# Atchison's Letters and the Causes of Mormon Expulsion from Missouri

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Richard Lloyd Anderson

Alexander W. Doniphan is proverbial in Missouri Mormon history for saving Joseph Smith's life, but an equally significant story is largely untold: the role of David Rice Atchison in restraining armed aggression against the Mormon minority. Both men were lawyers retained by Latter-day Saint leaders after the forcible expulsion of their people from Jackson County in 1833. In the next five years, both Doniphan and Atchison were periodically involved in seeking civil rights for an unpopular people. So when they took key militia posts during the 1838 Mormon troubles, these two well understood both the majority and the minority viewpoints. Doniphan was left on the scene at the surrender of Far West and registered his telling protest at the attempt to execute civilians by order of a military court. Only a few days earlier, Atchison had been removed from command because of his outspoken views. He had bluntly written Governor Boggs: "I do not feel disposed to disgrace myself, or permit the troops under my command to disgrace the State and themselves by acting the part of a mob."[1] Atchison's later silence on this subject contributed to the historical obscurity of his stand.

This article will explain the Atchison letters from the 1838 Mormon conflict. He and Doniphan knew Joseph Smith's policies, since they had negotiated with both parties for some two months prior to the Mormon surrender on 1 November 1838. Doniphan's views have great interest because he consistently saw the Mormons as victims of intolerance throughout their Missouri experience.[2] But Atchison's letters have added historical value because they were written at the height of anti-Mormon tensions by the commander assigned to investigate and resolve the civil conflict.

In war the open-minded are hated by both extremes. Thus Major General Atchison was accused of helping the Mormons in order to gain political advantage. The firebrand Samuel Bogart complained to the governor with one eye on Atchison: "Too many of our officers are seeking popularity with the Mormons, seeing their votes in time would be of some service to them."[3] But "in time" shows the hollowness of the contention, since immediate unpopularity was David Atchison' s reward for fairness. The gaining of a few thousand Mormon votes in one county would in any case have been more than offset by the predominant hostility against them in scores of counties. Moreover, Atchison's later political stance reflected

sectional interest. Would this ultra-southern senator have earlier supported what western Missourians perceived as a Yankee church biased against slavery?[4] Clearly, it is the lawyer and judge, not the politician, who speaks in the 1838 Atchison documents. The failure of moderation and the helplessness of watching a minority dispossessed are the themes of these on-the-scene letters.

**Atchison's Life**

Dissent on the Mormon question might have been expected from David Rice Atchison, inasmuch as his legal, military, and political careers were stamped with individualism. His views on the 1838 Mormon persecution should be seen in the light of a lifetime commitment to principle. Not that his virtues were neatly bounded by convention. Fellow Clay County attorney Peter Burnett pictured him even when a judge as still able to mingle with "mirth and gayety," adding that he "was very companionable, and full of anecdote, in which he was not limited by religious views." Burnett also outlined Atchison's serious side when appointed to the bench soon after the Mormon conflict:

> Judge Atchison was an upright, incorruptible judge, and was a man of fine literary and legal education and of superior native intellect. He possessed a kind heart, and a noble, generous, manly spirit; but when first appointed, he seemed to me to err too often in his rulings in favor of the accused.[5]

Doniphan also described Atchison during his years as a judge in the early 1840s. The two had known each other intimately as young attorneys: "we kept offices together, although never partners, and were very warm personal friends." Doniphan could be objective because they had different interests: "politically we were as wide apart as the poles. He was a strong States Rights Democrat, while I was a Whig of the most orthodox school." Doniphan sized up Atchison, admitting that he spent a good deal of time away from his office in hunting, social, and political affairs:

> He had a clear, bright, logical mind; had studied law well, and kept up with his profession by constant reading, when he was not engaged actively out of doors. . . . I deemed him one of the best lawyers, and consulted him more frequently than I did anyone else. As a judge he was quick, expeditious and industrious, seemed to arrive at his conclusions almost intuitively, and his high sense of justice always enabled him to decide equitably. I never knew a judge who gave such universal satisfaction.[6]

These are sketches soon after Atchison indignantly wrote about the injustice of allowing the Mormons to be expelled from Missouri counties. Atchison and Burnett were born in 1807, Doniphan in 1808. All were educated in the border states. Atchison and Doniphan were Kentuckians and college graduates who had studied English and Latin classics before

reading law. Atchison was the eldest of six children and was named for the devoted Presbyterian David Rice, ironically an early spokesman for emancipation.[7]

The young Atchison was a new attorney in Liberty, Clay County, when older settlers demanded that the Mormons leave Jackson, the county to the south. Before abandoning their homes in the Independence area, Mormon leaders countered by engaging four lawyers at Liberty, two of whom were Atchison and Doniphan. Though Joseph Smith was sarcastic about the size and circumstances of their fee, they risked careers and safety to defend an unpopular minority. They jointly signed a fee proposal at the end of 1833, expecting "to lose the greatest part" of their local practice but indicating their willingness to disregard intimidation: "as we have been threatened by the mob, we wish to show them we disregard their empty bravadoes."[8]

Atchison soon realized that pressure tactics overruled law in Jackson County. Governor Dunklin requested a court of inquiry, and in a supporting petition Mormon attorney Amos Rees wrote: "an examination of the criminal matter cannot be gone into without a guard for the court and witnesses."[9] Governor Dunklin then ordered out the Liberty Blues under Captain Atchison, but this state inquiry collapsed. The platoon of fifty men and their baggage wagon advanced with Mormon witnesses to Independence, but after overnighting the leaders were informed by state and district attorneys that tension was too high to proceed. Eyewitness William W. Phelps described the result:

> Shortly after, Capt. Atchison informed me that he had just received an order from the judge that his company's service was no longer wanted in Jackson County, and we were marched out of town to the tune of Yankee-doodle in quick time, and soon returned to our camp ground without the loss of any lives. In fact, much credit is due to Captain Atchison for his gallantry and hospitality. . . . Thus ends all hopes of "redress," even with a guard ordered by the Governor for the protection of the court and witnesses.[10]

That same year, the Mormons sent the "Zion's Camp" expedition of about two hundred men from Ohio, under the impression that Governor Dunklin would reinstate the Jackson exiles and that these reinforcements would prevent attempts to eject them again. But fearing civil war, the governor refused to back up Mormon property rights, forcing the disbanding of Zion's Camp when it reached Clay County.[11] David Atchison appears in expedition journals as a successful intermediary: "When we got within five or six miles of Liberty, General Atchison and several other gentlemen met us, desiring that we would not go to Liberty, as the feelings of the people of that place was much enraged against us."[12] Two years later, Mormons left Atchison's county by agreement under pressure. Hostility peaked in 1836, and community leaders called meetings to negotiate. When local Mormon

leaders agreed to leave rather than cause confrontation, Atchison's name appears as a Liberty representative to supervise fair removal.[13]

Mormon sources show Atchison's repeated position as arbitrator. Smith family journals give one important occasion. As the Daviess County crisis intensified, Joseph Smith's brother Don Carlos and his cousin George A. Smith were given an emergency mission to raise money in the southeast for buying out Missouri settlers. Making their way through Ray County, they boarded a Missouri River steamer. It docked at De Witt in the midst of the siege of the Mormon settlers there, and the conversation centered on the Mormons when the riverboat embarked again. A number of militia officers were traveling on the boat, including Generals Lucas and Wilson of Jackson County. The latter bragged about his part in punishing Mormons in 1833. As Don Carlos Smith bluntly labeled such conduct "below the brutes," Wilson reached for his pistol, but cousin George A. stood near, ready to topple the general into the river if he drew. Then Atchison broke the tension with an oath, "I'll be God damned if Smith ain't right," and Wilson "left the company rather crest-fallen."[14] Such words were morally and physically intimidating from a man described as "six feet two inches high, and straight as an arrow, florid complexion, and would weigh about 200 pounds."[15] Atchison, who never experienced the socializing influence of marriage, was a man's man by western and southern standards. A political and religious critic saw him as "large, commanding, dictatorial, and sometimes profane; an uncompromising Democrat, a plu-perfect pro-slavery man, and often boisterous, but always generous." Yet this rough exterior housed "superior judgment and native mind."[16]

Full detail on Atchison's later life is not necessary here, though an outline suggests the quality of his views on the Mormon question. In the Missouri legislature in 1834, he was elected again in 1838 and that winter was outspoken on measures designed to improve the lot of migrating Mormons. He was appointed to the bench of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit when it was created in 1841, but he served as judge only two years before Governor Reynolds designated him to fill a vacancy in the United States Senate, an appointment widely approved throughout Missouri. His senatorial career lasted a dozen years, since he was reelected for two terms. His record was distinguished. Many times he was elected as president of the Senate pro tempore. Atchison was influential in measures to annex Texas and Oregon and stood rock-firm in the southern bloc in antebellum politics, seeking to save the Union by insuring traditional sectional interests.[17]

The mature Atchison was passionate about the right of extension of slavery to the territories, and his Kansas manipulations tarnish his national reputation, though he is credible as a regional patriot. Before he failed of reelection and ended his last Senate term in 1855, he was influential in

establishing the self-determination provisions for Nebraska and Kansas. In the latter state, an immigration contest raged to import abolitionist or proslavery voters. Atchison threw himself into this cause, since Kansas bordered the western Missouri counties of his residence. He raised money, organized settlers, and was an influential officer in paralegal militia to protect southern interests. He could use extreme rhetoric, on one occasion writing to his friend Jefferson Davis of possible civil war in Kansas: "we intend to 'Mormanise' the Abolitionists."[18] Yet to Atchison's credit, he campaigned with verbal vigor but generally stood for responsible actions within the law. His careful biographer insists that his record was exaggerated in the northern press, where he was a hated symbol of the "slave-power conspiracy." William E. Parrish continues:

> While his actions during this time have been condemned, it must be remembered that Atchison was fighting for a cause in which he strongly believed, and to him the cause justified many actions which he would not ordinarily have condoned. Atchison's chief lieutenant on the Kansas border, Benjamin E Stringfellow, later remarked that no matter how severe the Senator's plans were, he always relented when the time came to put them into execution.[19]

The Civil War brought Atchison to another crisis of conviction. While Missouri stayed in the Union, he chose the South from the beginning, becoming chief advisor in the Confederate shadow government of Missouri, and he was on the scene in several western actions. Temporarily retiring to Texas at the end of the war, he expressed affection for his personal servant and concern for his other slaves.[20] Atchison's last two decades were spent on his large farm in western Missouri, where he died at the age of seventy-eight. He indirectly evaluated his political years in his journal entry concerning the 1874 visit of Jefferson Davis to Missouri: "the homage paid him is to virtue and great principles; he is the representative of the lost cause and all that it involved."[21] One does not have to agree with his cultural outlook to recognize that David Atchison generously served his state and nation in public life. Answering a critic after Atchison left the Senate, Stephen A. Douglas voiced the typical view of personal friends:

> He is impulsive and generous, carrying his good qualities sometimes to an excess, which induces him to say and do many things that would not meet my approval. But all who know him know him to be a gentleman and an honest man, true and loyal to the Constitution of his country.[22]

**Mormon Expulsions before 1838**

David Atchison stood for law over violence when the Mormon troubles erupted for the final time in 1838. But the outcome was heavily influenced by public opinion formed in the conflicts from 1833 to 1836. The expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from the state did not happen in a

vacuum, since it essentially repeated the earlier processes of exile. So a focus on 1838 obscures real causation. The deeper question is what social dynamics caused organized demands for Mormons to leave Jackson, Clay, and Carroll counties before they had lifted a weapon in resistance.

In 1833 and 1838, Mormons responded with force but did not initiate it. Both times their armed resistance intensified the demand that they leave but was not the origin of it. An analogy illustrates both cases. A spectator happening onto a fight might conclude that both parties were equally at fault because each is striking at the other, but he cannot legitimately make that judgment without knowing how the fight began. Perhaps one party is resisting an attempted robbery by the other or responding to an unprovoked attack. A close look at only final hostilities in Jackson or Caldwell is misleading, for Mormons were using force against forcible dispossession.

The sequence of events in Jackson County in 1833 is undisputed. In July, citizen regulators threatened the Mormons in Independence with death unless they immediately agreed to leave the county. Mormons accepted terms to buy time, but also initiated appeals to state officers and engaged lawyers. But these countermeasures triggered more violence. In November, Mormon homes were terrorized to force an immediate exodus. Some lives were lost when a Mormon settlement defended itself against marauders. Then all available Mormon men marched to Independence, hearing that some of their group were imprisoned illegally. When they came face to face with lawful militia, they surrendered their arms and with their families left Jackson County in disarray.[23]

It should be obvious that Mormon resistance in this series of events was essentially defensive. And yet Reverend Pixley's version of the events manages to portray the Mormons as aggressors. Reciting the gunpoint demand in July, Pixley indicates that the Mormons agreed "to move away before another summer." But after this "peace was made," they created a problem by insisting on staying, even "arming themselves and threatened to kill if they should be molested." This "provoked some of the more wild and ungovernable among us to improper acts of violence, such as breaking in upon the Mormon houses, tearing off the covering, etc." Then Pixley reviews "military preparations" among the Mormons, and gives his version of the first skirmish, manufacturing a Mormon revelation "to arise and pursue and destroy their enemies." He may be reporting contemporary rumors, but such a policy has absolutely no basis in Latter-day Saint sources. Pixley then interprets the Independence rescue mission as the application of his fictitious revelation on aggression. He expresses sympathy for "the sufferings of the Mormons, and especially the women and children, in being obliged to move off so suddenly at this season of the year." But he draws the conclusion that nothing else could be expected in an

organization "where such principles are evolved, and designs manifested, by blood and violence, to build up the kingdom of the Redeemer."[24] Thus the victims are made responsible for their victimization.

