

The Lynching of an American Prophet

Warren A. Jennings

David Wells Kilbourne (1803–76) was an Iowa pioneer who gained prominence in Iowa politics and business.¹ He was both a land speculator and railroad builder. A native of Connecticut, he taught school there before becoming a commission merchant in New York City. When that business failed because of a disastrous fire, he moved west and took up residence on the Iowa shore of the Mississippi River. There he laid out the town of Montrose. With his brother, Edward, he operated a general store at the abandoned Fort Des Moines. David Kilbourne was appointed a justice of the peace and also served as general agent for the New York Land Company, which held claim to the Sac and Fox Half Breed Tract in Lee County, Iowa.

Kilbourne was thus in an advantageous position to observe the Mormons when in 1839 they arrived in Iowa as refugees from the fury in Missouri. Driven from that state by armed militiamen set on carrying out the “Extermination Order” of Lilburn W. Boggs (governor of Missouri 1836–40), the Mormons were further victimized by unscrupulous men with questionable authority who sold them Iowa land in the Half Breed Tract, in which Kilbourne had a stake.² At the time of their settlement in Iowa, other Saints, under the leadership of their prophet, Joseph Smith Jr., began developing Nauvoo on the Illinois shore opposite Montrose.

Originating in a dispute over land titles, a feud arose between Kilbourne and the Mormons, and in time the former became a leader of anti-Mormonism in Iowa.³ Kilbourne wrote a number of polemics against the Mormons, many of which appeared in the *Burlington Hawk-Eye and Patriot*, and, as his letter books indicate, he was soon in communication with others opposed to the Saints.⁴

Among Kilbourne’s sympathizers was an Anglican parson, Thomas Dent, of Clitheroe, England. When The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was introduced in England in 1837, the faith attracted a large number of converts. One of the first Latter-day Saint congregations was established at Clitheroe, a fact that no doubt accounted for Dent’s interest in learning more about the new sect in America.

The following three letters to Dent were extracted from letter books in the Kilbourne Collection at the State Historical Society of Iowa, located in Des Moines, Iowa.⁵ One should be cautious before accepting as fact every statement within these letters; obviously, they contain some material that was only rumor. Kilbourne viewed events from Fort Madison, Iowa, ten miles

and a wide river away from Nauvoo. Allowance must also be made for Kilbourne's personal animus toward the Mormons. Nevertheless, the letters do give some insight into how non-Mormons viewed the dramatic events leading up to and following Joseph Smith's death.

Warren A. Jennings taught U.S. history for many years at Southwest Missouri State University. His Ph.D. dissertation, "Zion Is Fleed: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (University of Florida, 1962), remains the most comprehensive study available on the early Missouri period of Church history. His family appreciates the efforts of Brian Q. Cannon, William G. Hartley, and the staff of *BYU Studies* for the final preparation of this article, on which Dr. Jennings was working at the time of his death in December 1998, in Springfield, Missouri.

1. *History of Lee County Iowa*, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1914), 2:434, describes some of Kilbourne's accomplishments. Timothy R. Mahoney, *Provincial Lives: Middle-Class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), discusses some of Kilbourne's political and economic activities and explores the socioeconomic milieu in which he and his peers operated.

2. See David Wells Kilbourne, *Strictures, on Dr. I. Galland's Pamphlet, Entitled "Villainy Exposed," with Some Account of His Transactions in Lands of the Sac and Fox Reservation, Etc., in Lee County, Iowa* (Fort Madison, Iowa: Statesman Office, 1850); and Lyndon W. Cook, "Isaac Galland—Mormon Benefactor," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 261–84.

3. Some of Kilbourne's anti-Mormon activities are documented in Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 4:416–17, 444–45; 5:61.

4. See Warren A. Jennings, ed., "Two Iowa Postmasters View Nauvoo: Anti-Mormon Letters to the Governor of Missouri," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 3 (1971): 275–92.

5. The three letters reproduced here are the most complete published versions to date. The first of these letters was published in part in *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois*, ed. John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995), 226–28. A short excerpt of the second letter is quoted in Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 251–52, while the third letter goes unquoted in that source. An additional letter Kilbourne wrote to Dent, dated June 15, 1844, detailing a non-Mormon view of the destruction of the Nauvoo Expositor press, can be found in Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 161–62.

