was in great misery but could not speak a word; he lived about forty seven houres and expired. . . .⁹

The affidavit of John Loveless adds further information about the character of Carey's assailant:

. . . I was presant at the That Wm Cary was stuck over the head with a Gun by One one of the Militia by the name of Dunnohoo. Wm Cary was A prisner at the Time. And at the Same time this Dunnohoo Jurked up a spear and made an attemp to take my Life. And likewise Saw this Dunnohoo brake open several houses while I was a prisner¹⁰

Most of the affidavits in MSS 942 were written in 1840 in response to an appeal from Washington by Joseph Smith and Elias Higbee. They wrote:

We want you to assist us now; and also to forward us your certificates, that you hold for your lands in Missouri: your claims to pre-emption rights, and affidavits to prove that soldiers were quartered on us and in our houses without our

⁹MSS 942:11. As with other documents cited herein, original punctuation and spelling are preserved.

¹⁰MSS 942:11.

consent, or any special act of law for that purpose; contrary to the Constitution of the United States. . . .

These facts must be authenticated by affidavits. Let any particular transaction of the outrages in Missouri that can be sworn to by the sufferers, or those who were eye-witnesses to the facts, be sent, specifying the particulars. Have the evidence bona fide to the point.¹¹

The Saints in Illinois rallied together to write the affidavits. They appeared almost en masse before justices of the peace to have the facts "bona fide to the point." One such justice was William Laughlin, who verified thirty-five affidavits on 7 and 8 January 1840. To make sure there was no question, Nicholas Wren, clerk of the county commissioners' court in Adams County, Illinois, was called on to certify that Laughlin was an authorized justice of the peace.

Some of the affidavits almost parroted Smith's and Higbee's words to show that the depredations were executed "without our consent." The following two are typical:

. . . These troops came to Far West and lived upon us without our consent as far as my knowledge extends¹²

. . . General Clarks troops came to Mr Yale's house and stopt their for about two Days and destroyed considerable property, they tore up both the floors of the House destroyed their poultry, and hogs and set fir to a Hay stack I saw them set fire to the stack which was entirely destroyed, they took what Corn they wanted for their horses from Mr Yale and I believe he had about ten acres destroyed besides a Hay Stack, this they did without leave from Mr Yale or any one who had authority¹³

A note written by Bishop Edward Partridge at the bottom of Nathan Knight's affidavit indicates the urgency involved in getting the affidavits together:

We will procure the proper certificate to show that Wells is a justice and forward it soon Be patient brn. will do as fast as we can We may send you some things which you do not want and omit some things which you do want but we will do the best we can¹⁴

The note was written 3 January 1840. On another sheet, Partridge submitted a list of twelve land patents for property

¹¹HC 4:44, 7 December 1839.

¹²MSS 942:10, affidavit of J. S. Miles.

¹³MSS 942:10, affidavit of Mary K. Miles.

¹⁴MSS 942:7.

State of Illinois Bondcock Co.

I testify that while I lived in Ray Co and State of Missouri a Caucus meeting was held in the Town of Richmond in 1837 to adopt measures to drive the mormons out of the State and a committee appointed by Wiley Williams County Clerk consisting of three men to warn them to leave the Co Joseph being David Snowden and Anthony Mc Christian was the man appointed, which warn us to leave, which we did and I went to Davis Co - at the election in 1838 they commenced depredations upon us with clubs clapboards loaded whips and knives which caused us to leave the ground and many of us badly hurt and from that time the mob continued to commit depredations till the militia was called or sent out to exterminate us and they came marched into the Town of Adam on Adams which we purchased from them ^{the infidelity of the} and took possession of the Town took us prisoners took our ~~property~~ killed dogs cattle &c and wounded many others took possession of our store and also our corn fields and forbade us taking any corn out of the field and a painted company under the command of Cornelius Guilleman a member of the Legislature who rode through the Town plundering and taking just what they pleased and abusing men women and children and swearing that they would kill Joseph Smith Jr. S. Rigdon and others. and the militia would not suffer us to leave the town without a pass from Gen Wilson and two days only given us to leave the Co and in the Spring of 1839 to leave the State

Elisha Hill.

Affidavit of Elisha Hill written 6 January 1840. Most of the affidavits in this collection were written in January 1840 in response to the appeal from Mormon delegates in Washington, D.C., to send documentation on the Missouri persecutions.

he held in Jackson County, Missouri. It was thought best not to send the patents themselves for fear of losing them, a note said.