The parallels are striking between this first expulsion and that of 1838. In both cases, one can label Mormon resistance as aggression and argue that it caused the exile. Indeed, that is what the state tried to prove against the leaders in the Richmond hearing in 1838. The argument, however, was as spurious then as it was in 1833, though the events were more complex and involved Mormon preemptive strikes. In both 1833 and 1838, the Mormons' physical resistance was given as the cause of their expulsion, whereas the root cause was the determination of Missouri residents not to allow Mormon influence.[25] The real political motives were revealed during the Jackson meetings in July 1833:

> They [the Mormon settlers] now number some twelve hundred souls in this county, and each successive autumn and spring pours forth its swarms among us. . . . It requires no gift of prophecy to tell that the day is not far distant when the government of the county will be in their hands; when the sheriff, the justices, and the county judges will be Mormons, or persons willing to court their favor from motives of interest or ambition.[26]

Upper Missouri society could not tolerate the prospect of political control by northerners who believed in present-day revelation. Despite similar fears, non-Mormon society allowed a Mormon majority to develop in the township of Kirtland, Ohio, with only moderate violence. But monolithic southern communities rejected coexistence when Mormons approached effective political influence in county after county. The twelve hundred Mormons in Jackson County in 1833 made up about 30 percent of the population, so violence erupted when the threat of a majority of Mormon voters became real.[27] A tone of tolerance was set in Clay County by more educated and sensitive leaders, but the county had nearly twice the population of Jackson and could better assimilate a minority. But two years later, Clay County citizens were just as worried about the possible domination by the Jackson immigrants plus the ongoing gathering of Mormons from eastern states. The Clay committee report is temperate in tone but nearly identical with the Jackson report on reasons for conflict. Mormon attorneys Doniphan and Atchison were on the committee, placed there partly for their influence on the Mormon settlers.[28] The Clay leaders speculated on why religious, social, and political differences existed, but sought to avoid civil conflict by resettlement of the Mormons elsewhere: "We earnestly urge them to seek some other abiding place, where the manners, the habits, and customs of the people will be more consonant with their own." As with Jackson residents, they feared lest their county should become the main gathering place of a major religious movement:

> Their rapid emigration, their large purchases, and offers to purchase lands, the remarks of the ignorant and imprudent portion of them, that this country is destined by heaven to be theirs, are received and looked upon, by a large portion of this community, as strong and convincing proofs that they intend to make this county their permanent home, the center and general rendezvous of their people.[29]

Thus Mormon defensiveness had nothing to do with the original demands to leave Jackson County and did not figure in the negotiated abandonment of Clay County, since the Mormon leaders agreed to move on before major violence broke out. What is common to both instances is the reality that a Mormon majority would not be tolerated. This is confirmed by the neutral history of John Corrill, a key Mormon leader in Jackson and Clay counties who became disaffected from the Church in 1838 and soon thereafter penned a summary of Mormonism as he had known it. With a fair perception of both sides, he summed up the Jackson problems in the same terms as the 1833 citizens' ultimatum: "They saw their county filling up with emigrants . . . and saw also that if let alone, they would in a short time become a majority and of course rule the county."[30] After three years in the Liberty area, Corrill saw no logic in having to move, "for the Mormons had committed no crime," but realized that Mormon growth was the main issue: "The Church also continued to gather in Clay County, till the appearance was that they would sooner or later be overrun by the Mormons."[31]

A blunt letter from Clay County residents Anderson and Emelia Wilson to their relatives in North Carolina gives the same explanation as they argue the unfortunate necessity of expelling the religious minority. Anderson describes his participation in the anti-Mormon meetings and some vigilante work, giving his rationalizations. The letter includes a good deal of misinformation on Latter-day Saint beliefs, but the bottom line is non-Mormon resistance to a Mormon voting bloc:

> They have been flocking in here faster than ever and making great talk what they would do. A letter from Ohio shows plainly that they intend to emigrate here 'til they outnumber us. Then they would rule the country at pleasure. . . . You may depend all our officers are elected by us the people, and we might as well allow one man to give 100 votes as to allow 100 Mormons to vote at all. . . . To go away was to just give up all, for if emigration once begun, none would buy our land but Mormons, and they would have it at their own price. So we were resolved what to do. We thought of petitioning the governor, but he was sworn. We thought of fleeing. There was no place to flee to. We thought of fighting. This was cruel to fight a people who had not broke the law, and in this way we became excited. . . . Not that I boast of ourselves, but the spirit that possessed every breast plainly showed that they would either possess their country or the tomb. . . . We defend these principles at all hazards, although we are trampling on our law and Constitution. But we can't help it in no way while we possessed the spirit of 76.[32]

**Mormon Settlement of Caldwell County**

The Wilsons' letter estimates five hundred men available countywide for the "volunteer companies" and adds a list of 4,800 men expected from seven adjoining counties in case of conflict: "By this you may see what abomination the Mormons is held in the Mo."[33] Thus an infrastructure had already developed by 1836, determined not to allow any significant number of Mormons into an upper Missouri county. Another case arose when public meetings in Ray County, adjoining Clay to the east, denied permission for Mormon resettlement there. But a solution came by agreeing that the expatriates could buy out the sparse population of the prairie to the north. John Murdock joined Corrill in negotiating with Ray committees and summarized their meeting of 30 June 1836:

> According to previous agreement, I, in company with Elder John Corrill, met the Ray County Committee and laid our complaint before them and desired of them that if we could not have a home with them that they would grant us the privilege of settling on Shoal Creek in the territorial part of the State. And after calling a meeting of the county, they granted the latter but would not let us live with them.[34]

This consent was given with the strange rituals of a civilian treaty, reflected in the Corrill-Murdock letter to the Ray County group: "If Ray County requires the 'Mormons' to leave it entirely, we feel disposed to do so on our part and urge and advise our brethren to do the same." The same document alludes to a disputed strip claimed by Ray, with the proviso that until the matter was settled "we will abstain from making any settlements in the above stated territory."[35] Thus the Mormon county was created not merely to give them a place to locate, but to exclude them from becoming a force in any settled area. The Clay group had pledged their support to initiate action on it, and Doniphan, then in the legislature, reviewed his role and the implied contract in upper Missouri:

> The Mormons remained in Clay County until 1836 . . . when it was agreed between them and the citizens of Clay and Ray Counties that if they [the Mormons] would buy out a few inhabitants then inhabiting what is now Caldwell County, then a part of Ray County, the balance of the land being public, they could enter it at their leisure, and we would urge the legislature to create a county for them. . . . I was a member of the legislature and drew the bill organizing Caldwell County for the Mormons exclusively. . . . They continued to live prosperously and tranquilly until the summer of 1838, when Joseph Smith came out from Ohio, and soon after they commenced forming a settlement in Daviess County, which under their agreement they had no right to do. This occasioned difficulties with the citizens of Daviess County.[36]

The Prophet had not been a party to negotiations and did not accept an unwritten limitation confining a world church into a twenty-mile square,

when written constitutions gave free right of purchase. Doniphan's view of "their agreement" is explained in his 1837 letter informing the Mormons that the northern area (Daviess County) of his proposal had been subtracted because of "the petitions of the people of North Grand River, the statements of the citizens of Ray, the influence of her members, and the prejudices of Noland, Boggs, Jeffery, McLelland, etc." Doniphan expressed hope that bigotry would be temporary:

> You are aware of the prejudice and ignorance that are to be found and combatted everywhere in this country on this subject, as well with the legislature as with the common herd. In time, I hope you may add to its limits, when prejudices have subsided and reason and common sense have again assumed the helm.[37]

Should Mormons not assert their civil rights? And if powers of ownership were not valid in Missouri, where else? Mormon expansion outside of Caldwell County coincided with Joseph Smith's arrival not only because of his policies, but because missionary work and the closure of Kirtland increased immigration. In no known case did a Latter-day Saint occupy land without agreed consideration, but every county surrounding Caldwell was predisposed to shut out heavy Mormon influx. As Doniphan observed, such conceptions were not reasonable. He later insisted that while in Clay County, the Latter-day Saints "were peaceable, sober, industrious and law abiding people, and . . . not one was ever accused of a crime of any kind."[38] But the arrival of faithful Ohio Saints in 1838 fed the fears of non-Mormon society ringing their settlements. Given the Mormon determination not to forfeit citizenship and the determination in surrounding counties not to allow substantial intrusion, an irreconcilable conflict had already been framed before any Mormon acts of self-defense in that year.

Early in 1838, Joseph Smith arrived in Far West, enthusiastic about Mormon self-government, and soon dictated a statement condemning mobs and "vexatious law suits" but praising "the Constitution of our country . . . peace and good order . . . good and wholesome laws."[39] Sidney Rigdon expressed the same views in his oration of 4 July 1838, a talk believed by many then and now to have sparked the Mormon expulsion. But his abrasive words are less significant in the light of the preexisting determination by Missouri residents not to allow significant Mormon occupation beyond Caldwell County. Nearly all of Rigdon's talk surveyed God's blessings to the Latter-day Saints and their covenants with him. Only the final paragraphs of the printed version speak of rights and defending them, in the context of the "mob that comes on us to disturb us." Only then "it shall be between us and them a war of extermination." But Rigdon immediately added: "We will never be the aggressors; we will infringe on the rights of no

people, but shall stand for our own until death. We claim our own rights, and are willing that all others shall enjoy theirs."[40]

The purpose of this declaration was to "proclaim our liberty" after "the persecutions which we have had to endure for the last nine years, or nearly that." Though it is sometimes claimed that Rigdon declared freedom from court process, he actually threatened physical resistance to "vexatious law suits," a theme also in the above Joseph Smith statement on Mormon constitutionalism. To make Rigdon the scapegoat of the Missouri expulsion is to miss the underlying problem that he and Joseph Smith addressed—if the law would not protect their minority from expulsion, they served notice that they would protect themselves. Whether such an announcement tended to promote or retard violence may be debated—it is the same question of whether pacificism or military preparation brings peace. But Rigdon's talk must be placed in the setting of the expressed convictions of other residents of upper Missouri that Mormon settlement could not expand. Thus Rigdon's speech was a defensive ultimatum.

Public discourses of principal Mormons in 1838 are not well reported, but Rigdon's comments generally exceed those of others in radical language, raising a question of whether he was emotionally fit for leadership even then, since Joseph Smith sharply cut back his role afterward. Yet his extremism appears only in the closing language in the Fourth of July oration, not the fundamental message. He indulged in some ill-advised phrases—it was never Church policy to retaliate until "one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed."[41] In fact, when Daviess and Carroll county Mormons were attacked, Joseph Smith's defensive policies were clearly to save life and avoid physical harm. Nevertheless, Rigdon's oration was a serious warning that Mormons would resist if told to leave another county. Joseph Smith stood behind the principle or the speech would not have been circulated afterward as a pamphlet. He consistently expressed the goal of claiming rights purchased by the blood of the revolutionary generation just before him. He was an American prophet seeking to establish a constitutional commonwealth in frontier conditions. His public and private words in Missouri do not advise replacing or resisting the state, but counsel armed defense if the state would not enforce its laws.

**Early Daviess County Conflict**

Although Mormon sources indicate there had been earlier threats, the Gallatin election in August 1838 was the visible event of beginning violence. Gallatin was the county seat of thinly settled Daviess county, the northern area Doniphan had been unable to add to the Mormon county. Nevertheless, Lyman Wight had settled the Adam-ondi-Ahman area, which was then developed as a townsite after the arrival of Joseph Smith. The

chief newspaper at Liberty, Clay County, argued that both sides were aggressors in the voting scrape because Rigdon's July speech showed "a disposition to prevent the force of law." But that was a theoretical issue. The main issue was Mormon expansion, as the editor makes clear:

> It is true, that when the Mormons left this county, they agreed to settle in, and confine themselves to a district of country, which has since been formed into the County of Caldwell, but they have violated that agreement, and are spreading over Daviess, Clinton, Livingston, and Carroll. Such a number had settled in Daviess that the old inhabitants were apprehensive that they would be governed soon by the revelation of the great Prophet, Joe Smith, and hence their anxiety to rid themselves of such an incubus.[42]

While blaming Lyman Wight for fiery language in defending the Mormon Daviess settlements, John Corrill agrees that control was the key point with the prior settlers, who watched the heavy 1838 migration and realized "that the Mormons would soon overrun Daviess and rule the county."[43] Ironically, this area would have been Mormon controlled had the legislature adopted Doniphan's first proposal. This raises the obvious question of whether Missouri Saints ever really accepted the single county concept. None seemed to be inhibited from moving to surrounding areas in small numbers. While Missouri sources refer to an "understanding" that Mormons would confine themselves to Caldwell County, it was nowhere clearly defined. Because such a restriction on free movement was illegal, it was probably not intended to be discussed publicly. Missouri Mormons probably expected this political accord to vanish as their industry and usefulness became better known—and the many new immigrants and converts were doubtless unaware that their civil rights were supposed to be limited because of their religion. Clearly, most Mormons were as unwilling as their leaders to accept a lesser citizenship.

Thus both sides acted from their prior convictions in the election brawl of 6 August. Some Daviess settlers cursed Mormons seeking to vote at Gallatin, and swore they would not. When fighting erupted, a dozen determined Mormons picked up clubs and defended themselves before retreating safely in a body. First reports indicated casualties and unburied bodies, which brought a posse from Caldwell County to join with Wight's Daviess group of Mormons. On finding no such crisis, the leaders nevertheless sought assurances of equal treatment under law from some local officials, including Adam Black, who was known for his anti-Mormon sentiments.[44] Under protest, Black signed a statement of his constitutional intent, later testifying that Sampson Avard showed a "savage disposition" but that Joseph Smith answered "no" when asked "if he possessed such a heart" or justified Avard's attitude.[45]

Black next filed a misdemeanor action against his visitors, charging intimidation. At first Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight were wary of a hostile court but finally attended a preliminary hearing and posted bail. This hearing took place one month after the election riot, but by this time volunteers to drive out the Mormons were already organizing. On the day the Prophet posted bail, the following letter was written indicating that Daviess citizens had declared war the day after the voting riot:

> We have just conversed with General Wilson of Howard County, who states that on last Saturday he saw a letter dated on the 7th instant, from a committee of gentlemen in Daviess County, to the people of Howard County, calling on them to raise a force and come to their assistance and aid them in expelling the Mormons from the county; that the citizens of Daviess had removed their families and were making preparations for warlike operation; that the Mormons were in a state of open rebellion against the laws, and war between them and the citizens was inevitable; that the people of Daviess had come to the fixed determination of commencing the attack on Saturday last.[46]

This September information establishes operative plans for expulsion well in advance of any Mormon military operations. Their armed countermeasures were confined to the last two weeks of October, whereas the call for volunteers against the Mormons had gone out five weeks earlier. Thus "committees of safety" organized two years before, at the height of the Clay County expulsion, were revitalized at this time.[47]

The key Mormon chronicle lays the background for the first of Atchison's 1838 letters. Joseph Smith generally assigned secretaries to record his activities and official documents. In 1838 George W. Robinson kept this history, calling it the "Scriptory Book." Though not a daily diary, its narrative continues to 11 September, when Atchison's letters begin. The Scriptory Book contains few comments by the Prophet but tends to reflect Presidency views, along with many first-person notes by Robinson. In the first relevant entry, Robinson mentions the existence of "a company of Danites," gives their specific purpose "to cleanse the Church," and adds a comment on the damage the unfaithful have caused: "Kirtland has been broken up by those who have professed the name of Latter-Day Saints."[48] This late July observation suggests no organization against non-Mormons. Tension with outsiders is first mentioned when the election brawl is reported, with the ride of the Mormon group to justice Black's two days afterward. This contemporary record gives the purpose of the visit to Black: they inquired "whether he would administer the laws of our country or not in justice for people."[49] The Scriptory Book next records some visits by committees of non-Mormons, and indicates the uniform answer given to them that Latter-day Saints were sworn to cooperate with laws and courts and expected evenness of justice for all parties.