Kilbourne's letter books contain copies of three earlier letters to Dent. The earliest and longest, signed October 20, 1842, was probably a response to an inquiry for information about the Mormons. The others were written on February 24, 1843, and December 28, 1843. The Kilbourne Collection contains no letters from Dent; perhaps these were destroyed by accidental burning. Kilbourne's letter books are charred about the edges and obviously have survived a fire that may have destroyed other correspondence.

Kilbourne to Dent: Three Letters

Fort Madison
June 29th 1844
7 O Clock P. M.

Rev^d T. Dent
Billington
near Whalley Lancashire England

My dear Sir

I hasten to inform you of the wonderful events which have taken place at Nauvoo since my letter to you a few days since. The work of death has commenced. The Mormon Prophet Joe Smith & his brother Hyrum are no more. I have just returned from Nauvoo & I this day looked upon the lifeless remains of these two men—the great heads & leaders of Mormonism. Their work of infamy is finished & their dupes about two hours since committed their remains to the silent grave. But I will hasten to give you the particulars as full as I am able in a single letter. I believe I mentioned in my last¹ that Gov[ernor] Ford² was at Carthage³ & had ordered out troops to enforce the laws.

As soon as the Gov. arrived at C[arthage] he found that the people were determined to march to Nauvoo for the purpose of arresting Joe & all the members of the City Council for destroying the press⁴ & for other crimes—The Gov on the 21st sent messengers to Joe ordering him & the council to appear at C[arthage] & answer to the numerous charges which had been preferred vs him.

1. Likely the letter Kilbourne wrote to Dent on June 15, 1844. See note 5 of this article's introduction.

2. Thomas Ford (1800–50), governor of Illinois from 1842 to 1846, took his responsibilities of office seriously but was so prone to indecision for fear of offending anyone that he proved ineffective in handling this crisis. His apologia may be found in Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois: From Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (1854; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

3. Carthage, the county seat of Hancock County, was approximately eighteen miles southeast of Nauvoo.

4. William and Wilson Law and other Nauvoo dissenters printed the first and only issue of their anti-Mormon newspaper, the *Expositor*, on June 7, 1844. Three days later, the city marshal destroyed the press according to a resolution of the Nauvoo City Council. A standard treatment of the action is Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the *Nauvoo Expositor*," *Utah Law Review* 9 (winter 1965): 862–903. Some relevant primary documents can be found in *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois*, ed. John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995), 142–65.

This created excitement at Nauvoo—Joe called a meeting of the Council—He & some of the Council would at this crisis have fled from the town & made their escape from justice; but most of the leaders & his people in general would not suffer him to do so. They knew by this time that if he did not go to Carthage—that the military forces & the people would march to the City—& if Joe could not be found that under the excitement vengeance would fall upon the heads of the innocent as well as the guilty—in the destruction of their City.⁵ Joe finally decided to give himself up and on Monday the 24th Inst with the other members of the Council & an attorney from this place⁶ started for Carthage when within about four miles of C[arthage] they met a posse sent by the Gov to Nauvoo to arrest Joe—they all surrendered & were taken into custody—this was on the open Prairie. This done the officer in Command,⁷ presented an order to Joe from the Gov. for all the arms at Nauvoo belonging to the State.⁸ Joe after a moments consultation endorsed the order & the posse with Joe & his men returned to Nauvoo & rec^d all the arms & took them with Joe & his men to Carthage.

On their arrival at Carthage they appeared before a magistrate⁹ & entered into recognizance for their appearance at the next term of the Hancock Circuit Court to answer to the charge of riot on which they had been arrested.¹⁰ Joe & Hyrum were immediately arrested again on charge of Treason against the State of Illinois & committed to Jail to await their

5. The Mormon view of these events is recounted in *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 6:548–50; and Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 17. A dissenter's view is in Lyndon W. Cook, *William Law: Biographical Essay, Nauvoo Diary, Correspondence, Interview* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994).