Many Mormons have come to regard the Missouri persecutions as among the most atrocious crimes ever committed by man. It may be disappointing to some, then, to explore the MSS 942 affidavits and find that many of the Saints who lived through the persecutions really didn't say much about them. Take, for instance, the affidavit of William Allred:

September the 3rd AD. 1839
State of Illinois, Pike County—

Of Damage sustained By Mr. Wm. Allred by the Mob of the State of Missouri and the Exterminating Order of Governor Bogs it is 4 Fourthousand Dollars at a moderate rate

William Allred¹⁵

Not all are so short. A few go on for as many as twenty pages, but most involve one-third to one-half of an 8½ by 11-inch sheet of paper. Many of the affidavits deal almost entirely with losses rather than with accounts of what happened. The following by Andrew Moore, written 25 September 1839, illustrates the point. This was written before the appeal came from Smith and Higbee in Washington to substantiate the outrages committed against the Saints.

A bill Stating the loss of property and damages that I sustained by the inhabitence of the State of Missouri unlawfully. I imagrated with my Famaly in the year 1834 from the State of Ohio to the State of Missouri with the expectation of resideing there, which cost me one hundred dollars there I bought Land and paid for it in Clay county being compeld to leve there with out any just caus or provication I lost on my land there one hundred and ten dollars. I remooved from Clay to Caldwell Co damages for remooveing from Clay to Caldwell one hundred and ten dollars. there I bought Land and made me a farm there being compeld to leve the State in 1838 lost on Land Twelve hundred dollars, on Corn Cattle and other property two hundred dollars on Hoggs fifty dollars, two Rifle Guns thirty five dollars, one Swaard eaight dollars. on 2 Town lots in Farwest one hundred dollars I was Seraunded and taken and and cept under gard unlawfully six days—damagees twenty dollars loss of time and damagees for remooveing out of the

¹⁵MSS 942:7.

It is well known that there has bin a great difficulty since
between the missourians & the people called mormons, and
we are well aware that there is many false reports respecting
the matter now in circulation, I shall now endeavor to
come clear of all prejudice & give to the community a fair account
of the barbarous slaughter that taken place on the 30th day of Oct
at Houns Mills on Shoal creek, I was an eye witness to the murder
that was there committed I was one that escaped being murdered or wounded
but it was through difficulty, there was but three or four besides myself
that stood to see the result of the matter that escaped being killed
or wounded, in order ~~to~~ to set forth the matter to the satis-
faction of the inquiring mind I must first show ^{what} gave rise
to so horrid a scene, firstly it was a jealous notion in the
Missourians, that the mormons had some evil design in
gathering themselves together secondly they thought that
the mormons would be apt to all vote the same ticket
and many other other notions that were false & ground-
less, and when the election came round some of the
Missourians publicly declared that the mormons should not
be entitled to a vote, for they was not entitled to a vote
in Jackson county & they should not be there, this was
Davess county, the mormons contended that they was
a free people that they supported the government
& was in subjection to the laws of their country & that
they had an equal right to vote, this soon bred a con-
tention between the two parties, & soon come to blows,
it is well known that the Missourians was the aggressors, &
they first began to insult, and also first began to
kill with unlawful weapons, the missourians were
tired of there fun for the mormons proved to
be gally for them soon the fray was over and the
mormons left the ground without voting in
to keep down for their disturbance, they was at
Gallington in the County seat of Davess County,
near soon came to Span West Carroll county &
there had bin a fray in Gallington with the
Missourians & that too of the mormons was
that the missourians would not suffer the
mormons to carry there Dads this was the

Issac Leany (Laney) wrote seventeen pages describing the Missouri persecutions. He told his readers he was not learned and that they must watch for his meaning, not his imperfections.

State one thousand dollars, all with out any Just caus or provocation, the amount of all losses and damgees as nigh as I can ascertain amounts to two thousand nine hundred and thirty three dollars¹⁶

Imagine what could be done claimwise with a case like that in a modern-day lawsuit. Lewis Abbot was getting close to the idea of collecting more than tangible losses when he wrote:

I think the State had ought to pay me for my loss \$1,500 at least and for my damage a great sum, as money would not hire me to pass through the same scenes again¹⁷

Loyal C. K. Griffen expressed similar sentiments:

. . . from the comensment of this fus to the end of it was as much as 1000 thousand Dollars Damage to me and my famerly this would not tempt me to go throught the Same troubles and loses of time a gane So I close my troubles by being a friend to the laws of my country¹⁸

The Reverend Isaac McCoy, a Baptist missionary among the Indians, is named in LDS histories as being one of several religious leaders who led mobs in attacks on Mormons in Missouri. The MSS 942 affidavits also mention him as a persecutor of the Saints. Lewis Abbott's reference is typical.