Robinson reported how Atchison became reinvolved with the Mormons because of their need to settle the dilemma arising from the August confrontations. If Joseph Smith did not go to Daviess County to answer the charge of intimidating Justice Black, he faced the danger that "regulators" would lynch him and drive his people out of Daviess County. Yet by going he would risk assassination, no doubt followed by expulsion of the Mormons. A questionable letter purportedly written at this time by Atchison seems intended to fit into these events. The letter, dated 1 September, reports that "Judge Black has graciously received me and has earnestly conversed with me his feelings concerning you and the Latter Day Saints." The writer goes on to tell Joseph Smith that he will come personally "in two or three days."[50] However, Atchison's help was first sought the day *after* this odd letter is dated. Nor would he have written a letter about coming because he immediately returned with the messenger that summoned him. In view of these inconsistencies, it is important to trace the sequence of events during this period.

According to the Scriptory Book, Joseph Smith negotiated with Daviess authorities to answer the Black charge, but by the end of August anti-Mormon volunteers were "collecting from eleven counties" to "help" arrest the Prophet: "This looks a little too much like mobocracy; it foretells some evil intentions; the whole Upper Missouri is all in an uproar and confusion."[51] Philo Dibble, elected as Lieutenant Colonel in the Caldwell County militia, advised the Prophet to get Atchison's help, "and a man was selected, with the best horse to be found, to go to Liberty for General Atchison."[52] Robinson's contemporary record is dated 2 September:

> This evening we sent for General Atchison of Liberty, Clay County, who is the Major General of this division. We sent for him to come and counsel with us, and to see if he could not put a stop to this collection of people, and to put a stop to hostilities in Daviess County. We also sent a letter to Judge King containing a petition for him to assist in putting down and scattering the mob, which are collecting at Daviess.[53]

The Scriptory Book notes Atchison's arrival the next evening, and on 4 September adds:

> This day was spent in council with General Atchison. He says he will do all in his power to disperse the mob, etc. We employed him and Doniphan (his partner) as our lawyer and counselor in law. They are considered the first lawyers in the Upper Missouri.[54]

Atchison immediately scheduled the Prophet's appearance for 7 September in a special circuit court sitting in Daviess County near the Caldwell County line in case the Mormon leaders needed a rescue party. Dibble, then military commander at Far West, said that the Liberty lawyer insisted on no bodyguards:

> Joseph at first hesitated about agreeing to this, but Atchison reassured him by saying: "My life for yours." When they arrived at the place of trial, quite a number of the mob had gathered, and on seeing Joseph, commenced to curse and swear. Atchison, however, checked them by saying: "Hold on boys, if you fire the first gun there will not be one of you left."[55]

Judge King found probable cause against George W. Robinson, Lyman Wight, and Joseph Smith, but took bail and released the Mormon leaders. While attending court, Atchison consulted with King, who was empowered by Article 5 of the state constitution as "conservator of the peace" within his circuit. Atchison returned home to activate two hundred men in Clay County and another two hundred in Ray, explaining in an initial report to the governor that citizens of Mormon Caldwell and non-Mormon Daviess counties had requested the action, which was ordered" by the advice of the Judge of this circuit." Atchison, as major general in charge of the Third Division of the militia, was the military counterpart to Judge King in the western counties north of the Missouri River. He had some discretionary powers also, and used statutory language of putting down an "insurrection" in his 12 September letter to Governor Boggs, indicating that his troops would assist the judicial process but also control volunteers:

> Citizens of other counties are flocking in to the citizens of Daviess County, and the Mormons are flocking to the assistance of the Mormons in those counties . . . and it is very much feared, that if a blow is once struck, there will be a general conflict, the termination of which, God only knows.[56]

Warren Foote, who had recently come to Far West, wrote that the Caldwell County militia was released from reserve duty right after Joseph Smith's trial, adding on 12 September that General Atchison was expected to return with Clay and Ray county militia "to disperse the mob" in Daviess County.[57] Foote then says that General Atchison arrived with only an aide, leaving his Clay County soldiers outside of Far West because of their fear of Mormon strength. But this general was apparently Doniphan, who preceded Atchison north and wrote that he arrived at Far West with his aide late on 12 September and received prompt cooperation from the Mormons, who returned the rifle stands they had intercepted and the three men captured with them.[58] Foote observed mutual respect between the visitor and the Prophet: "He had a friendly chat with Joseph Smith, and the leading men, and appeared to be very friendly to the 'Mormons.'"[59]

Atchison marched a Ray County contingent north to Gallatin, where he joined Doniphan's group and ordered the "armed men from adjoining counties to repair to their homes." There were 250 of these volunteers, which is a sobering foretaste of potential numbers when Daviess settlers would send more urgent calls later. This 17 September letter also shows that empty houses are no evidence of Mormon military operations, for the

general noted the whole county appeared to be deserted except for a few with nerve to stay. The Daviess settlers "had left their farms and removed their families either to the adjoining counties or collected them together at a place called the Camp Ground."[60] This removal was clearly voluntary, for Atchison was blunt about Mormon intimidation later. Mormon journals also speak of leaving the farms and moving to the larger centers out of fear; those involved in the election riot did so a month before this time.

Doniphan's report to Atchison also named his aide: Benjamin Holliday, who came to Utah for business a dozen years later and was given an introduction recounting his fairness to Mormons in these first militia actions of 1838. In this note, Doniphan *stressed* that the Mormons were under attack, saying that the goal of this first Daviess expedition was to "prevent an engagement between a self-constituted collection or army of citizens from various counties then in Daviess and the residents of Adam-ondi-Ahman, who had embodied under General Lyman Wight for self-defence."[61]

In his letter of 17 September, Atchison is sarcastic about the intentions of the upper Missouri regulators, since they had assembled "under the pretext of defending the citizens of Daviess County against the Mormons." His viewpoint agrees with Doniphan's summary above—the Mormons were not aggressors. In addition to beginning to disperse unauthorized non-Mormon forces, Atchison insisted on Mormon compliance with legal processes: all "charged with a violation of the laws will be in today for trial."[62] This refers to other defendants accused of menacing Justice Black. Although Joseph Smith and two associates had preliminary hearings on the charge ten days before, other members of the party did not answer in Daviess County until Doniphan and Atchison brought protecting militia. George A. Smith pictures the 18 September hearing:

> I was arrested by a constable who could not read his writ, and a posse of 40 men, and taken before a court of three magistrates. The court was held near General Atchison's camp at Netherton Springs. About 300 of the mob were present, besides the 200 militia. . . . Adam Black, Esquire, testified against us as being the only witness. . . . We were detained two days and subjected to many insults, for it seemed to be the studied design of both mob and militia to annoy us with threats. . . . Had it not been for the stern vigilance of Generals Atchison and Doniphan, probably none of us would have left the grounds alive. . . . We were bound over in one thousand dollar bonds on a charge of misdemeanor. . . . Many times during our detention, infuriated men came up to us and holding their knives in their hands with their thumbs upon the blade said, "Damn you, I am going to put that into you so far." Others presenting their pistols said, "This is loaded on purpose to kill a damned Mormon." Notwithstanding the continued remonstrances of General Atchison, these threats were repeated over and over again.[63]

Atchison next wrote the governor on 20 September, following with short confirmations of 23 and 27 September, indicating that the Daviess County situation had stabilized. With Mormons cooperating with the courts and extracounty regulators withdrawing, Atchison and his commanders felt that a token police force was enough, though one act of aggression could bring uncontrolled violence. As their legal counsellor, Atchison knew Latter-day Saint policies. He reported their defensive posture but predicted it would certainly change "if an attack is made upon the Mormons in Daviess County, for the purpose of driving them from that county." For they possessed an "unalterable determination not to be driven."[64] Atchison's 27 September letter forwarded the report of General Parks, the officer left with the peacekeeping force. This Ray County general indicated his surprise at misinformation on the Mormons: "There has been so much prejudice and exaggeration concerned in this matter, that I found things on my arrival here totally different from what I was prepared to expect." In his military assignment, Parks insisted that Mormons "have shown no disposition to resist the laws, or of hostile intentions."[65] In sending that report, Atchison emphasized the point, warning the governor not to act upon only one side of the story:

> And in fact from affidavits, I have no doubt your Excellency has been deceived by the exaggerated statements of designing or half crazy men. I have found there is no cause of alarm on account of the Mormons. They are not to be feared; they are very much alarmed.[66]

Thus October opened with a two-month record of Latter-day Saint restraint under pressure. They had answered to authorities for the only offenses charged: intimidating Justice Black into signing his agreement not to use mob tactics, and intercepting the shipment of Ray County arms. The peace was uneasy but genuine, since neither Atchison nor field commander Parks reported dispossessions or destructions. After dismissing most troops, Atchison returned to his Liberty home, where he wrote his final September letters to the Governor before traveling to a new assignment at a midstate military board. There had been a peaceful close to the "insurrection" of unauthorized armed groups entering Daviess County, but the officers did not call this "war."[67] Yet there was an uneasy tone in Atchison's opinions after phase one of the Daviess operations, echoed in the letters that his brigadier general forwarded on 25 September. General Parks outlined conditions in Daviess County in one letter to Governor Boggs and another to the major general. Mormon and settlers' representatives were to meet the next day to explore buying or selling out. The citizens were still unwilling to coexist: Parks reported that "the men of this county" were threatening that if negotiations failed "their intention is to drive the Mormons with powder and lead from this county."[68]

**Carroll County Conflict**

Just as confrontation eased in the Daviess area, private forces began hostilities in Carroll County, just east of Ray, where a Mormon settlement had formed on the Missouri River at De Witt. Though De Witt was sixty miles from Gallatin, the goal of the anti-Mormons was the same—to prevent Mormons from voting.[69] John Murdock remembered the June settlement and the warning to be gone on the day of the August election:

> George M. Hinkle and myself, being sent by the High Council by the direction of Brother Joseph the Prophet, bought the undivided half of the town plot of De Witt, Carroll County, Missouri, for five hundred dollars . . . and we with our families proceeded forthwith to settle. . . . About the last of July a committee . . . came and ordered us to leave the county by the 7th of August, and on the 20th a mob of more than a hundred men came and ordered us off, but finally gave us ten days and threatened if we were not away in that time, they would exterminate us without regard to age or sex and throw our property into the river.[70]

The date of Murdock's final warning is 20 September, since he and nearly fifty other Mormon men petitioned Governor Boggs for emergency help two days afterward, describing the same facts that he recorded in his journal.[71] Organized resistance to Mormon expansion was simultaneous in two counties, but the Daviess election riot and its aftermath first attracted manpower from the surrounding committees of safety. Atchison's Daviess settlement permitted the return of over one hundred paralegals to De Witt. Ironically, General Atchison stopped there on the day fixed by the ultimatum, since the Prophet's brother and cousin were on the same riverboat and noted his verbal support of Mormons and also his purpose in traveling to attend the midstate court-martial.[72] Since the emergency petition from the De Witt Mormons was sent a week before that, the governor's action in removing the strongest leader of the Mormon crisis is highly questionable. This relatively trivial assignment crippled the moral power of lower officers straining to maintain civil peace.

On 7 October, General Parks wrote Atchison that needed units did not obey his order to report, that he would be forced to wait for Doniphan's Clay County reinforcements before being effective, and that Hinkle had dug in to defend the town with nearly four hundred Mormons, while the besieging force of three hundred had a cannon and was swelling rapidly: "The Mormons say they will die before they will be driven out, etc. As yet they have acted on the defensive as far as I can learn. It is my settled opinion, the Mormons will have no rest until they leave."[73].

Atchison fulfilled his duty at Boonville while the Mormon situation totally deteriorated. He continued to report to the governor, evidently on the basis of messages by courier from De Witt, fifty miles away. His first letter

from Boonville reported that the citizen army was assembling "for the purpose of driving the Mormons from that county."[74] This was verified by observers sent from surrounding counties; one reported that old citizens had decided the Mormons must leave and were using language of "waging a war of extermination, or to remove them from the said county."[75] An arbitrator reported that the Carroll Saints rejected first offers to sell out: "The Mormons replied that ever since they had been a people they had been driven from place to place, and they had determined that they should be driven no more."[76] While there was some hope for government intervention, a grim waiting game dragged on. Chariton County observers found Mormons "in the act of defense, begging for peace, and wishing for the civil authorities to repair there as early as possible to settle the difficulties between the parties."[77]

This De Witt experience was the crossroads, finally proving to Mormons that state institutions would not be effective. Atchison had earlier restored civil order in Daviess County because, as he said, the vigorous presence of legal militia "has convinced the Mormons that the law will be enforced, and other citizens that it can be enforced, and is ample to redress all grievances."[78] Now the opposite process worked in Carroll County. While Atchison obeyed his order to be absent, General Parks's units dissolved in disloyalty. On 13 October, an antagonistic subordinate complained to the governor that Parks had left the field without dispersing the Mormons—the general obviously retired because extracounty forces snowballed faster than he could maintain lawful forces.[79]

The call had already gone out for anti-Mormon volunteers, and potential manpower was immense. Rifle patrols skirmished as paralegals moved cautiously against Mormon defenses. Then they sent a frantic call for help to adjoining counties:

> And we think this one of the cases of emergency in which the people ought to take the execution of justice in their own hands. . . . We will anticipate . . . assistance in expelling the fanatics, who are mostly aliens by birth and aliens in principle, from the county.[80]

Thus political and social forces were at work to expel the Mormons without the governor lifting his pen. Just before this call for an unofficial army, General Lucas of Jackson County had passed through De Witt on the same steamboat with Atchison and sent his opinions to the governor. Lucas had talked to the Mormon commander Hinkle and was convinced he would fight if attacked, which rumor said had happened. But one death in the non-Mormon forces would bring "four or five thousand volunteers," with the result that "those base and degraded beings will be exterminated from the face of the earth."[81]

Far West sent help to the besieged outpost, which only inflamed the situation. Joseph Smith arrived with a relief force.[82] This was the beginning

of October, and the Prophet asked a non-Mormon to travel east for a last appeal to Governor Boggs:

> Several gentlemen of standing and respectability, who lived in the immediate vicinity . . . offered their services to go and present the case to the Governor themselves. A messenger was accordingly dispatched to his Excellency, who made known to him our situation. But instead of receiving any aid whatever . . . we were told that "the quarrel was between the Mormons and the mob," and that "we might fight it out."[83]

According to the Prophet and others there, this response obliterated hope of assistance, so a peaceful withdrawal was negotiated.[84] Governor Boggs later told John Corrill that he did not send a message that the Mormons were on their own, but that is a technicality.[85] The governor told the legislature that he "received information" of the crisis at De Witt "but took no order on the subject" because Atchison and his lieutenants "had ample force to preserve the peace."[86] This is just what the non-Mormon courier denied. Failure to act was a clear message to a people weighing whether to fight for survival. John Taylor, who shouldered his gun at the siege, was not concerned with particular words: "After we had defended the place ten days, we obtained the heartless intelligence that his Excellency could do nothing for us."[87] Although Atchison told the governor on 9 October that he advised the Carroll County Saints "to sell out and remove elsewhere," he was incensed when he heard the circumstances.[88] On 16 October he wrote from Boonville and essentially accused Governor Boggs of ratifying the mob program.