6. The attorney was James W. Woods. See *History of the Church*, 6:554.

7. The commanding officer was a Captain Dunn, in charge of about sixty mounted militia from McDonough County. See *History of the Church*, 6:554–55.

8. These arms consisted of about 250 muskets and other material granted to the Mormon militia, the Nauvoo Legion, by the State. See Richard L. Saunders, "Officers and Arms: The 1843 General Return of the Nauvoo Legion's Second Cohort," *BYU Studies* 35, no. 2 (1995): 138–51.

9. The magistrate was Robert F. Smith, who was also captain of the Carthage Greys, the military force that was charged with protecting the Carthage prisoners but that failed to do so. During the Civil War, Robert Smith would rise to the rank of brevet brigadier general. Joseph Smith actually arrived in Carthage shortly before midnight on June 24th and appeared before Robert Smith on the following afternoon. Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 17–18, 20, 121, 218; *History of the Church*, 6:559, 567–69.

10. The charge of riot resulted from the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* press.

examination.¹¹ On Wednesday the 26th Inst they were brought before a magistrate,¹² and time was given until 12 O Clock, Thursday, to get witnesses ready for trial. On the same day the Gov held a council of Officers, and determined to march all the troops with the exception of one company, into the City of Nauvoo. The examination of Smit[h] in consequence of this determination to march to Nauvoo was postponed until Saturday the 29th Inst.

On Thursday morning 27 Inst the order for all the troops to march to Nauvoo were [*sic*] for some cause countermanded.¹³ Most of the troops at Carthage some 800 in number were discharged. One company of some 50 men were left at Carthage to protect the prisoners, only eight of this Company were stationed at the Jail as guards while the remainder of the Company were [*sic*] in Camp a quarter of a mile distant.¹⁴

The Gov with some 60 horsemen marched to Nauvoo where he made a speech to the Mormons telling them of the excitement that was abroad against them & the dangerous ground on which they stood.

In the absence of the Gov. & about 4 O Clock P.M. of this Thursday 27th day of June, an armed and disguised [*sic*] band of men, about two hundred in number attacked the Jail—overpowered the guard of eight men, entered the Jail and shot both the Smiths.¹⁵ Hiram received a ball in

11. The charge of treason resulted from Joseph Smith's declaring martial law in Nauvoo after non-Mormon citizens of Hancock country threatened to march against the city.

12. Robert F. Smith. See *History of the Church*, 6:594–97.

13. Ford came to fear the consequences of marching hundreds of angry anti-Mormons into Nauvoo under the guise of a posse, a fear fully justified. Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 19.

14. Ford erred grievously in choosing the strongly anti-Mormon Carthage Greys to guard the prisoners. He later maintained that he disregarded warnings of a possible attack upon the jail because he believed them to be unfounded. Oaks and Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy*, 20. Ford's intent is sympathetically examined in Keith Huntress, "Governor Ford and the Murderers of Joseph Smith," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4 (summer 1969): 41–52; and George R. Gaylor, "Governor Ford and the Death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 50 (winter 1957): 391–411. Other historians have been more critical of Ford. B. H. Roberts concludes in *History of the Church*, 7:113–16, that "things looked more than suspicious against him [Ford]." Susan Sessions Rugh, *Our Common Country: Family Farming, Culture, and Community in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 218, cites evidence suggesting Ford's complicity with the assassins. D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 646, maintains that Ford "knowingly enabl[ed] the assassination."

15. The estimates of the number involved in the mob vary widely from under 80 to 250. See, for instance, Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 141, 374; *History of the Church*, 7:110, 142–46; Davis Bitton, *The Martyrdom Remembered: A One-Hundred-Fifty-Year Perspective on the Assassination of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1994), 111. Non-Mormon accounts of the conflict are found in Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 222–37.

the head, and nearly [*sic*] had time to exclaim “I am a dead man,” and expired; Joe received a number of balls which pierced his body, some while still in the Jail, some while he was in the act of leaping from the window of the Jail, and others after he reached the ground, he exclaimed “O God”—and expired.¹⁶

Elder [John] Taylor who was also in the jail received several flesh wounds, is considered dangerous.¹⁷ The disguised [*sic*] band immediately escaped to the woods & were not pursued for want of force sufficient to take them. They were all disguised [*sic*] with paint, & of course not known.