This is to certify that I moved from Wayland Mass. 1832 to Jackson Co. Missouia. There I perched 80 acres of land I remained there untill the mob had driven the largest half of our sosity out of the Co. where then I was attack'd by a company of 40 mobers well armed and under the command of Rev Isaac McCoy an Indian Missionary they threaten my life with much violence but left me on condition I would leave the County. Accordingly I move into Clay Co. 1833.¹⁹

Perhaps nothing more need be said except that research by RLDS historian Warren A. Jennings indicates that McCoy may having been acting at the head of the mobbers to keep them from murdering the Mormons.²⁰ McCoy's Journal for 6 November 1833, states:

¹⁶MSS 942:7.

¹⁷MSS 942:9.

¹⁸MSS 942:13.

¹⁹MSS 942:9.

²⁰Warren A. Jennings, professor of history at Southwest Missouri State College, in Springfield, has studied the 38 volumes of McCoy's letters and McCoy's Journal housed in the Manuscript Division of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

I set out for Independence, and met a small company who desired to make an excursion in the upper Mormon settlement in order to take the guns which might yet be found among them. Fearing that the Mormons would be rashly used by them I requested to forbear until I returned from town, & I would then accompany them. This they agreed to. A few miles farther I met a company of 30 or 40 persons coming up on the same errand. Believing that some of the Mormons, now conquered, would likely be killed by them, I proposed to turn back with them, to this some who were bent on avenging the deaths and wounds which had been occasioned by the Mormons, objected, though in respectful terms. Several advised me to proceed to town, a few expressed a wish that I should go with the company—the one party lest I should be present when some one would be killed—and the other that I might prevent the killing of any. I however turned and went with the company, many of whom I discovered were determined to kill. I embraced the earliest opportunities of conversing alone with the most murderously disposed. We immediately entered the Mormon settlement, and I as soon perceived that my anticipations had not been erroneous—there was need of some to regulate the conduct of the rash. Two guns were at one time cocked for the purpose of shooting a Mormon, when I rushed forward and prevented. I had to use similar efforts afterwards to prevent one from being beaten with a stick, and another with a gun. I prevailed upon the company to stop a little from houses, and allow me with one or two only to approach and ask for their guns, &c. Had it not been for this measure the alarm and injury to the Mormons would have been much beaten and the injury considerable [sic]. In some instances I had to pacify some of our party by telling them that the Mormon had laid himself liable to prosecution, and it would be better to hang him by law, than kill him & thus expose themselves to prosecution. The mormon men were generally hid, though we spoke to several. My business in approaching their houses alone was dangerous, for I knew not at what moment some one of them in their alarm might knock me in the head. We found two guns.

The company dispersed at night, and I returned to my house fatigued in the extreme yet satisfied that I had been the means of saving several mormons from being murdered on that day, and from suffering severely in other respects.²¹

Maybe McCoy was whitewashing the matter, but with all that the MSS 942 affidavits say about him, there is nothing to contradict his version of the story. In all cases, he is reported

²¹Reprinted in Warren A. Jennings, "Isaac McCoy and the Mormons," *Missouri Historical Review*, vol. 61, no. 1 (October 1966), pp. 70-71.

as coming at the head of a mob and demanding that the Mormons leave. Not once is he cited as physically attacking any of the Saints. This situation calls for more study and points up the need for a new look at Mormon history in Missouri.

A comparison of the original 1840 petition with the printed version in *HC* 4:24-38 shows many differences. For example, only two lines of the published version on page 25 are printed without changes. All the rest have been altered. Note the differences in the following passages. The first is from *HC* 4:25:

They then proceeded to the dwelling of Mr. Partridge, the beloved Bishop of the Church there, dragged him and his family to the public square, where, surrounded by hundreds, they partly stripped him of his clothing, and tarred and feathered him from head to foot. . . .