As the De Witt crisis intensified, General Parks had asked Atchison to request the governor's immediate presence to dispel the illegal militia: "You know a word from his Excellency would have more power to quell this affair than a regiment."[89] So Atchison wrote his thinly veiled rebuke of Governor Boggs that was historically justified—the governor made no appeal to Missourians to place law above prejudice. Without a strong official stand, private policy would force the Mormons out of all counties. Atchison insisted that the governor had one last chance to be effective: "Nothing, in my opinion, but the strongest measures within the power of the Executive, will put down this spirit of mobocracy." A personal visit to the area was best, but at least "a strong proclamation was required." Atchison's alternative was prophetic:

> Parks reports that a portion of the men from Carroll County, with one piece of artillery, are on their march for Daviess County, where it is thought the same lawless game is to be played over, and the Mormons to be driven from that county and probably from Caldwell County.[90]

Atchison obviously felt used. His considerable efforts produced only a show of doing something. But inaction at the point of expulsion proved

that the governor had no commitment to minority rights. Atchison's 16 October letter really accused Governor Boggs of passive acceptance of the private programs of" the last two months" to drive the Mormons back to their single county, a movement "ruinous to the public and disgraceful to the State." The blunt general requested a clear executive stand or an order to discharge the troops seeking to restore order. Then all pretense would be removed: "I would again respectfully suggest strong measures to put down this spirit of mob and misrule, or permit them to fight it out."[91] Knowing Major General Atchison's view—shared by his brigadiers Parks and Doniphan—one can understand the Mormon reaction at this point. Their leaders reported that the militia generals told them to raise their own troops in self-defense. With lives at stake, Mormons did not always define whether this advice was given as private counsel or as official orders. The total breakdown of militia protection put the rule of survival into play, one which had been thought out beforehand as a contingency. As secretary to the First Presidency, George W. Robinson noted that Mormons were carefully avoiding attempts at "provoking us to anger,"[92] and he undoubtedly reflected Church policy in explaining the limits of pacifism:

> We have suffered our rights and our liberties to be taken from us. We have not avenged ourselves of those wrongs. We have appealed to magistrates, to sheriff, to judges, to governors and to the President of the United States, all in vain. . . . We will not act on the offensive, but always on the defensive. Our rights and our liberties shall not be taken from us, and we peaceably submit to it as we have done heretofore, but we will avenge ourselves of our enemies, inasmuch as they will not let us alone.[93]

Robinson's contemporary comments are important because hostile remarks have been attributed to Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in charged situations. Robinson's words were his own, but this corporate policy was formed in calm moments by the Presidency. The above entry was written in early September just before Atchison's forces arrived in Daviess County. Robinson's entries phase out as September troubles escalated, but he repeatedly recorded Mormon restraint: "They try all in their power to make us commit the first act of violence."[94] Although he used the words "avenge ourselves," the context was totally defensive. Robinson felt the record from Jackson, Clay, and Carroll counties spoke for itself, proving that "we have no designs against any man or set of men, that we injure no man."[95] Individuals—including leaders—made angry statements under stress, but Joseph Smith never justified using weapons except in self-defense. There is a remarkable consistency on this point in official documents in Missouri and afterward. As the threat of violence returned in Illinois, the Prophet reflected back on the Missouri experience and reiterated:

> I calculate to be one of the instruments of setting up the Kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord. . . . It will not be by sword or gun that this kingdom will roll on. . . . It may be that the Saints will have to beat their plows into swords. It will not do for men to sit down and see their women and children destroyed patiently.[96]

**Guerrilla Tactics in Daviess County**

The 1838 expulsion went down in regional histories as the Mormon War, which deceptively suggests that both sides were fighting for some period of time. But there was no Mormon attack until mid-October, and Latter-day Saints surrendered their weapons two weeks later. The main Mormon operations took place in Daviess County during a single week, with no goal whatsoever of bloodshed or personal harm. There is no known casualty until militia units moved into Caldwell County at the end of October. If the term must be used, here is a war of days, of limited violence, and with the clear Mormon goal of resisting ejection by vigilantes.

Dozens of wagons rolled into Far West with the De Witt refugees in mid-October.[97] This was the point of realization that state protection was a sham. Nothing could be seriously construed as a Mormon attack before that. Regulators from surrounding counties came to help Daviess County settlers force out the Saints in early September, but there were no Mormon counterstrikes. Retaliation was first used in late October. When the news of Mormon raids reached Ray County, letters show that these actions were unprecedented. Austin King was circuit judge with the responsibility of keeping the peace within his upper Missouri district, so he had consulted with Atchison from the time of the voting scrape in mid-August. He wrote in the last week of October: "Until lately, I thought the Mormons were disposed to act only on the defensive, but their recent conduct shows that they are the aggressors, and that they intend to take the law into their own hands."[98] Such a statement from an informed source confirms the absence of Mormon offensive action during the ten weeks after the election brawl. So taking "the law into their own hands" only occurred after the militia failed to prevent banishment from Carroll County. As far as conflict with outsiders was concerned, the Richmond hearing in November focused on events in the last two weeks of October, the last 15 percent of the total period of hostility, and ignored the 85 percent of the period when Mormons cooperated with a fading legal system.

The First Presidency modified its policy after two months of calculated nonviolence because civil protection disappeared. When the vigilance forces drove the Mormons from Carroll County, the Church had to face the serious threat that Daviess, then Caldwell would follow. After passively supporting the eviction of the De Witt Mormons, Captain Samuel Bogart

warned the governor that private forces would next block resettlement in Daviess County, which was really just a phase of the program of expelling all Saints there:

> The Mormons are moving west—it is supposed they intend pushing the citizens out of Daviess; that county is in a state of great agitation. . . . The Daviess and Livingston county people, and many others, are on their way to Daviess County with one field piece, with the determination to prevent their settling in that county at all hazards.[99]

The day after this letter was written, Warren Foote was in Far West when the report arrived that four hundred to five hundred armed anti-Mormons had collected in Daviess County.[100] And Ebenezer Robinson remembered that private soldiers were gathering there again "with avowed determination of driving the Mormons from the county."[101] Robinson adds that this sparked desires to retaliate in kind, which raises the specter of secret Danites bent on destruction. In reality, what started as an elite group of defenders of the faith was by now assimilated into the open organization, which now conscripted every able-bodied man for community defense. Albert P. Rockwood arrived from Massachusetts in September, at the end of the first phase of Daviess troubles, and he knew no organization except that which openly drilled as the "Armies of Israel." Not secretive, "they are seen from my door every day" in late October drills, and "the companies are called Daniel," showing that the former name was now synonymous with the broader public group.[102] Many Mormon records show serious reservations about founder Sampson Avard and his sworn special force, and he explained his dismissal before open conflict in mid-October: "I once had a command as an officer, but Joseph Smith removed me from it."[103] This probably indicates disapproval of Avard's radicalism and also shows the October integration of old and new immigrants into a single Mormon force with consolidated command.

Joseph Smith's Missouri words are often filtered through interpreters trying to portray him as a conqueror instead of the defender of constitutional rights that he always claimed to be. A rare contemporary entry reports the thrust of his Far West speech asking for reinforcements to protect the Daviess Saints during their mid-October crisis:

> He said that those who would not turn out to help suppress the mob should have their property taken to support those who would. He was very plain and pointed in his remarks and expressed a determination to put down the mob or die in the attempt. . . . He said that the Mormons would have to protect themselves, as they could not put any dependence in the militia of the state, for they were mostly mobocrats.[104]

What the Prophet said about the militia agrees with Atchison's 16 October letter and Parks's 21 October report after visiting Daviess County. Both Parks

and Doniphan had marched to quiet the area once more, but dismissed their troops because they were about to mutiny and attack the Mormons. Subsequent actions in Daviess County are lightly treated in Latter-day Saint documents but not covered up. Joseph Smith accurately summarized the next Mormon move in a sentence: "Accordingly, a force was immediately raised for the purpose of quelling the mob, and in a short time were on their march with a determination to drive the mob, or die in the attempt, as they could bear such treatment no longer."[105] About three hundred men left Far West for Adam-ondi-Ahman on Tuesday, 16 October, and one week later Albert Rockwood watched the return of those mounted, about half that number, with those on foot probably following soon afterward.[106] Of course such a relief expedition increased hatred and hostility, but that was already so severe that Mormons could not live or travel safely in Daviess County.[107] A week before these reinforcements were sent, John D. Lee and three others went out into the upper Daviess country to gather honey and were accosted by "a large number" of armed men, but he pretended to be an Illinois immigrant who knew nothing of local affairs. The men called themselves "state volunteers" and informed Lee of the election fracas and the common understanding that Mormons must leave before "they rule the country as they please." They then explained the coming program to "go through the Mormon settlements, and burn up every house, and lynch every damned Mormon they could find," insisting that such work would start as soon as the expected removal of militia units took place.[108]

On 16 October the Caldwell reinforcements traveled some twenty-five miles from Far West to Adam-ondi-Ahman, and contingents were formed to search and destroy weapons, to gather isolated families, and to forage for survival supplies. From a tactical viewpoint, Gallatin and Millport were both about eight miles to the south of Adam-ondi-Ahman and were nearby centers that supported raids on the Mormons. For instance, Lorenzo Dow Young's farm was eight miles from Gallatin, and in early September a group warned him that he must leave or renounce his religion. Five days later a horseman rode up to Young's place and tensely explained: "I have rode from Gallatin to inform you that in two or three hours there will be a company of forty men here, who assert that if they find you here, they will fasten you and your family in your house and burn it down." Young loaded his wife, four children, and a few belongings into a wagon and immediately left for Far West.[109] This incident shows the motive of preemptive strikes at the two non-Mormon centers in the region. John Corrill, a reluctant member of the Mormon forces in Daviess County, said that the understood goal was "not only to scatter the mob, but also to destroy those places that harbored them; that Gallatin and Millport were of that number, that . . . they meant to confine themselves to the mob characters in their plunderings."[110]

Gallatin was and is the county seat, and Millport was nearby, across the Grand River. Both were still small settlements in a new county. John D. Lee said that Gallatin had "about ten houses, three of which were saloons," but there was also a store and tailor shop.[111] Millport was even smaller, but Chapman Duncan infiltrated the camp there and learned from the guards that three hundred irregulars had come from the Carroll County siege.[112] Mormon rangers from Adam-ondi-Ahman burned buildings in both places. About five hundred Mormons gathered in Daviess County, and their aggressive operations evidently caused the paralegals to retire. But the countryside could not be guarded, so Mormon squads evacuated those who had not already gathered to Adam-ondi-Ahman or to the southern area around Far West. Emergency conditions suspended the writing of Church records and many journals, so datable details are hard to find. Joseph Smith mentions with feeling how "a number whose houses were burned down" came to Adam-ondi-Ahman, in addition to others vulnerable because of remote locations.[113] These late Daviess County conditions fit Nathan Tanner's recollection of his rescue assignment:

> Then the mob gathered and burned houses and drove the Saints out in the night from one place to another. I have picked up women and children that were skulking in the night in the brush to save their lives, or keep out of the hands of the mob. We were obliged to go and fetch in the families that were scattered, or in the out settlements, and guard those we could not fetch until they could be brought out.[114]

In the later excitement after the Crooked River battle, exaggerated reports flew through upper Missouri. For a few days there were widespread fears of a Mormon invasion of surrounding counties. During this time, Atchison and Doniphan jointly wrote: "The Mormons have robbed and burned every house in Daviess but one or two."[115] But neither general had been in Daviess County after the Mormon counteractions. John Corrill reported rumors of cabins burned by Mormons: "some say eighty, and some say one hundred and fifty."[116] If Corrill's highest figure were true, that would be 30 percent of the dwellings, since Atchison's 20 September letter to the governor enumerates about five hundred households: "there are about two hundred and fifty Mormon families in Daviess County, nearly one half of the population." But aside from the two dozen structures burned in the Gallatin-Millport area, no one can give an accurate figure. Reed Peck's friend saw thirty blackened remains in a day's ride through the county, but merely counting charred chimneys would not distinguish between settlers' cabins and Mormon dwellings fired by opponents.[117] The claim that all homes were destroyed is not true, since accounts like Benjamin Johnson's indicate that houses were searched and not damaged or were found deserted and still standing. The preemptive strikes south of

Adam-ondi-Ahman were intentionally destructive, but it appears that any burning elsewhere was selective.

Non-Mormon families in Daviess County were dispossessed during the last half of October, but careful history should not adopt the Propaganda that Mormons indiscriminately burned out Daviess County. For instance, Benjamin Johnson tells of razing for security. His company rode to destroy "arms and ammunition . . . held for the use of the mob." A terrified householder was assured of personal safety and told his dwellings might remain—if there was no cache of weapons "stored there . . . we should leave them as we found them." But arms were discovered, and they sent the family away on their horses, burning the place used as a base of operations.[118] But Nathan Tanner commanded a squad that found the buried Carroll County cannon and cartridges for it under the floor slabs of a nearby house, which was not burned.[119] Non-Mormons left statements that they were asked to leave their houses but mentioned no burning or returned to find them still standing.[120] It is risky to make generalizations now or to accept uncritically all those made at the time.