There is but one feeling throughout this country in regard to this last tragedy, & that is, that merited vengeance had fallen on the right men, at the same time all regret that it happened while he was a prisoner & had a right to expect protection. It is regretted because his followers will now claim that he died a martyr when if he could have been tried on the charges & convicted he would have died a felon.

On Thursday morning I determined to go to Carthage 18 miles distant for the purpose of seeing for myself & learning the true state of the case—but after I got over the river I concluded to go down to Nauvoo. There I found Mr. Ford & his company & heard him make his speech. The Gov invited me to go to Carthage with them that evening & about sunset we set out when about 4 miles out we met a messenger with the intelligence that Joe & Hyrum were dead. The Gov fearing to have the intelligence [*sic*] go to Nauvoo took the man in charge & proceeded on towards Carthage.

As it was after dark I turned about myself unnoticed & went back to Nauvoo & put up at Joe^s tavern¹⁸ where several of my friends from this place were stop[p]ing over night which circumstance made me feel more secure.

I soon retired without mentioning the circumstance to any one for I could hardly believe it. About 4 O Clock the next morning Friday June 28th the same messenger arrived at Joe^s tavern confirming the news. I immediately

16. According to Mormon sources, Smith’s last words were, “O Lord, my God!” *History of the Church*, 6:629. See also Dean C. Jessee, “Return to Carthage: Writing the History of Joseph Smith’s Martyrdom,” *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981): 14–16; and Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 141, 374.

17. John Taylor (1808–87), an English convert, was editor of the Mormon publication *Times and Seasons*. He succeeded Brigham Young as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Francis M. Gibbons, *John Taylor: Mormon Philosopher, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985); *History of the Church*, 6:621–22; 7:104–5.

18. The “tavern” was the Nauvoo Mansion House.

dressed & went down, saw Joe^s wife & children about the house, but saw no manifestations of grief on the part of any one save Joe^s mother who made her appearance at the door in the course of the morning & enquired who had killed her sons.¹⁹

The Mormons were told by their principal men to be quiet, to be calm to make no threats—and to remain quiet in the City, as the only possible means of preventing their entire extermination. I remained [*sic*] here until this evening—they are still in a great state of alarm—and I doubt not they have reason to be. The troops are rallying at Carthage & the people at Warsaw, Quincy & other towns. The people say that they must scatter—that there are 12 men yet in Nauvoo who must be brought to Justice.²⁰ Every body who is able to get away is doing so. I do not myself think that there will be any further hostilities at present—but there may be.

I called at a small house in Nauvoo the other day where I found an English family. They had been there but 12 weeks, had resided & [*word illegible*] in Missouri. They told me that they came from Clith[e]roe, Lancashire—The mans name is Stephen Longstroth.²¹ I found them an interesting family. There was three daughters—young women—he has an acre of ground there & a fine garden. He told me that he had heard you preach many a time. . . .²²

19. Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, suffered another shock five weeks later when her son, Samuel, died of natural causes. Only William Smith, one of six sons born to Lucy, survived her. *History of the Church*, 7:213, 216–22. Another guest in the Mansion House, B. W. Richmond, also recalled the seemingly stoic initial reaction of Lucy Mack Smith. See Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 195.

20. Brigham Young and other Apostles feared for their lives, and attempts were made to arrest Elder Young, but Kilbourne's reference to "12" may refer to those charged with ordering and carrying out the destruction of the *Expositor* press and papers. Young, along with the majority of the Twelve, was far from Nauvoo preaching and electioneering at the time this letter was written. See *History of the Church*, 7:132–33.

21. On December 16, 1844, Stephen Longstroth was appointed to work full-time as a carpenter on the Nauvoo Temple. He went west in the Brigham Young Company of 1847, as did Willard Richards, Joseph Smith's secretary, who escaped Carthage unharmed and who married two of Longstroth's daughters. See Frank Eshom, *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Utah Pioneers Book Publishing, 1913), s.v. "Longstrath, Stephen"; and *History of the Church*, 7:326.