The following is from the original handwritten petition submitted to Congress in 1840:

They then proceeded to the dwelling of Mr. Partridge, the beloved Bishop of the Church; they dragged him from his family to the public square, and when surrounded by hundreds of spectators partially stripped him of clothes, and in the most unfeeling manner covered him with tar and feathers from head to foot.²²

The first account is shorter and less colorful. However, it does involve the family whereas the second one doesn't. Now compare these two accounts with Partridge's own affidavit as found in MSS 942:

On the 20th day of July A.D. 1833 George Simpson and two other mobbers entered my house (whilst I was sitting with my wife, who was then quite feeble my youngest child being then about three weeks old,) and compelled me to go with them, soon after leaving my house I was surrounded by about fifty mobbers who escorted me about half a mile to the public square, where I was surrounded by some two or three hundred more.

Rupell Hicks Esqr. appeared to be the head man of the mob, he told me that his word was the law of the county, and that I must agree to leave the county or suffer the consequences. I answered that if I must suffer for my religion, it was no more than others had done before me—That I was not conscious of having Injured any one in the county therefore I could not consent to leave it. Mr. Hicks then

²²MSS 942:5.

Quincy Ill Feb 23-1839
 Hon Felix Grundy
 Dear Sir
 I take the liberty of addressing on a
 subject of great importance of which
 you have no doubt heard, as the pub-
 lic papers generally have been giving
 publicity to it. I mean the affairs of
 the Mormons so called in Illinois
 I am one of that number who has been
 driven by violence from my home and
 being held in prison for near four
 months and all my property destr-
 oied. My object in writing to you is
 to ascertain of recourse can be had
 to the federal and whether or no
 we can enter suit in that court not
 only against individuals inhabitants
 of Missouri but against the state
 also for the unconstitutional action
 the execution of said ^{state} as well as the
 passage of the legislature to prohibit
 the execution of the executive order
 which was to drive us from the state
 confiscate our property for no other
 cause than because we refused

The first page of a three and one-half page letter from Sidney Rigdon
 to the Honorable Felix Grundy asking for legal advice concerning the
 plight of the Saints, written 23 February 1839 at Quincy, Illinois.

proceeded to strip off my clothes and was disposed to strip them all off—I strongly protested against being stripped naked in the street, when some more humane than the rest interfered and I was permitted to wear my shirt and pantaloons. Tar and feathers were then brought and a man by the name of ———— Davies with the help of an other doubled me with tar from the crown of my head to my feet, after which feathers were thrown over me. For this abuse I have never received any satisfaction, although I commenced a suit against some of them for \$50,000. damage, and paid my lawyers six hundred dollars to get a change of venue.—My lawyers after getting their pay of me, made a compromise with the defendents without my consent, and threw my case out of court without giving me any damages by their agreeing to pay the costs, which they never have paid that I know of. And I never could prevail upon my lawyers to collect them for me though they agreed so to do.

Quincy Ill May 15, 1839

Edward Partridge²³

It is interesting to note that “some more humane than the rest” interceded to keep the rest from stripping their victim naked. Mormons today are not accustomed to thinking of frontier Missourians as humane or even human, but this and other affidavits contain statements showing that some actually helped the Mormons.

Here is another comparison between the published and original versions of the petition. The first is from *HC* 4:26:

Shortly after the meeting above referred to, another persecution commenced; some of the “Mormons” were shot at, others were whipped, their houses were assailed with brickbats, broken open, and thrown down; their women and children were insulted; and thus for many weeks, without offense, without resistance, by night and by day, were they harassed, insulted, and oppressed.

The original reads thusly:

Shortly after the meeting above referred to, another persecution commenced with increased sufferings on the part of the devoted Mormons. Some of their people were shot at; others were whipped without mercy; their houses assailed with brickbats, the doors broken open; and thrown down; their women grossly insulted; and their weeping daughters brutally abused before their mother’s eyes. Thus were they for many days and weeks without offence and

²³MSS 942:9.

without resistance, by night and by day, harassed, insulted, and oppressed. . . .²⁴

It seems that the editor wanted to tone down the severity of the account. At least he leaves out the part about the weeping daughters being abused before their mothers' eyes. Perhaps he was justified in this because the affidavits, including the twenty-eight written by women, give little or no evidence of attacks on women. It may be that victims of such assaults were, as today, reluctant to talk about them. Hearsay evidence in *HC* 3:428 and 464 indicates that several women were violated by mobs, but there is no direct evidence for such instances in *MSS* 942. In fact, a study of the affidavits leaves one with the feeling that even the worst of the Missourians had a certain respect for women—even Mormon women. Knowing what soldiers and street gangs have done in more recent times, perhaps we tend to pin these same types of atrocities on the early Missourians, but the affidavits do not back up this assumption. The following account by Catherine Fuller describes conditions which would afford every opportunity for mobbers to violate Mormon women, yet no mention is made of this type of atrocity:

I hereby certify that my husband and myself settled within about a mile of Haun's mill Caldwell Co. Missouri in the fall of AD. 1836 where we lived untill the massacre at the mills the 30th of Octr. 1838, at which time and place my husband was killed. About a week after the massacre I was at the mills and saw a large company of our enemies, as I understood, tented there I heard one of them by the name of Comstock say to Sister Merrill who lived in the house with me that if he could get his eye upon her husband he should be a dead man. Companies of from six to ten came to our house enquiring for men and guns a number of times.²⁵

This affidavit exhibits a strange, matter-of-fact association with the mobbers that gives cause for wonder. Ruth Naper's account also is intriguing because of her concern for seeming trivia after having lived through the Haun's Mill massacre. The affidavit also deals with the assault question.

. . . After a few days there came back a large company of armed men and took possession of Haun's mill and they also crowded into our house and crowded me and my chil-

²⁴*MSS* 942:5.

²⁵*MSS* 942:8.

dren away from the fire without my consent they lodged there and one night one of them came to my bed and laid his hand upon me which so frightened me that I made quite a noise and crept over the back side of my children, and he offered no further insult at this time. This company camped in the neighborhood between one and two weeks to our great inconvenience for they took from the brethren grain, cattle, hogs, bee stands, &c. as free to appearance as though they were their own.²⁶

Only one other affidavit says anything directly about assaults on women. It is interesting because it shows that Missouri mobbers could be dissuaded from their plans. The following account is from Elijah Reed:

. . . I was Closely Pursued I was at a Br. Jimmisons house in a by Place on the 28th of Oct & in the night of of that Day a Company of men Came to the House & Demanded admittance & threatened to Brake Down the Door Mr. J got up and opened the Door meantime I hid under the Bed the men Came in and said they were soldiers & he must Go with them his wife asked where they said to the Malitia Camp above Richmond he Dressed himself & he & one of the men went for a horse at the Stable when they had got a little from the house the man Fired a gun & said the D.d rascal had run from him he then returned to the house & they began to abuse Mrs. Jimmison wanting to sleep with her But she begged & cried For them to Desist & they Did so I lay under the Bed During this time they soon left the house & we supposed they had killed him I lay in the Feild the remainder of the night . . .²⁷

In examining documents like the affidavits in MSS 942, there is always the question of how much is fact and how much is exaggeration. As can be seen from the affidavits already quoted, there is an amazing matter-of-factness concerning some pretty terrible events. Many of the affidavits exhibit this same tone. But others, such as the one following, leave the reader wondering if the facts weren't a bit overplayed. The affidavit is from Truman Brace and concerns an event which took place in the fall of 1832 in Jackson County:

. . . One day as I was hauling a load of wood I saw a number of armed men on the prairie. Then they saw me two of them came up to me. They ordered me to Stop or they would shoot me. One of them named J. Young asked me

²⁶MSS 942:8.

²⁷MSS 942:10.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

Your Memorialists Elias Higbee, John Taylor, and Elias Smith, would most respectfully represent; that they have been delegated by their Brethren and fellow believers the Latter Day Saints, (commonly called, Mormons) to prepare and present to your honorable Bodies a statement of their wrongs, and a prayer for their relief, which they now have the honour to submit to the consideration of the Congress of the United States.

This Memorial sheweth:— That in the summer of the year 1831 a portion of the people above named commenced a settlement in the County of Jackson, in the State of Missouri. The individuals making that settlement had emigrated from almost every State in the Union to that lovely spot in the Far West in the hope of improving their condition, of building homes for themselves and posterity, and of erecting Temples, where they and their might worship their Creator, according to the dictates of their own consciences. Though they had wandered far from the homes of their childhood, still they had been taught to believe, that a citizen born in any one State in this great Republic might remove to another and enjoy all the rights and immunities guaranteed to the citizen of one State by his adoption in another. And the same rights and immunities were guaranteed to the citizen of one State by his adoption in another. And the same rights and immunities were guaranteed to the citizen of one State by his adoption in another.