Vacant dwellings and fields were an invitation to necessity, for the economy of the region was shut down, with Adam-ondi-Ahman swollen to a thousand inhabitants and early snows covering October fields, many unharvested. Survival required taking what was available, a reality only understandable in the light of accounts of Mormons who barely escaped from their homes and were barred from returning to get either possessions or crops. Johnson recalled how "foraging companies" returned with "whatever we could find, without regard to ownership . . . corn, beef, cattle, hogs, bee stands, chickens, etc."[121] He insists that they were not "common robbers"; instead, they were prevented from getting to their own supplies and therefore "took by reprisal that with which to keep from starvation our women and children."[122]

Some personal accounts question whether this foraging was carried beyond necessity, and such countermeasures caused several prominent Mormons to desert at the end of October. Joseph Smith is repeatedly quoted as justifying securing emergency supplies but not personal enrichment. For instance, John D. Lee said the Prophet allowed "spoil to subsist on during the war, but he did despise this little, petty stealing."[123] One could remain faithful, as Harlow Redfield did, and still hold the view that protecting the Daviess territory was finally carried out by Wight and others with excess. Redfield received a vote of approval in his position on the high council after confessing continuing faith "notwithstanding he did not feel to fellowship all the proceedings of the brethren in Daviess County."[124] Yet the policies behind those skirmishes were defensive, and personal effects taken were to be held in trust for the needy. Bishop Vincent Knight controlled materials

brought into the storehouse at Adam-ondi-Ahman and four months later summarized the mid-October events to a nonmember friend in New York:

> I would not have you think that all that the Mormons have done is exactly right, but when men are pushed as were the Mormons they will do almost anything to save their lives and the lives of their families. . . . There is not a Mormon in this Church that has had a better chance to know the minds of the leading men than I have, and I do know that they would let the Missourians alone had they been let alone.[125]

When the Mormons took control of Daviess County, Atchison was still a hundred miles away at Boonville on the governor's strange assignment. In previous letters he had insisted that unless there were stronger executive action mobs would continue to pressure the Mormons, and that the Mormons possessed an "unalterable determination not to be driven." Just before the relief march to Adam-ondi-Ahman, Atchison told the governor that with his passive policy he might as well remove the militia so the parties could "fight it out."[126] After such predictable events, Atchison returned to Liberty and wrote to the state capital with continued indignation that inaction was rapidly bringing the unjust banishment of Mormon citizens. Field Generals Doniphan and Parks continued to agree with Atchison that a Mormon persecution was in progress, even though they were shocked by the vigorous responses in Daviess County. Parks updated Atchison on 21 October, reporting that he had been in Adam-ondi-Ahman the previous week to see five hundred armed Mormons, two hundred of whom were mounted. He reiterated their determination not to be "driven from that place," adding that they had struck back and were "now the aggressors." He also reviewed how he and Doniphan were forced to dismiss the militia because their men "intended to act against Adam-ondi-Ahman." He said that calling more regional troops would do nothing unless in massive force "to fright the Mormons and drive them from the country. This would satisfy the people, but I cannot agree to it."[127]

On the basis of such reports, General Atchison wrote Governor Boggs on 22 October, outlining the damage done by both sides in Daviess County, including the Mormon raids on Millport and Gallatin, and adding his evaluation: "It seems that the Mormons have become desperate, and act like mad-men." He put the burden of action on the governor with the reminder that regional militia was now unreliable because tied closely to the anti-Mormon groups. While criticizing what he regarded as their excessive countermeasures, Atchison still retained the perspective that the Mormons were citizens and that the government had silently become a party to their expulsion:

> I do not feel disposed to disgrace myself, or permit the troops under my command to disgrace the State and themselves by acting the part of a mob. If the

> Mormons are to be driven from their homes, let it be done without any color of law and in open defiance thereof; let it be done by volunteers acting upon their own responsibilities.[128]

**Atchison's Removal**

The next event in the conflict wrested the initiative from Atchison and destroyed his hopes of moderation. On 23 October, Captain Bogart wrote Atchison that he had marched his company through Ray County to the southern line of Mormon Caldwell, in order to repel any Mormon "outrage," closing with his paralegal reminder to the general: "I learn that the people of Ray are going to take the law into their own hands, and put an end to the Mormon War."[129] Peter Burnett, Atchison's friend who would soon be Mormon counsel in the Richmond hearing, said that the general ratified the border patrol to "preserve the peace between the people of the two counties." [130]On 23 October, Atchison authorized Bogart to prevent "any invasion of Ray County by any persons in arms whatever" and ordered him to keep the general informed on" the state of things in Daviess County." Atchison obviously did not expect trouble, since he closed, "I will endeavor to be with you in a few days, etc."[131]

The sequel is well known in Mormon history. Burnett, a militia member close to the Liberty generals, told how Bogart managed his defensive assignment:

> But Captain Bogart was not a very discreet man, and his men were of much the same character. Instead of confining himself and his men within the limits of his own county, he marched one day into the edge of Caldwell, and was not only rather rude to the Mormons residing there, but arrested one or two of them, whom he detained for some little time.[132]

The Mormon militia was immediately sent with the purpose of freeing hostages and repelling an assumed invasion. The Battle of Crooked River followed, where some men were killed or seriously wounded on both sides, and in these circumstances the Mormons were unfortunate enough to be victorious. As magnified rumors of the clash spread, Ray County leaders panicked and sent the governor emergency calls for help to prevent wholesale slaughter and the burning of Ray County cities.[133] But Mormon sources show no intention of invading Ray County—only the intent to defend their own county from mobs.

For whatever reason, Governor Boggs had no difficulty prejudging the Mormon menace. As chief executive, he had an immediate responsibility for protecting the public peace. Why did he not feel the same urgency on earlier occasions when Mormons sent desperate calls for protection? Given his perception of imminent invasion and bloodshed, the situation required firm use of police power to restore peace. But Governor Boggs used an

extreme remedy without hearing from both sides, which suggests that he had already made up his mind on the problem and its political solution. He adopted the slogans long used by private regulators in every problem county: Mormons "must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace."[134]

At this point General Atchison still held military jurisdiction over the area of conflict. Assuming the danger of the Mormons invading Ray County, and no doubt the reverse possibility, he joined with the commanding general of the next militia district to remind the governor that his presence was "absolutely necessary." But this 28 October appeal made no impact, since Governor Boggs had issued the Extermination Order the day before. Atchison was evidently out of contact with Mormon leaders when he moved to "keep them in check" three days after the Crooked River battle. Both he and Lucas were major generals and wrote from their Ray County headquarters: "From late outrages committed by the Mormons, civil war is inevitable. They have set the laws of the country at defiance and are in open rebellion."[135]

Such language does not show that Atchison turned against the Mormons as much as that he was consistently on the side of legal solutions throughout this conflict. To the extent that their late tactics exceeded the law, he could not justify them. On the other hand, Atchison continued to believe that they were victimized by the lawlessness of those who drove them out of Carroll County and began to repeat the process in Daviess County. His views on the Mormon crisis are condensed in the request that he and Doniphan made to the federal commander at nearby Fort Leavenworth. Writing two days after the Crooked River battle, Atchison and Doniphan requested additional small arms to leave in their communities as the able men took weapons in the militia campaign against the Mormons. They added a summary of the causation, which emerges as an essential statement because it was written by the generals best informed on both Mormon and citizen actions up to the time of the Crooked River engagement:

> The citizens of Daviess, Carroll, and some other northern counties have raised mob after mob for the last two months for the purpose of driving a community of fanatics (called Mormons) from those counties and from the State. Those things have at length goaded the Mormons into a state of desperation that has now made them aggressors instead of acting on the defensive. This places the citizens of this whole community in the unpleasant attitude that the civil and decent part of the community have now to engage in war to arrest a torrent that has been let loose by a cowardly mob, and from which they have dastardly fled on the first show of danger.[136]

Though public opinion and the governor's Extermination Order would not allow it, the Mormons needed negotiation, not subjugation. After a day of adjusting to the shock of facing state militia, Mormon leaders surrendered

without a shot. Atchison was senior field officer as the army marched from Richmond to Far West, but he surrendered command when word reached him that Clark of Howard County had been placed in charge of state troops. However, the new commander did not arrive on the scene until after Lucas and Doniphan had accepted the surrender of Far West. While finalizing terms, Doniphan first read the Extermination Order, which directed his operations. As lawyers, he and Atchison would have similar reactions. Doniphan later said, "In my report to Governor Boggs I stated to him that I had disregarded that part of his order, as the age of extermination was over, and if I attempted to remove them to some other state it would only cause additional trouble."[137]

Did General Atchison leave the field in protest over the governor's illegal command? Evidently not. Instead he was removed from command because he had previously insisted on constitutional principles. Commentators have puzzled over Atchison's "seemingly unnecessary withdrawal from the conflict," but he clearly was dismissed.[138] His personal feelings about the release crop up in General Clark's boot-licking comment to the governor: "I regret exceedingly to learn that any acts of yours should create any heart burnings . . . to such an extent as I understand exists with General Atchison."[139] However, such emotions were not the cause of Atchison's withdrawal, according to all sources close to him. Atchison's pattern was to take Boggs's policies (or lack of them), make the best of them, and not eliminate his chance of tempering their result by quitting. Governor Boggs simply used characteristic indirection in dismissing him, later commenting that Atchison "was not ordered out" because he should be at the coming legislature, and because "there was much dissatisfaction manifested towards him by the people opposed to the Mormons."[140]

In the same letter Governor Boggs indicated that co-commander Lucas was not ordered out either, though he had the option to act in lesser rank and command the brigade authorized from his Jackson County district. The governor had issued two activation orders, one based on information from Daviess County and the stronger extermination directive after he heard of the Crooked River battle. Atchison's district was passed over, but Lucas's district was named, giving him a reason which Atchison did not have for continuing with the expedition.[141] According to Lucas, the two had led their forces some seven miles short of the Mormon capital when they received the two mobilizing orders of the governor:"atthis point Major General Atchison left me and returned home to Liberty."[142] An articulate aide of General Parks was in staff meetings then and wrote at the time: "General Atchison returned home, considering himself dismissed by the governor in appointing General Clark to the command." [143] This was 30 October, the day before Joseph Smith gave himself up as a hostage.

Fellow attorney Peter Burnett edited a Liberty newspaper and agrees with the other best sources: "General Atchison and his staff returned home, having considered himself virtually ordered from the field by General Boggs."[144]

The general who saved Joseph Smith's life added details within this framework. When later requesting Mormon leaders to help his former aide get established in business, Doniphan said that Atchison asked him to remain as an influence for fair treatment of the Mormons:

> I commanded a brigade from Clay under General Atchison. When in Caldwell and about to open negotiations, General Atchison received an order from Governor Boggs requiring him to yield up the command to General Lucas. Thereupon Atchison withdrew and retired home. And feeling indignant at the treatment of our Major General, I should also have retired, had I not been persuaded by General Atchison and others that by remaining I might save the effusion of blood and much arising. We did remain, and I feel assured that every family then resident of the county will bear witness that we did save much suffering and spared no pains to prevent much that did occur.[145]

**Atchison's Accuracy and Stature**

Strong sentiment in Clay County supported Atchison, despite Governor Boggs's dismissal. Peter Burnett's *Far West* insisted that the governor "has done himself very little credit by so illiberal a course of procedure."[146] Not only was friendship expressed, but also approval of Atchison's Mormon policies:

> There will be a dinner given to General Atchison on Monday next at the Liberty Hotel, a tribute of the high regard and esteem entertained for his personal character, and his meritorious and prudent course in the late difficulties with the Mormons. The citizens of this and the surrounding counties are respectfully invited.[147]

Mormon militia officer Philo Dibble said that Atchison spoke in the "public dinner" in Liberty, threatening the governor if he did not "restore my commission." If this remark is reported accurately, the meaning is ambiguous. But the physical reaction to Atchison's speech is no doubt accurate: "On hearing this the audience became so enthusiastic that they took him upon their shoulders and carried him around the public square."[148]

Atchison the soldier returned to practice law and serve his term in the state legislature, where he was no longer subordinate to the governor. As in the militia letters, constitutionalism was still his theme. He proposed a bill to remove the trial of Mormon leaders to "some circuit where prejudices against them do not exist."[149] He vigorously argued for a thorough legislative investigation that would expose all wrongs:

> In the course of this debate, Mr. Atchison, who was for having an immediate investigation, alluded to the Governor's order to General Clark, requiring him to exterminate or expel the Mormons from the state, if necessary for its

> peace and safety. This order he looked upon as unconstitutional, and he wished to have an expression of the Legislature upon it. If the Governor of the state, or any other power, had the authority to issue such orders, he wished to know it, for if so, he would not live in any state where such authority was given.[150]

Since history is ill-equipped to speculate, it is impossible to determine whether Mormon rights to live in Missouri could have been preserved by giving Atchison firmer support in early October or keeping him in command to negotiate peace at the end of that month. But he should be recognized as the commanding officer who kept the courts functioning, minimized violence, and protected the Mormons from deportation in Daviess County. His explanation of the causes of the Mormon troubles is broader than that of General Clark and Governor Boggs because Atchison insisted on ultimate instead of immediate causation. Clark's speech at the surrender of Far West was taken down and circulated soon afterward:

> You have always been the aggressors. You have brought upon yourselves these difficulties by being disaffected and not being subject to rule. And my advice is, that you become as other citizens, lest by a reoccurrence of these events you bring upon yourselves irretrievable ruin.[151]

Governor Boggs took the same short-term view in his Extermination Order, referring to the Crooked River battle two days before:

> I have received . . . information of the most appalling character, which entirely changes the face of things, and places the Mormons in the attitude of an open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this state.[152]

One can ask analytically, not politically, why lawful militia defending Caldwell County were any less "the people of this State" than the contingent they clashed with that was defending Ray County. One can ask why only Latter-day Saints were guilty of "defiance of the laws," though preventing them from voting or holding land in Daviess and Carroll counties was not labeled the same. The final conflict "entirely changes the face of things." But should Mormon resistance in a two-week period have outweighed aggression against the Mormons during the previous two months? The governor's two orders were only reasoned from the most recent events. Within this limited scope, the argument went that Mormons were aggressive and caused their own downfall. But going beyond this chopped logic, what caused them to be aggressive?

Civil violence is not unlike domestic violence, for the party who initiates it will likely rationalize that he was incited to anger by the words or hostility or habits of the other. But social and religious tension is no justification for a factional war. Atchison's letters take the long view of causation. Instead of two weeks of October, his reports to the governor began

six weeks before that, when threatened Daviess Saints were acting on the "defensive" and "much alarmed." In midperiod, naked force emerged in Carroll "for the purpose of driving the Mormons from that county." The same week that Mormons began systematic defensive operations, Atchison reviewed the "spirit of mob and misrule" that had eroded their confidence in Missouri law "for the last two months."[153]

Atchison's letters contain an informed perspective for the 1838 Mormon conflict, distilled in the Atchison-Doniphan request for small arms from Fort Leavenworth: first "mob after mob" was raised against the Caldwell-Daviess Mormons by northern Missouri regulators; afterward the Mormons decided to meet force with force. Clark and Boggs *insisted* that the Mormons must be expelled from the state because they used arms against citizens. But Atchison and Doniphan reversed the reasoning—the Mormons finally used arms because they resisted being thrust again from their counties.