22. This letter may have been the first account of the death of Joseph Smith to reach England. It was printed in the Mormon paper in England, the *London Record*, according to "Death of the Mormon Prophet," *Millennial Star* 5 (September 1844): 58–59.

Fort Madison
 Upper Mississippi river
 Lee Co. Iowa
 July 29th 1844

Rev^d T. Dent
 Billington
 near Whalley
 Lancashire England

My dear Mr Dent

I wrote you under date 29th Ultimo giving you an account of the death of Joe & Hiram Smith. As my brother leaves tomorrow for New York I will improve the opportunity to send a few lines by him, believing that you will feel some solicitude to know what has become of the "Saints."



David W. Kilbourne (1803–76). From *History of Lee County Iowa*, vol. 2 of *Story of Lee County Iowa* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1914), 441.

There have been no further hostilities since I last wrote you. They are perfectly quiet in Nauvoo & in the surrounding country. The Mormons are much more decent in their deportment—not insolent as formerly.

They have been taught a lesson which I think they will not soon forget. They will hereafter be afraid to interfere at all with the rights of the people.

All the Elders abroad have been sent for to return to Nauvoo—also the 12 Apostles—who are I understand to appoint a successor to Joe.²³ They continue to work on the Temple & matters go on there about as usual.

23. At the time of the Martyrdom, most of the Twelve and over three hundred brethren (Kilbourne's "Elders") were away from Nauvoo campaigning for Joseph Smith's presidential candidacy. See Margaret C. Robertson, "The Campaign and the Kingdom: The Activities of the Electioneers in Joseph Smith's Presidential Campaign," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 3 (2000): 147–80.

There is however great distress there for the want of the necessaries of life. It is also very sickly there this Season.

It is impossible to say what will be the result there—but my opinion is that there will be great trouble among the ambitious leaders—& that hereafter the doctrine will not prosper. I think very likely they may open papers purporting to be sealed up by Joe—saying who shall be the Prophet & giving other instructions in regard to their future course.—

It is supposed that Joe & Hiram were buried under Joe's house. Their remains were disposed of while all the people were assembled at preaching some miles from the house—there was no funeral service. Notice was given at the meeting where I was that a “few judicious persons would bury them.” It is said that these few men carried out two coffins & put them on wagons & buried them at the grave yard two miles out of town but that they did not contain the corpses. I have no doubt myself of the fact. They were fearful that Joe would be taken up,²⁴ which no doubt would have been done if possible. I therefore believe that they rest under the house where his family now resides.

With great Esteem
Your friend
D. W. K

24. The Saints were fearful that Joseph Smith's grave would be exhumed because Thomas Reynolds, the governor of Missouri (1840–44), had offered a reward of six hundred dollars for the Prophet's return to Missouri—dead or alive. See *History of the Church*, 6:627–29; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 5, 453. Kilbourne's suspicion of a false burial was correct. A public burial was staged with coffins filled with sand. The bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were hid in the basement of the unfinished Nauvoo House and later buried under a small shed twenty-five paces from the Smith family's homestead. See Richard N. Holzapfel and T. Jeffery Cottle, *Old Mormon Nauvoo, 1839–1846: Historic Photographs and Guide* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1990), 160.

Fort Madison Upper Miss R.
 Lee County
 Iowa T[erritor]y
 North America
 Decr 16 1845

The Rev^d T. Dent
 Grindleton in Mytton
 Clith[e]roe
 England

Respected Friend Your much esteemed favor of October 23rd came safe to hand a few days since. It gave me great pleasure to hear from you once more; mingled however with regret on account of the serious & protracted indisposition with which you have been afflicted. I have enjoyed the best of health since I last wrote you. But during the last year I have been deeply afflicted in the loss of an affectionate father & mother—They had lived together upwards of fifty years & were aged 74 & 75 years.²⁵