The first page of the 24-page petition submitted to the House of Representatives in May 1842 by Elias Higbee, John Taylor, and Elias Smith. The petition is essentially the same as the one submitted to the Senate in 1840 by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Elias Higbee. The petition was published in edited form in the *History of the Church*.

if I believed the book of Mormon, I told them that "I did" They said that I must leave the County. I told them I had neither team or means to take me and my family away. The said Young then said he would shoot me and immediately made ready to carry his threat into execution, but the other man persuaded him not to do so,—the rest of the company then rode up I suppose there were about Fifty of the. The said John Young then took an axe gad which I held in my hand and commenced beating me with the same. I suppose I received about fifty strokes after breaking it he got a Raw Hide and Commenced whipping me with it he cut my Hat nearly all to pieces, while he was thus engaged a man of the name of Jennings came behind me and struck me on the head with a Rifle which nearly knock'd me down, John Young then took an axe from me and going a few steps back threw the axe at me with great force, but fortunately it did not hit me, at this time my wife and daughter seeing me there situated came and entreated the mob to share my life. I then went to the House and was followed by the mob. they came into the House. I sat me down on the chair when one of them thrust the muzzle of the Gun against my neck and thrust me against the wall and then kicked me on the mouth with his foot and cut my lip. This was in my own House—. . . .²⁸

As stated earlier, MSS 942 contains about ten affidavits dealing directly with the Haun's Mill massacre which took place 30 October 1838. The collection includes the affidavit of Amanda Smith, thus affording another opportunity for comparisons, since the affidavit was published in *HC* 3:323-325. As with the petition to Congress, the Smith document appears in a heavily edited form in the published version. The most significant difference is the names of the mobbers. *HC* 3:325 reads:

I will mention some of the names of the heads of the mob: two brothers by the name of Comstock, William Mann, Benjamin Ashley, Robert White, one by the name of Rogers

Compare this with the original:

. . . I will mention some of the names of the heads of the mob: two brothers by the name of Crumstock, William and Benjamin Ashby, Robert White, and one by the name of Rogers²⁹

²⁸MSS 942:9.

²⁹MSS 942:8.

me and my children in welcome; they sent to us from time to time, but
 we did not leave the state they would come and kill us. We had little
 prayer meetings, they said, if we did not stop them they would kill some
 out of us, man, woman and child, we had spelling schools for our little
 children, and they said we must also stop them. We did our own mill-
 ing, and got our own wool, no man to help us. I started on the first
 of February for Illinois, without money, (nearly all the way) driving
 my team, slept out of doors; I had four small children, we suffered
 hunger, fatigue and cold. And for what? for our religion, where?
 In a boasted land of liberty. Deny your faith or die, was the cry.
 I will mention some of the names of the heads of the Mob. Two brothers
 by the name of Greenstock, William and Benjamin Shy, Robert
 White, and one by the name of Rogers who took an old deacon and
 cut an old white-headed man all to pieces. I wish further also to state
 that when the mob came there (as I was told by one of their captives)
 their intention was to kill everything belonging to us that had life,
 and that after our men were shot down by them, they went around and
 shot all the dead men over again to make sure of their lives. I now
 leave it with this Honorable Government to say what my damages
 may be; or what they would be willing to see their wives and children
 slaughtered for, as I have seen my husband, son & others.
 I lost in property by the mob, 2 goods stolen fifty dollars, one
 pocket book and fifty dollars cash, ^{note} damage of horses and time, one
 hundred dollars and gun ten dollars, in short my all whole damage
 are more than the state of Missouri is worth. Written by my own hand
 in truth and earnest, This eighteenth day of April 1839.

Amanda Smith

Quincy, Adams County Illinois.

The last of three pages written by Amanda Smith, who lost her husband
 and one son in the Haun's Mill Massacre. About ten of the affidavits
 in the collection deal directly with the Haun's Mill incident.

Amanda Smith's young son who was in the middle of the massacre also swore out an affidavit. It is a priceless, first-hand account:

I hereby certify that my father stoped at Haun's mill and was living in a tent at the time the massacre took place there. I was in the tent when the company rode up. Some of our people hallowd to the women and children to leave the tents I run into a blacksmith shop where my father was. I crept under the bellows as also did my brother and another boy by the name of Charles Merrick I was wounded on the hip, my brother had his brains blown out, and the other boy received three wounds and has since died of them. My mother tells me that I was eight years old last month. I saw some of our enemies pull off my father's boots before he was dead

his
Alma X Smith³⁰
mark

The above was written 3 January 1840. Note that the document was signed with an X. Nineteen of the affidavits were thus signed. Six of the nineteen signers were women.