Instead of the "Mormon fault" theory of Clark and Boggs, Atchison and Doniphan, who had experienced earlier events, gave an explanation of sequential response. Even if we were to modify "Mormon fault" to be "mutual fault," it would still miss the mark, for Mormons first sought peaceful solutions to repeated efforts to expel them. Their efforts at compromise, at surrender and evacuation, or at seeking administrative and judicial relief did not maintain their rights of residence. Their final choice of self-defense came after exhausting all other remedies. It came after appeals to regional and state authorities failed to prevent their ejection from Carroll County. And while they finally used extreme resistance strategy, these counteractions were really not central in their banishment from Missouri. Even before the burning of Gallatin and the attack on Bogart's company, the vocal segment of upper Missouri was already organized, demanding Mormon exile from the state, and had the momentum of events to accomplish it, including the passive cooperation of Governor Boggs.

Mormon defensive operations began because they believed the clear statements of intention of the citizen-volunteers after their Carroll County victory. General Atchison interpreted anti-Mormon intentions similarly when he told the governor that the cannon and many paralegal patriots were headed to Daviess County, where it was expected that Mormons would "bedriven from that county, and probably from Caldwell County."[154] A member of the non-Mormon arbitration team at De Witt gave the same view after conversing with older citizens. The latter would now keep their pledge "to assist any county who assisted them." Thus the Mormons headed for their own county would not find security, since "the adjoining counties to Caldwell will never be contented until they leave the State."[155] Carroll regulators marched north and released two prisoners with a

promise: "they meant to drive the Mormons from Daviess to Caldwell, and from Caldwell to hell."[156]

Atchison was in regular contact with the anti-Mormon forces and believed that they had the intention and capacity to drive the Latter-day Saints from upper Missouri—prior to the Mormon counteraction that sought to prevent it. Mormon leaders made the same informed judgment: they could choose to do nothing and be expelled or choose to resist and give their enemies the excuse to drive them out in the name of defending the state. Of course the latter happened, with the administrators of expulsion explaining that the Mormons were being justly punished.

It is a truism that both sides contribute to misunderstanding in a dispute, but that view of the 1838 expulsion does not reach the real historical issues. An episodic view of these events is a mistake, as though "chance might so easily have given events a happier turn."[157] Upper Missouri society might have tolerated quiet minorities in small numbers, but the Latter-day Saints had a powerful program of conversion and gathering. Moreover, the Mormon center shifted from Ohio to Missouri at the beginning of 1838. All Missouri tensions that year really reflect the heavy migration and unlimited prospect of more. The removal of the Carroll County Mormons was only a reminder of this unsolved problem, for Captain Bogart complained to the governor that the Mormons at De Witt "were mostly Canadians," a phrase meant to suggest several things, one of which was the specter of immigration.[158] An irritating reminder was the Canadian group of John E. Page, arriving at De Witt" the first week of October, with a company occupying thirty wagons."[159] Such arrivals were regular in Latter-day Saint centers that fall. Albert P. Rockwood wrote from Far West at the same time: "Emigration to the west is quite fast; every day witnesses about 30 teams."[160]

Both sides realized then that moving Mormons from one county to another was no longer possible. A thousand new Mormons arriving in September and October did more to strengthen anti-Mormon resolve than the symptomatic skirmishing in Daviess County. No Mormon pacifism or diplomacy would change the fundamental problem. The migration that threatened to shift control of Jackson County in 1833 cast a dark shadow on a whole region in 1838. The mutual suspicions, provocations, misconceptions, and skirmishes were all stage props in a drama pitting a Missouri Mormon population that increased from one thousand to ten thousand in five years against a traditional society resistant to cultural and religious differences. This central source of tension explains why Mormon provocations, whether slight or serious, were immediately acted upon with intensity and without sustained negotiations.

In these conflicts, Atchison managed to cause some dissatisfaction among both non-Mormons and Mormons, an indication of his independent position.

In the frustration of his long imprisonment at Liberty, Joseph Smith saw Atchison as an obstacle to justice: "I would just name also that General Atchison has proved himself to be as contemptible as any of them. We have tried for a long time to get our lawyers to draw us some petitions to the supreme judges of this State, but they utterly refused." [161] Although the context here is the failure of justice in the legislature, Atchison had in fact supported the Mormons there. The Prophet is evidently complaining that Atchison and other Liberty attorneys should have long since made some sort of appeal to give him a chance at freedom. Atchison may have made a procedural judgment, whereas the Prophet was concerned with justice. Perhaps Joseph Smith misconceived the power of the Missouri Supreme Court. He was bound over for trial that winter, and his case had to be decided before appeal could be taken. And clemency would have to come from the executive.

Was the ultimate cruelty of Liberty Jail receiving false information that the Prophet's Missouri friends had turned against him? Whether a planted rumor or exaggerated statement, it came to Joseph at the end of imprisonment that General Atchison had joined in the regional outcry that the prisoners should die: "This is according to the information I have received, which I suppose to be true."[162] But this report is corrected by Heber C. Kimball's comments on visiting Andrew Hughes and other members of the Clay County bar in order to get legal assistance for Joseph Smith and the other "brethren" in Liberty Jail. In his early memoirs Heber wrote of the attitude of these lawyers two weeks after the above statement of Joseph Smith:

> There were several men in Liberty who were very friendly to the brethren. I called on them when I went there, and they treated me with great civility. Among these were General Doniphan and Atchison and the keeper of the tavern where I put up at. . . . Those men whom I have named and several others revolted at the scenes enacted against the Mormons.[163]

Atchison still was sympathetic when Heber C. Kimball and Lyman Wight visited him in Washington, D.C., in 1844. He mildly encouraged their congressional petition for Missouri losses, but added that they should not ignore the courts. The report of these veterans of the expulsion indicated that Senator Atchison still felt the Mormons had been victims of injustice in 1838: "General Atchison is of the opinion if we could sue the State of Missouri for redress of grievances, that there was virtue enough in the State to answer our demands, 'for,' said he, 'they are ashamed of their conduct.'"[164]

In Nauvoo Joseph Smith did not list Atchison among the officers who were the "leading characters in the unparalleled persecutions against the Church of Latter Day Saints."[165] And Hyrum Smith also paid Atchison the same compliment of eliminating him from the list of leaders who brought about the Mormon expulsion—Atchison was not one who violated "the Constitution and laws of the State of Missouri."[166] Indeed, Mormons at

that time realized that there were others besides Alexander Doniphan who understood their plight and sought to protect the rights of a minority with unpopular beliefs. Eliza R. Snow not only described how Alexander Doniphan had saved Joseph Smith from an illegal firing squad, but she added that other Missourians deserved to be recognized as moral heroes in the expulsions of 1838: "There are those who, actuated by the spirit of republicanism and without any partiality to the religious views of our society, have risked their reputation and endangered their lives by pleading the cause of the innocent."[167] One addition to Doniphan in this select group is his law associate and military commander, David Rice Atchison.

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Richard Llyod Anderson is a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University and associate editor of *BYU Studies.*

1. David R. Atchinson to Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, Liberty, Mo., 22 October 1838, in *Document,* 42.

2. See, for example, the *Kansas City Daily Journal interview,* 12 June 1881, where he gave religious bigotry and opposition to suspected abolitionism as the main causes of aggression against a people who in the main were "law abiding citizens."

3. Samuel Bogart to Governor Boggs, Elk Horn, Ray County, Mo., 13 October 1838, in *Document* 42.

4. See chaps. 4–15 of William E. Parrish, *David Rice Atchison of Missouri: Border Politician* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1961).

5. Peter Burnett, *Recollections of an Old Pioneer* (New York: D. Appleton, 1880), 76, 80–81.

6. These Alexander W. Doniphan quotations come from his biography of Atchison in the *History of Clinton County, Missouri* (St. Joseph, Mo.: National Historical Co., 1881), 441–42. See also Atchison's obituary by J. T. Child in the *Richmond Conservator,* 28 January 1886: "a mind well stored with literary lore."

7. See the summary of Atchison's early life in the prologue of the scholarly Parrish biography. See also biographical summaries published in Atchison's lifetime by Doniphan in the *History of Clinton County, Missouri* and by Walter Bickford Davis and Daniel S. Durrie in *An Illustrated History of Missouri* (St. Louis: A.J. Hall, 1876), 466.

8. Wood, Rees, Doniphan, and Atchison to the Missouri LDS Leaders, 30 October 1833, in *Times and Seasons* 6 (1 May 1845): 881; also cited in Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church o f Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1946–50), 1:425 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church).*JosephSmith's comments precede the letter in both locations. The spelling of "Rees" follows his own.

9. Amos Reed to Governor Daniel Dunklin, Liberty, Mo., postscipt to letter of 29 November 1833, in *Times and Seasons* 6 (1 June 1845): 913; also cited in *History of the Church* 1:448.

10. W. W. Phelps to Kirtland LDS Leaders, 27 February 1834, *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (March 1834): 139; also cited in *History of the Church* 1:481–82.

11. See Peter Crawley and Richard L. Anderson, "The Political and Social Relaties of Zion's Camp," *Brigham Young University Studies*14 (Summer 1974): 406–20.

12. "Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (15 March 1845): 838. Compare George A. Smith, "Memoirs," 24 June 1834, typescript, 24, Harold B. Lee

Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah: on the upper Fishing River "we were met by General Atchison and other gentlemen, who informed us the people of Liberty were very much excited."

13. "Public Meeting," *Far West* (Liberty, Mo.), in *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2 (August 1836): 353–55, 358–61; also cited in *History of the Church* 2:448–55.

14. Journal of Don Carlos Smith, in Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith* (Liverpool: Orson Pratt, 1853), 283–85. Supplemental details are given in Smith, "Memoirs," 50–51. The latter explains why Atchison would leave the scene of conflict though he was commander of the military district: "These military chieftains were summoned by Governor Boggs to attend a court martial to be held at Columbia for the trial of Major General Powell, who was charged with having been drank on parade." The trial was evidently held at nearby Boonville, since the letters of Atchison and Lucas originate there from 4 October through 16 October. See n. 72.

15. William F. Switzler, quoted in Walter B. Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri,* 6 vols. (St. Louis: S. J. Clarke, 1921), 2:832. Compare the personal memorial by J. T. Child in the *Richmond Conservator,* 28 January 1886: "a form of majestic mould."

16. W. M. Paxton, *Annals of Platte County, Missouri* (Kansas City: Hudson-Kimberly, 1897), 53.

17. See n. 4. This account of the remainder of Atchison's life depends upon the detailed narrative and documentation in the final chapters of Parrish.

18. Atchison to Davis, 24 September 1854, State Historical Society of Missouri, Manuscripts, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.; also cited in Parrish, David Rice Atchison, 164.

19. Parrish, *David Rice Atchison,* 164. For his operational influence against violence see Ibid., 200–202 and 205–7.

20. David R. Atchison to William Atchison et al., 12 August 1865, cited in Parrish, *David Rice Atchison,* 220–21.

21. Cited in Parrish, *David Rice Atchison,* 23.

22. *Congressional* Globe, 34th Congress, 1st Session, 546; also cited in Parrish, *David Rice Atchison,* 197.

23. Events are narrated with documents in chaps. 27–31 of vol. 1 of *History of the Church.*

24. B. Pixley to Editors of the New York *Observer,* Independence, Mo, 7 November 1833, cited in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, *Among the Mormons* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), 81–83.

25. Richard L. Bushman saw this basic issue as common to the major nineteenth-century persecutions of the Mormon people in his "Mormon Persecutions in Missouri, 1833," *BYU Studies* 3 (Autumn 1960): 11–20.

26. Report of meeting of 20 July 1833, Independence, Mo., *Missouri lntelligencer* (Columbia, Mo.), 10 August 1833; also cited in Mulder and Mortensen, *Among the Mormons,* 78–79; a related version is in *History of the Church* 1:396–97.

27. In the 1830 census Jackson County had a population of 2,823 and an estimated population in 1836 of 4,522 (see Alphonso Wetmore, *Gazetteer of the State of Missouri* [St. Louis: C. Keemle, 1837], 267). The percentage figure is based on 1,200 Jackson Mormons in 1833 (see n. 26) and an estimate of about 3,800 total population then. For cultural-religious conflict, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Jackson County in Early Mormon Descriptions," *Missouri Historical Review* 65 (April 1971): 270–93.

28. Compare "The History of Thomas Baldwin Marsh" (1857), *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 26 (1864): 391. Recalling his presentation to the Clay County committee, Marsh recounts: "I was appointed by said committee, spokesman, and was enabled

to speak so feelingly in relation to our previous persecutions and expulsions, that General Atchison could not refrain from shedding tears."

29. *Far West,* cited in *Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2 (August 1836): 354; also cited in *History of the Church* 2:449–50.

30. John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (St. Louis: Privately printed, 1839), 19.

31. Ibid., 26.

32. Anderson Wilson and Emelia Wilson to Samuel Turrentine, Clay County, Mo, 4 July 1836, cited in Durward T. Stokes, ed., "The Wilson letters, 1835–1849," *Missouri Historical Review* 60 (July 1966): 504–8.

33. Ibid., 508. Wilson's addition has been corrected.

34. John Murdock, "An Abridged Record," typescript, 29, in Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). Compare Murdock, "Synopsis of My History," typescript, 165: "John Corrill and myself were appointed a committee to meet the people in Richmond and intercede with them for the privilege to go to Shoal Creek."

35. John Corrill and John Murdock, Report of the Committee, 30 July 1836, Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, LDS Church Archives; also cited in Journal History, 30 July 1836.

36. *Kansas City Daily* Journal, 12 June 1881.

37. Alexander Doniphan to William W. Phelps, Jefferson City, Mo., 8 January 1837, LDS Church Archives.

38. *Kansas City Daily Journal*, 12 June 1881.

39. "Motto of the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints," in George W. Robinson, "The Scriptory Book of Joseph Smith, Jr., President of The Church of Jesus Christ in All the World," 16, LDS Church Archives; also cited in *History of the Church* 3:9.

40. *Oration Delivered by Mr. S. Rigdon, on the 4th of July, 1838* (Far West: Journal Office, 1838), 12; reprinted in Peter Crawley, "Two Rare Missouri Documents," *BYU Studies* 14 (Summer 1974): 527.

41. Ibid.

42. Editorial statement, 14 September 1838, *Western Star* (Liberty, Mo.), cited in *Missouri Argus* (St. Louis, Mo.), 27 September 1838, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as BYU).