I spent the last summer in New York City on a visit & returned here only four weeks since. There have been exciting times at Nauvoo for six months past. Several dens of Mormon thieves [and] murderers have been broken up. In the early part of the Summer a house in this County—about five miles from my house—was entered by three men about 12 O Clock on a Saturday night & two men, Father & son murdered. They were traced to Nauvoo—were arrested & by force brought back to this County—had a legal trial—were found guilty & hung on the 15th July. They were Mormons.—The third person has since been arrested and is now in prison in this place—He is a good Mormon from Nauvoo.²⁶

On the 4th July in broad day light 5 men entered the house of Coln Davenport²⁷ at Rock Island (about 100 miles above this—) & murdered him—& took about \$800 in cash—a Gold watch &c. They were traced—three of them caught—tried convicted & all hung at the same time on one

25. His parents were David Kilbourne and Lydia Kilbourne.

26. Three brothers, William, Stephen, and Amos Hodges, who were not Mormon but had family who were, were implicated in the murders. Amos was released for lack of evidence, but the others were hung. See Barbara Howard and Junia Brady, "The Hodges Hanging," *Palimpsest* 60, no. 2 (1979): 48–58; Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 244–45; and Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Crime and Punishment in Mormon Nauvoo," *BYU Studies* 32 (1992): 214–15.

27. Colonel George Davenport (1783–1845), one of the founders of Davenport, Iowa. See *St. Louis American*, November 6, 1845; *St. Louis Weekly Reveille*, October 3, 1845; and Godfrey, "Crime and Punishment," 217.

Gallows in October. They were from Nauvoo—The other two have since been arrested and are now in jail at Rock Island—They are also from Nauvoo.

These things so excited and exasperated the people in all this region of Country that publick [*sic*] meetings were held during the summer & resolutions passed giving the Mormons formal notice that they must leave Nauvoo. All those [Mormons] living out were compelled to flee to the city—such was the indignation of the old citizens.²⁸ Under this state of things the Mormons made up their minds that they could not remain here. They accordingly decided to leave the country—& they are now getting ready to leave for California in Mexico on the 1st of April next. They are now building in Nauvoo some 2000 waggons, they go by land over the Rocky Mountains & calculate one waggon with four yoke of oxen for every ten persons. They are divided into companies of 100 families each—with a Captain for each company—. They are now selling off what they cannot take along. The head men are also negotiating a sale of their Temple & other public buildings together with the town site. I believe they have had some offers from the Catholics.

[Sidney] Rigdon left them more than a year ago & settled in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania & is publishing a paper there—He denounced all the present leaders at Nauvoo—says that Joe Smith was a fallen Prophet—that he Rigdon is now the true & only Prophet of the church.²⁹ Brigham Young one of the twelve is the leader. He exercises as absolute power over them as ever Joe did—he equals him in depravity & all evil practices. He pretends to have revelations (a short time since in one of his public discourses told his people that the Bible was no more to him than a last years Almanac—that he was all the Bible they needed[]). I made the Mormons an offer for their temple & other buildings—having a large flock of sheep—I thought I could use their homes for sheep pens & the Temple to shear the sheep in—by which means the original design of the building would be carried out viz Fleecing the Flock—

It will be a glorious deliverance for all this section of country when they turn their backs upon it—but woe to the Country wherever they go. . . .

28. The violence during this time is chronicled in *History of the Church*, 7:430–533; and Hallwas and Launius, *Cultures in Conflict*, 270–96.

29. Sidney Rigdon (1793–1876) was for many years the first counselor to Joseph Smith. Harkening back to his glory days in Kirtland, Ohio, he called his Pittsburgh paper the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*. See Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 367–87; and F. Mark McKiernan, *The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness: Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer, 1793–1876* (Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado, 1971), 133–45.

We have had most bountiful crops this season—never a more productive one known. Wheat is selling here at half a Dollar per bushel of 60^{lbs} Indian Corn 16 cts Oats 14 cts—Beef 2_ cts per pound & Pork 3 cts. I shall endeavor to send you occasionally such News Papers as may give accounts of the movements at Nauvoo—together with any published at Nauvoo—together with any published matter in relation to that people which I think will interest you.

I shall always be gratified to hear from you.

With Very Cordial Salutations

I remain Yours Truly

D. W. K