Some of the affidavits are interesting because of the frontier language they portray. They wrote the way they talked. Consider the following which deals also with the Haun's Mill massacre:

all of A Suding the war whoop was heard and an armed force ameadiately hove in Sight and Commenced firing upon men women and Children our Society Called for quarters, but none Granted the women and Children then fled in every direction nearly frightened out of there sensis in this awful Seene of destruction I made out to escape and after a short and Bloody Conflict the mob dispersed not leaving so much as the clothes of the Dying and wounded but littraly took thier Clothes from thir backs & boots & shoes from thire feet also most of thire furnitur and to prove their Savage feracity more Clearly they Also litlearly took a Corn Cutter and mangled an ole Revolutionary Soldier by the name of Mc Beide in Cool Blood. 16 were killed and among the Number killed was my father and two sons dyed of their wounds

his
Mosiah X Benner³¹
mark

³⁰MSS 942:8.

³¹MSS 942:11.

Tarlton Lewis, who was wounded in the Hauns Mill tragedy, wrote an affidavit which shows that all Missourians were not set on murder all of the time. Speaking of the time after the massacre, he said:

. . . While I was confined with my wound, companies of six or eight came to my house three or four times enquiring for arms and threatening to take me a prisoner and carry me off. Twice they examined my wounds to see if I were able to be moved but concluded that I was not.³²

Similar things happened to other Saints at other times in Missouri. For instance, David Pettigrew wrote concerning the Jackson County era:

. . . they still continued their depradations till in Oct when a mob came to my house in the night of Between 50 and a hundred men headed by brazill Moses Wilson Luis Franklyn and burst Open my door and cried how many mormans have you got here I told them we ware sick to come in and light a candle and see which..was done by brazill he then came to the bed and felt the faotts of my self and wife and pronounced us sick the cry was made to tare down the house which was forbidden to be done that night by brazill but threttoned us with ammediate destruction if we did not leave the county forthwith. . . .³³

Other affidavits show that some of the Missourians actually helped the Mormons. Elisha Whiting wrote:

. . . and soon taken sick and in a few days a mob threatened to come upon and drive me from my home not withstanding my sickness. but through the kindness of a neighbor who informed me of the plot, and offered me an asylum under his roof which I accepted and escaped from their snare³⁴

The whole Missouri affair is not a simple story of the good versus the bad. Both sides drank in rumors and spread propaganda that could cause almost any culture to go to extremes to defend itself. An example of how the Missourians felt is depicted in David Pettigrew's conversation with Judge Elisha Cameron of Clay County:

. . . and now will retale a conversation that took place between Judge Elisha Camron and myself as I met him in

³²MSS 942:8.

³³MSS 942:10.

³⁴MSS 942:11.

the road he said its terrible times oald man the Maill Carrier Eat breakfast at my house this morning and said he came by an army of mormons this side of richmond and they are twelve hundred strong in Jackson and they have four cannon and recruits are coming in from other counties continually for God's sake dont take your family over thare to be cut all to peices³⁵

Then with Missouri Lieutenant Governor Lilburn W. Boggs stirring up both sides, it is no wonder that the conflict worsened. Isaac Morley said he had a talk with the Lieutenant Governor in Jackson County in 1833.

. . . about this time lieutenant Governor Boggs Came to my house and advised me if any of the Citizens came and Destroyed any of my property by night if he was in my place he would return the Same injuries to them in the Dark³⁶

Only samplings of a few of the documents in MSS 942 have been touched on here. The entire collection deserves detailed study. Perhaps the most interesting thing about the documents is that they give the reader a more humanistic view of frontier Missourians than is generally available in LDS histories.

List of Names of the Signers of the Memorials, Affidavits, and Letters in the 1840 and 1842 Appeals to Congress by the LDS Church.

Note: This list does not contain the 3,419 names signed by Nauvoo residents on the fifty-foot petition submitted to the U.S. Senate in 1844.

Lewis Abbott	Mary Benson	Levi Bracken
Rufus Abbot	Lettice Bent	Lindsey A. Brady
David W. Adams	Samuel Bent	John Brassfield
William Aldrich	Henry Best	Alanson Brown
H. M. Alexander	Betsy Bidwell	Mary Brown
Albern Allen	Robert W. Bidwell	Horace Burges
James D. Allen	Adam Black	Daniel B. Bush
Martin C. Allred	George Boosinger	Reynolds Cahoon
William Allred	William Bowman	Daniel Cathcart
Philip Ballard	Peter Boyce	Lorenzo D. Chamberlin
Lucinda Barlow	Squire Bozarth	Solomon Chamberlin
Moriah Benner	Truman Brace	Amelia Chapman
Jerome M. Benson	James Bracken	Nathan Cheney

³⁵MSS 942:10.