43. Corrill, *A Brief History,* 28.

44. See the Black statement in *History of the Church* 3:60. Black's testimony at Joseph Smith's 7 September hearing confirmed the basic contents of his agreement to treat the Mormons lawfully (see *Document,* 162).

45. *Document,* 162.

46. *Boonville Emigrant,* 13 September 1838, cited in *Missouri Republican Daily* (St. Louis), 19 September 1838. This and other newspaper articles cited are conveniently found in the typescript collection of newspaper articles entitled "Mormons in Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri," Special Collections, BYU.

47. See the proceedings of public meetings in Independence on 4 and 8 September 1838 printed in the *Southern Advocate* (Jackson, Mo.), 29 September 1838. They met to consider "an express, from a committee of Daviess Co. under date of the 29th Aug., 1838." Resolutions were made to send help "when called on by proper authority," though men were asked to travel to Daviess County the following Monday without a legal order of the militia.

48. Robinson, "Scriptory Book," 27 July 1838, 61.

49. Ibid., 67.

50. The purported Atchison letter exists in the LDS Church Archives only in photocopy and was acquired in 1981, as the Hofmann forgeries began to appear. In form it is D. R. Atchison to Joseph Smith, 1 September 1838, but the writing differs from Atchison's informal handscript, which is angular and assertive, with heavy vertical strokes. However, the supposed Atchison-Joseph Smith document has more flourishes and is more rounding, though it appears to be an intelligent attempt to copy many of Atchison's characters. The document is accepted without comment in Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 79.

51. Robinson, "Scriptory Book," 2 September 1838, 77–78.

52. "Philo Dibble's Narrative," in *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 88.

53. Robinson, "Scriptory Book," 78.

54. Ibid.

55. "Philo Dibble's Narrative," 88–89. LeSueur adds the imagined dramatic detail that Atchison's warning was given while "fingering his gun" (LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War,* 80–81). But his threat probably hinted at Mormon resources, including a contingent stationed nearby that would retaliate immediately. George A. Smith apparently refers only to the friends of Joseph at the trial itself: "Many of the brethren from Far West had accompanied Joseph and Hyrum, and concealed their arms in the woods, fearing treachery, as a great number of the mob were in attendance" ("Memoirs," 48). However, William Moore Allred was part of a Caldwell County rescue mission: "On the seventh of September previous to this, Joseph yeas put on trial in Daviess Co., and we heard that a mob was collecting to take him, so a company of us went out to lay in ambush near the court, in case we were needed. . . . We lay in ambush till night, and Joseph was discharged, and we returned home" (Journal, photocopy, 5, LDS Church Archives).

56. General Atchison to the Governor, Richmond, Mo., 15 September 1838, in *Document,* 19 (no signature).

57. Warren Foote, Autobiography, typescript, 24, BYU.

58. Doniphan to Atchison, Grand River, Mo., 15 September 1838, in *Document,* 24–25. See *History of the Church* 3:78–79 for a copy of the whole letter.

59. Foote, Autobiography, 12 September 1838, 24.

60. Atchison to the Governor, Grand River, 17 September 1838, in *Document,* 26. See *History of the Church* 3:80–81 for a copy of the whole letter. For Atchison's tactics with the irregulars in the first Daviess operations, see Sidney Rigdon's testimony in the 1843 Nauvoo hearing: "And General Atchison said, in my presence, that he took the following singular method to disperse them. He organized them with his troops as part of the militia called out to suppress and arrest the mob. After having thus organized them, he discharged them and all the rest of the troops, as having no further need for their services, and all returned home" *(Times and Seasons* 4 [15 July 1843]: 271; see also *History of the Church* 3:454).

61. Doniphan to Major B. Holladay, Liberty, Mo., 5 April 1850, LDS Church Archives. For Holladay's colorful career in the West and afterward see Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography,* 11 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), 5:141–42.

62. See n. 60.

63. Smith, "Memoirs," 49–50. The date comes from an abstract of the legal record, *Document,* 158, which is confirmed by Atchison's 17 September letter to the Governor (see n. 60).

64. Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo, 20 September 1838, in *Document,* 27. See *History of the Church* 3:81–82 for the first, middle, and last parts of this letter—printed without location of ellipses.

65. General H. G. Parks to the Governor, Millport, Mo., 25 September 1838, in *Document,* 32. See *History of the Church* 3:84 for part of this letter.

66. Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo. 27 September 1838, in *Document,* 34. See *History of the Church* 3:85 for the main part of this short letter. In narrating phase one of the Daviess County difficulties, Mormon dissenter Reed Peck said that some who went to defend Adam-ondi-Ahman told him they appropriated animals and honey from deserted homesteads. If so, this seems an exceptional case by individuals, since Atchison, Doniphan, and Parks all say that up to this point the Mormons were not lawbreakers. Possibly Peck confused the appropriations that took place in the open hostilities later (see Reed Peck, "Sketch of Mormon History," 1839, MS, 68–69, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.).

67. Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo., 23 September 1838, in *Document,* 31.

68. Parks to Atchison, Millport, Mo., 25 September 1838, in *Document,* 33, which also has Parks to the Governor, with a postscript giving the same caution. Compare n. 65.

69. For details on early public opposition, see Leland H. Gentry, *A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839* (Provo: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church Schools, 1965), 288ff.

70. Murdock, "Abridged Record," 30. Compare the High Council minutes, which have a 6 July entry noting Hinkle's move to De Witt, in Donald Q Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983), 197.

71. Mormon Petition, De Witt, Mo., 22 September 1838, in *Document,* 29–30. See *History of the Church* 3:82–83 for a copy.

72. The George A. Smith entry is critical in understanding Atchison's absence and was written to explain their emergency journey to border states to get money to buy out Daviess County settlers. George A. and Don Carlos Smith boarded at Richmond landing in Ray County: "We went on board the Kansas Steamer, September 30th, taking a deck passage at $4.00 and helped to wood. We soon found that the cabin contained a big swarm of mobocrats. Major General Samuel Lucas, Brig. General Moses Wilson of Jackson County notoriety, and Colonel Thompson from Platte country were the most prominent among them. General D. R. Atchison of Clay was also on board. These military chieftains were summoned by Governor Boggs to attend a court-martial to be held at Columbia for the trial of Major General Powell, who was charged with having been drunk on parade. The boat stopped at De Witt, where we found about 70 saints surrounded by a mob of 200 men, who threatened their extermination the next day" (Smith, "Memoirs," 49–50). The report of Atchison's verbal defense of the Mormons follows, discussed in the text at n. 14. The trial was evidently at Boonville instead of Smith's nearby Columbia, since Atchison's letters to the governor come from Boonville on 5, 9, and 16 October *(Document,* 35–39). However, he wrote from his home at Liberty on 27 September and 22 October *(Document,* 34, 46). Lucas also wrote from Boonville on 4 October *(Document,* 34), saying that he had talked to the De Witt Mormon commander "as we passed down the Missouri River on Monday last," which was 1 October. So Atchison's absence is reconstructed by integrating the above dates. He left Liberty no later than 30 September and returned no earlier than 18 October, a critical absence of almost three weeks when the government lost its power to control the conflict in Carroll and Daviess counties. Compare nn. 14 and 166.

73. Parks to Atchison, near De Witt, Mo. 7 October 1838, in *Document,* 37. See *History of the Church* 3:156–57 for most of this letter.

74. Atchison to the Governor, 5 October 1838, in *Document,* 35.

75. Chariton County Committee Report, 5 October 1838, in *Document,* 36.

76. William E Dunnica to Editor, Glasgow, Mo., 7 October 1838, *Missouri Republican Daily,* 11 October 1838; also cited in Mulder and Mortensen, *Among the Mormons,* 99.

77. See n. 75.

78. Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo. 20 September 1838, in *Document,* 28. Compare n. 64.

79. Captain Samuel Bogart to the Governor, Elk Horn, Mo., 13 October 1838, in *Document,* 41–42. Compare a Carroll County resident's report that exaggerates casualties but shows the alliance between the irregulars and the militia: "There are 2 or 300 Mormons at De Witt. . . and nearly all the men of our county have been called out against them. . . . The militia have been called out to suppress the mob, but I believe they intend helping to kill them. They have taken a few shots and the report seems to be established that about 5 Mormons have been killed" (Edward Lampkin to Thomas Bradford, Carrollton, Mo, 14 October 1838, cited in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 11 [Winter 1978]: 115).

80. De Witt Citizens to Howard County Citizens, near De Witt, Mo. 7 October 1838, in *Document,* 40.

81. General Samuel D. Lucas to the Governor, Boonville, Mo, 4 October 1838, in *Document,* 34–35. See *History of the Church* 3:150 for a copy of this letter.

82. Albert P. Rockwood's first letter from Far West was written Saturday, 6 October, noting that two relief groups left Friday: Brunson and forty-two men in the morning, and "Friday another company started under Bro. Joseph." Rockwood had a report that Brunson's group had arrived at the time of his letter, though he says nothing more about Joseph Smith's group. The De Witt citizens also mention the arrival of two Mormon reserve groups at this time. Writing Sunday, 7 October, they noted the arrival of a hundred "two nights ago" and added: "About two hours ago the Mormons were reinforced by sixty-two mounted men, well armed, from Far West." BYU archivist David Whittaker shared his transcription of the Rockwood letter-journal held by the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

83. "Extract from the Private Journal of Joseph Smith, Jr.," *Times and Seasons* 1 (November 1839), 3; also cited in Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984), 435.

84. Compare Murdock, "Abridged Record," 34: "And for a month or two we had been importuning to the . . . Circuit Judge, and the Governor . . . and all hope of protection or right of citizenship failed us."

85. Corrill, *A Brief History,* 36: "This, the Governor has since told me, was a mistake, for. . . Gen. Atchison and other officers had full power to act when necessary, without an order from him."

86. The Governor to the House of Representatives, Jefferson City, Mo., 5 December 1838, in *Document,* 13.

87. John Taylor, *A Short Account of . . . Outrages Committed . . . upon the Latter Day Saints* (evidently published in 1839 in Illinois), 3–4.

88. Atchison to the Governor, Boonville, Mo., 9 October 1838, in *Document,* 38. This letter is not printed in the *History of the Church* but is important enough to reproduce in full from the above source:

Boonville, Oct. 9, 1838.

To the Commander-in-Chief:

> Sir:—Enclosed you will receive a communication from Gen. Parks, which I deem my duty to forward to your Excellency. I have required Gen. Doniphan with the troops from Clay, Clinton and the Platte, to co-operate with Gen. Parks; I have also instructed Parks to prevent armed Mormons from

marching to De Witt, and also to send back or take into custody, all the Mormons from Caldwell county, who may be found in arms in Carroll county; also to disperse all armed bands of citizens from other counties found in Carroll.

I have also suggested to Parks to urge it upon the Mormons in Carroll county to sell out and remove elsewhere, and also to urge the citizens to make the proposition to buy. I have no doubt but your Excellency, if you should deem it your duty to proceed to Carroll county, could restore peace. I would have forwarded this communication by express, but was informed that you were at St. Louis. It is therefore sent by mail. If you deem it necessary to proceed to Carroll county, I would respectfully suggest that it should be done as quick as possible,

I have the honor to be, &c.,
D. R. Atchison.

P.S. If your Excellency should deem it necessary to proceed to Carroll county, Boonville will be in your route, when it would give me great pleasure to see your Excellency, at which time I will be prepared to give all information as to the difficulties between the Mormons and citizens, as far as it could be obtained.

D.R.A.

89. Parks to Atchison, near De Witt, Mo., 7 October 1838, in *Document,* 38. See *History of the Church* 3:155–56 for part of this letter. How firm leadership might have aided the community conscience is illustrated by the wavering of a Carroll County resident, who wrote at the peak of prejudice after he marched on Far West. Before being mobilized in the militia, he volunteered in the private attack on De Witt: "I have until recently been disposed to pity all except the leaders—in them I never had any confidence. The mob which raised in this county some weeks since and drove those who had settled in a little place called De Witt, I did not at first approve of, but I finally believed they were right, and I joined in with them" (Arthur Bradford to Thomas Bradford, Carrollton, Mo., 13 November 1838, cited in *Dialogue* 11 [Winter 1978]: 115).

90. Atchison to the Governor, Boonville, Mo., 16 October 1838, in *Document,* 39. The 16 October letter is not in the *History of the Church* but is pivotal and reproduced here from the above source:

Boonville, Oct. 16, 1838.

To His Excellency, L. W. Boggs.

Sir:—From a communication received from Gen. Parks, I learn that the Mormons in Carroll county have sold out and left, consequently every thing is quiet there, but Parks reports that a portion of the men from Carroll county, with one piece of artillery, are on their march for Daviess county, where it is thought the same lawless game is to be played over, and the Mormons to be driven from that county and probably from Caldwell county. Nothing, in my opinion, but the strongest measures within the power of the Executive, will put down this spirit of mobocracy.

The troops ordered into the field, from Parks' report, partake, in a great degree, of the mob spirit, so that no reliance can be placed upon them; however, in this I believe Parks to be mistaken. I would respectfully suggest to your Excellency the propriety of a visit to the scene of excitement in person, or at all events, a strong proclamation. The state of things which have existed in

> the counties of Daviess and Carroll for the last two months, has been, in a high degree, ruinous to the public, and disgraceful to the State. I would again respectfully suggest strong measures to put down this spirit of mob and misrule, or permit them to fight it out. If your Excellency should conclude the latter expedient best calculated to produce quiet and restore order, issue an order to the Major General, 3d Division, to discharge the troops now engaged in that service.
>
> I have the honor, &c.,
> David R. Atchison.

91. Ibid.

92. Robinson, 1 September 1838, 75.

93. Ibid., 1 September 1838, 76.

94. Ibid., 9 September 1838, 82.

95. Ibid, 1 September 1838, 76.

96. Discourse of 12 May 1844, Thomas Bullock Report, in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1980), 367.

97. See Murdock, "Abridged Record," 34: "on the 13th, 14th, and 15th of Oct. the brethren arrived in Caldwell County." Compare Rockwood's letter-journal, 15 October 1838: "The brethren have all returned from De Witt."

98. Judge Austin A. King to the Governor, Richmond, Mo, 24 October 1838, in *Document,* 53.

99. Bogart to the Governor, Elk Horn, Mo, 13 October 1838, in *Document,* 42. Compare nn. 154–56.

100. Foote, Autobiography, 24.

101. Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," *The Return* 1 (December 1889): 189.

102. Rockwood, retrospective entry in letter of 29 October 1838.

103. Sampson Avard, testimony at Richmond hearing, November 1838, in *Document,* 99. Compare the text in this article at n. 45.

104. Foote, Autobiography, 24–25.

105. "Extract from. . . Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons 1* (November 1839): 4; also in Jessee, *Personal Writings,* 436–37.