³⁶MSS 942:11.

James Clark
 Moses Clawson
 Barnet Cole
 Anthony Coombs
 Lucy Corkins
 John Correll
 David Crenshaw
 Charles Crismon
 Lyman Curtis
 Nahum Curtis
 Percy Curtis
 Alpheus Cutler
 Thaddeus Cutler
 John Daley
 Daniel C. Davis
 Isaac Decker
 David C. Deming
 Moses Dudley
 Edmund Durfee Jr.
 Jabis Durfee
 James Durfee
 Perry Durfee
 David Dutton
 Hannah Dutton
 Elisha Edwards
 Rufus Edwards
 Isaac Ellison
 Lydia B. English
 (Widow of William
 Whiting)
 Henry Ettleman
 Philip Ettleman
 Ladawick H. Ferre
 Reuben Foot
 Jonathan Ford
 Clarissa Fosdick
 Catherine Fuller
 David Fullmer
 D. H. Gilmer
 Charles Glulet
 Charles Granger
 Loyal C. K. Griffen
 Selah J. Griffen
 Thomas Grover
 Solomon Hancock
 James M. Henderson
 Rueben Hendrix
 Jordan P. Hendrixson
 Amos F. Herrick
 Lemuel Herrick
 Phebe Herrick
 Elias Higbee
 John S. Higbee
 Elisha Hill
 Curtis Hodges, Sen.
 Elizabeth Holsclaw
 Jonathan Hoopes
 Warner Hoopes
 Joseph Hormuth
 Eli Houghton
 James Houghton
 Ornan Houghton

Mary Ann Hoyt
 Smith Humphrey
 Jacob Huntsman
 James Huston
 Charles Jameson
 Mahlon Johnson
 Moses Kelly
 H. N. Kent
 Perry Keyes
 Joseph C. Kingsbury
 Nathan K. Knight
 John Lawson
 Isaac Leany
 Alfred Lee
 Eli Lee
 Wm. Leffingwell
 Tarlton Lewis
 John Loveless
 Robert Lucas
 Arza Ludd, Jr.
 John M. McCall
 Jesse McCard
 Enos McHall
 William Marks
 Eliphaz Marsh
 Moses Martin
 J. S. Miles
 Mary K. Miles
 Samuel Miles
 Samuel C. Miles
 Alexander Mills
 Albert Miner
 Andrew Moore
 Isaac Morley
 Arthur Morrison
 Elizabeth C. Munjar
 William Munjar
 John Murdock
 Philindia Myrick
 Reuben Naper
 Ruth Naper
 Elijah Newman
 William Niswanger
 Daniel Norton
 Harvey Omstead
 John Outhouse
 Mahalaanon Oventor
 John Pack
 James B. F. Page
 Abraham Palmer
 Edward Partridge
 Charles W. Patten
 John Patten
 P. Paullin
 David Pettigrew
 Jeremiah Plumb
 Merlin Plumb
 Uriah B. Powell
 Terah Pulsipher
 Tunis Rappleye
 Harlow Redfield
 Delia Reed

Elijah Reed
 John Reed
 Elisha Richards
 Sidney Rigdon
 Oren P. Rockwell
 Sarah Rockwell
 Noah Rogers
 James H. Rollins
 Stephen M. St. John
 William Seely
 Elihah Shaw
 Joel Shearer
 Benjamin Slade
 Clark Slade
 Alma Smith
 Amanda Smith
 Elias Smith
 John Smith
 Joseph Smith
 Willard Snow
 Chester Southworth
 Charles Squires
 Daniel Stanton
 Henry Stephens
 Henry Stevenson
 Dexter Stillman
 Coonsod Stokes
 Nathan Stuart
 Gabriel N. Taylor
 John Taylor
 George B. Teeple
 Darrill S. Thomas
 Lewis Thompson
 John Thorp
 James B. Turner
 Lewis Turner
 Nelson Turner
 William Turner
 Elizabeth Tyler
 John P. Walker
 Wm. C. Walker
 John Welch
 Elisha Whiting
 Andrew Whitlock
 Bradley B. Wilson
 Eleanor Wilson
 George C. Wilson
 Lewis D. Wilson
 Polly Wilson
 William Wilson
 David Winter
 Giddion D. Wood
 Hannah Wood
 William Woodland
 James Worthington
 Hannah Yale
 Hannah York
 Jane A. Young
 Joseph Young
 Phineus H. Young