106. Foote and other sources indicate that the relief expedition started at the beginning of the week of 15 October. Rockwood's letter of 29 October 1838 sequences earlier events, noting 23 October that 130 cavalry from the reinforcing expedition returned "last night, 7 o'clock."

107. A new study leaves the impression at several points that serious violence to the Mormons came after their military actions in Daviess County, but the opposite is true—Mormon actions there responded to serious expulsion threats of the kind just carried out in Carroll County. Moreover, they were reported by responsible people in touch with the public defenders operating against the Mormons: see nn. 154–56. LeSueur's *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* inverts sequence twice in trying to document attacks on Mormons in retaliation for the Mormon initiative in Daviess County, which began when Caldwell reinforcements arrived on 16 October. The first case is the harassing of William H. Walker's immigrant group (LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War,* 128), but Walker says that their harsh warning was received before Daviess hostilities: "About the 15th we were surrounded by a mob while travelling. . . and robbed of all their firearms and ammunitions." The second case is that of the formidable anti-Mormon Cornelius Gilliam, who supposedly "later cited the Mormon depredations in Daviess County as the reason why he called out his regiment" (LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War*, 129). But

Gilliam's rationalizing Missouri Senate speech simply says that he saw families dispossessed, not that his self-mustered local unit was called up after that (see the *Missouri Argus* [St. Louis], 15 February 1839, microfilm, BYU). Gilliam's daughter is quoted (ibid.) for the proposition that their relatives had been burned out by Mormons and her father's overdone campaign was retaliation. But that tradition hardly reaches historical standards—Martha was born the year after the Mormon expulsion, and her father died before she turned nine (see Fred Lockley, "Reminiscences of Mrs. Frank Collins," *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* 17 [December 1916]: 358, 366).

108. John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand, 1877), 66–67.

109. "Lorenzo Dow Young's Narrative," *Fragments of Experience* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 48–49. The detailed biography-autobiography which is the source of this narrative was made by Lorenzo's nephew and gives specific dating here. Lorenzo was called for two weeks of guard duty at Adam-ondi-Ahman after the 6 August election fight. His final warning to leave was given about two weeks after that. See James Amasa Little, "Biography of Lorenzo Dow Young," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 14 (1946): 48–51.

110. Corrill, *A Brief History,* 38.

111. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled,* 59. For the buildings used as a store and a tailor shop, see Joseph H. McGee, *Story of the Grand River Country* (Gallatin, Mo.: N.p., 1909), 12.

112. Chapman Duncan, "Biography," typescript, 36–37, BYU. A secondary but responsible county history indicates that Millport stood "about three miles due east of Gallatin" and consisted of the Peniston mill, a blacksmith shop, and a few stores. "In 1837 Gallatin was founded and much of Millport's business was transferred to the new town, and in 1838 the Mormons burned the buildings that remained, and all that was left of Millport was the memory of its name and the place where once it stood" (John E Jordin, *Memories* [Gallatin, Mo.: North Missourian Press, 1904], unpaged; in the chapter on Theodore Peniston).

113. "Extract from. . . Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 1 (November 1839): 4. For instance, Chapman Duncan had his house shot up after the Gallatin election, and his family moved to Adam-ondi-Ahman, evidently at once: "The mob burned all of my buildings and destroyed all my bees. I never saved one hog out of eighty head" (Duncan, "Biography," 36); also in Jessee, *Personal Writings,* 436.

114. Nathan Tanner, "Incidents in the Life of Nathan Tanner," MS, 28, BYU; see also ibid., typescript, 10–11, BYU.

115. David R. Atchison and A. W. Doniphan to Col. Mason, Liberty, Mo. 27 October 1838, photocopy of National Archives MS. Compare McGee, *Story of the Grand River Country,* 1243, who lived at Gallatin and afterward with his father at Winston; McGee claims: "There was scarcely a Missourian's house left standing in the county." But he saw burnings only on the horizon and had personal experience only at the locations south of Adam-ondi-Ahman. The occupation general of Adam-ondi-Ahman also reported that "the whole county is hid waste," but gave his view "as far as my observation and information extended," suggesting perhaps knowledge of the south of the Daviess area (Robert Wilson to Clark, Keytesville, Mo. 25 November 1838, in *Document,* 88).

116. Corrill, *A Brief History,* 38.

117. Peck, "Sketch of Mormon History," 151.

118. Benjamin E Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Press, 1947), 38–39.

119. Tanner, "Incidents in the Life of Nathan Tanner," 32–33; also ibid., typescript, 12.

120. See *Document,* 45–46.

121. Johnson, *My Life's Review,* 37.

122. Ibid., 42–43.

123. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled,* 90.

124. *Far West Record,* 19 December and 26 December 1838, cited in Cannon and Cook, Far West Record, 223–25. Compare *History of the Church* 3:240–42, 287n.

125. Vinson Knight to William Cooper, Esq., Spencerburg, Mo., 3 February 1838, family copy courtesy of Brent Belnap.

126. See Atchison's letters to the Governor of 20 September and 16 October, in *Document,* 39.

127. Parks to Atchison, Richmond, Mo., 21 October 1838, in *Document,* 47–48.

128. Atchison to the Governor, Liberty, Mo., 22 October 1838, in *Document,* 46–47. The letter does not appear in *History of the Church* but is reproduced here from the above source because it shows that Atchison continued in his convictions that an illegal dispossession of the Mormons was in process, in spite of their Daviess defensive tactics:

Liberty, October 22, 1838.

To His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief.

Sir:—Almost every hour I receive information of outrage and violence—of burning and plundering in the county of Daviess. It seems that the Mormons have become desperate, and act like mad-men; they have burned a store in Gallatin; they have burnt Millport; they have, it is said, plundered several houses; and have taken away the arms from divert citizens of that county; a cannon that was employed in the siege of De Witt, in Carroll county, and taken for a like purpose to Daviess county, has fallen into the hands of the Mormons. It is also reported that the anti-Mormons have, when opportunity offered, disarmed the Mormons, and burnt several of their houses.

The great difficulty in settling this matter, seems to be in not being able to identify the offenders. I am convinced that nothing short of driving the Mormons from Daviess county will satisfy the parties opposed to them; and this I have not the power to do, as I conceive, legally. There are no troops at this time in Daviess county, nor do I deem it expedient to send any there, for I am well convinced that it would but make matters worse; for, sir, I do not feel disposed to disgrace myself, or permit the troops under my command to disgrace the State and themselves by acting the part of a mob. If the Mormons are to be driven from their homes, let it be done without any color of law, and in open defiance thereof; let it be done by volunteers acting upon their own responsibilities.

However, I deem it my duty to submit these matters to the Commander-in-Chief, and will conclude by saying it will be my greatest pleasure to execute any order your Excellency shall think proper to give in this matter with promptness, and to the very letter.

I have the honor to be,
Your Excellency's most ob't serv't.
David R. Atchison.
Maj. Gen'l. 3d Div. Mo. Mi.

N. B. I herewith inclose to you a report from General Parks;
also one from Capt. Bogart.
D.R.A.

129. Bogart to Atchison, Elk Horn, Mo.; 23 October 1838, in *Document,* 48.

130. Burnett, *Recollections,* 57–58.

131. Atchison to Bogart, Liberty, Mo., 23 October 1838, in *Document,* 108.

132. Burnett, *Recollections,* 58.

133. See the group and individual statements in *Document,* 49–53.

134. Governor to General John B. Clark, Jefferson City, Mo. 27 October 1838, in *Document,* 61. See *History of the Church* 3:175 for a copy of this letter. Nearly identical language was repeated in Governor Boggs to Clark, Jefferson City, Mo., 1 November 1838, in *Document,* 76–77.

135. Atchison and Lucas to the Governor, 28 October 1838, Richmond, Mo., in *Document,* 76. See *History of the Church* 3:176 for a copy of this letter. Some phrases in this brief letter probably come from Lucas. In *History of the Church* 3:176–77n, editor Roberts could not understand how Atchison could cosign the statement that Mormons were in rebellion. One problem is that Roberts obviously did not have access to the Mormon accounts of counter operations in Daviess County in the week after 16 October. On the other hand, Atchison was uninformed in the sense that the river counties did not understand the Mormon defensive perimeter of Caldwell-Daviess, so clashes were wrongly interpreted as preliminary to attacks elsewhere. As commander of this military district, Atchison was forced to act on the possibility of rumors being accurate, and his joint note was written on the basis of available information at the time. It is also true that these circumstances forced Atchison and Lucas together as directors of adjoining districts, though their goals in respect to the Mormons were quite different. Compare the Doniphan quotation in the text at n. 145.

136. Cited at n. 115.

137. *Kansas City Daily Journal,* 12 June 1881.

138. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War,* 158.

139. Clark to the Governor, Richmond, Mo., 12 November 1838, in *Document,* 80.

140. Governor to Clark, Jefferson City, Mo., 6 November 1838, in *Document,* 69.

141. Governor to Clark, Jefferson City, Mo., 26 and 27 October 1838, in *Document,* 61–63. The 26 October letter includes an activation order for four hundred men to the commander of the Fourth Division, who was Lucas. Copies of both are in *History of the Church* 3:173–75.

142. Samuel D. Lucas to the Governor, Independence, Mo., 5 November 1838, in *Document,* 71. Compare Lucas to the Governor, near Far West, Mo., 2 November 1838, in *Document,* 72, stating that "we received" the 26 October order, and that "I received" the 27 October order: "At this point Maj. Genesis. Atchison left me for Liberty, when I was left in sole command." See n. 141.

143. Letter to A. B. Chambers, Richmond, Mo., 13 November 1838, mentioning that the author was activated and in the field eight weeks, beginning 1 September: "I acted as aid to General Parks, who was in the field with me all this period."

144. *Far West,* cited in *Missouri Republican Daily,* 17 November 1838. The context indicates that the *Far West* was repeating what had been said right after Atchison's return. Compare Burnett's autobiography in telling of 1838 events: "I also edited a weekly newspaper, 'the Far West,' published in Liberty" (53).

145. Cited at n. 61.

146. Cited at n. 144.

147. Ibid. The *Western Star,* another Liberty newspaper, is cited in the same article: "The course of Gov. Boggs, in superseding Genesis. Atchison, we hear much complaint about. Why the Gov. did this we are at a loss to know. So far as we have heard an expression of opinion, the people appear to be satisfied with Mr. A. as a General."

148. "Philo Dibble's Narrative," 89.

149. *Missouri* Republican Daily, 30 January 1839.

150. Ibid., 27 December 1838.

151. Clark's speech is given in an early copy in Eliza R. Snow to Esquire Streator, Caldwell Co., 22 February 1839, cited in E Mark McKiernan, ed., "Eliza R. Snow Letter from Missouri," *BYU Studies* 13 (Summer 1973): 548–49; a version is in *History of the Church* 3:204. Compare a similar Missouri copy of the Clark speech in the Rockwood letter-journal of January 1839.

152. Governor to Clark, Jefferson City, Mo., 27 October 1838, in *Document,* 61; see n. 134.

153. Atchison to the Governor on dates of 27 September 1838, in *Document,* 34; 5 October 1838, in *Document,* 35; 16 October 1838, in *Document,* 39. For the text of the letter, see n. 89.

154. Atchison to Governor, Boonville, Mo., 16 October 1838, in *Document,* 39. For the text of the letter, see n. 90.

155. William E Dunnica to Editor, Glasgow, Mo., 12 October 1838, *Missouri Republican Daily,* 18 October 1838.

156. Corrill, *A Brief History,* 36. Compare the quotation in the text at n. 99.

157. Mulder and Mortensen, *Among the Mormons,* 97.

158. Bogart to the Governor, Ell Horn, Mo., 13 October 1838, in *Document,* 41.

159. "History of John E. Page," *Millennial Star* 27 (1865): 103.

160. Rockwood, Letter of 6 October 1838, near end.

161. Joseph Smith, Jr. et al., to the Church at Quincy, 20 March 1839, Liberty Jail, Clay Co., Mo. in Jessee, *Personal Writings,* 393; also cited in *History of the Church* 3:292–93.

162. Joseph Smith to Isaac Galland, 22 March 1839, cited in Jessee, *Personal Writings,* 417, includes Atchison among those who "have made public proclamation" that Mormon leaders should be hung. But the rumor lacks confirmation, and Joseph evidently changed his mind since no comment of the kind comes from Nauvoo sources.

163. *President Heber C. Kimball's Journal* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 72. Kimball gives his Liberty visit as approximately 8 April 1839.

164. Lyman Wight and Heber C. Kimball to Joseph Smith, Philadelphia, Pa., 19 June 1844, LDS Church Archives; see also *History of the Church* 7:138, italics in original. On 9 August 1850, John Bernhisel wrote Brigham Young from Washington, D.C., that Atchison had voted for Utah's territorial status. He referred to "Senator Atchison, of Missouri extermination memory," but the sarcasm may have been uninformed, since Bernhisel did not come west until the Nauvoo period (cited in Journal History).

165. "Extract. . . of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 1 (November 1839): 7. Those listed in the roll of dishonor were all militia leaders: Clark, Wilson, Lucas, Price, Gilliam, and Bogart.

166. Statement of Hyrum Smith, 1 July 1839, *Times and Seasons* 4 (1 July 1843): 254–56; also cited in *History of the Church* 3:424. This roll of dishonor includes officials Boggs and King, and militia leaders Clark, Lucas, Wilson, and Gilliam. This statement of Hyrum Smith has been misread with regard to Atchison, where Hyrum was actually quoting the intriguing view of their jailor, Samuel Tillery, claiming that the expulsion plan was "concocted by the Governor down to the lowest judge in that upper country, early in the previous spring, and that the plan was more fully carried out at the time that General Atchison went down to Jefferson City, with General Wilson, Lucas and Gilliam" *(Times and Seasons* 4:254–55; also cited in *History of the Church* 3:421). LeSueur misstates Hyram Smith as the source, and thinks the statement included Atchison in the expulsion "plan" (LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War,* 245). But the key

here is George A. Smith's memoirs, telling that Atchison and other officers were ordered to be absent at the height of the Mormon problems, as narrated in the biographical section at the beginning of this paper. Tillery was sympathetic to his prisoners and unlikely to be criticizing his fellow townsman Atchison, who had similar views. Instead, he apparently claimed that Atchison's assignment to the court-martial was a useful tool to remove him so Mormons could be evicted from Carroll County. Actually, George A. Smith and Turnham have near misses on where Atchison went. Since Atchison wrote several letters from Boonville, near Jefferson City, his location is clear. See nn. 14 and 72 and the text at these notes.

167. Snow to Streator, 546, cited at n. 151.1