

"To Seal the Testimony"

Lesson 32

*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual,
Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lesson 32, pp 183-189.*

Purpose: To teach class members about the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and to strengthen their testimonies of his calling as a prophet of God.

Preparation:

- a. Doctrine and Covenants 135.
- b. Our Heritage, pages 62-66. Ask a class member to prepare to summarize the first five paragraphs of the section "The Martyrdom" from Our Heritage (pages 62-63).
- c. pictures: The Prophet Joseph Smith (62002; Gospel Art Picture Kit 401) and Brother Joseph (62161).

Attn Activity: Ask class members to identify other martyrs from the scriptures and Church history. Answers might include Zacharias (Matthew 23:35), Stephen (Acts 7:56-60), and Hyrum Smith (D&C 135:1). Joseph Smith, David Patten, John the Baptist, Abinadi, The original Quorum of the Twelve.

This lesson discusses the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum. It also discusses the contributions of the Prophet Joseph.

1. The Prophet Joseph Smith sealed his testimony with his blood.

The Saints prospered for a few years in Nauvoo. The Church and the city grew rapidly, work on the temple progressed, and the Prophet Joseph Smith received many revelations. However, during 1843 and 1844, animosity against the Church increased. Enemies both inside and outside the Church began trying to destroy it. This opposition climaxed on 27 June 1844.

Report on the first five paragraphs of the section "The Martyrdom" from Our Heritage, pages 62-63. Also read D&C 135:4-5. D&C 135 was written by Elder John Taylor, who was wounded during the attack on the Prophet Joseph.

•Why do you think the Prophet Joseph Smith could be as "calm as a summer's morning" when he knew he might be martyred at Carthage? What comfort do you think Joseph and Hyrum would have received from Ether 12:36-38?

D&C 135:1-2. Also read the following account of the martyrdom by Elder Willard Richards. **Elder Richards** was a friend of the Prophet and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. He was in Carthage Jail when the Prophet was martyred. His account begins as the mob arrived at the jail just after 5:00 P.M. on the afternoon of 27 June 1844:

"A shower of musket balls were thrown up the stairway against the door of the prison in the second story, followed by many rapid footsteps....

". . . A ball was sent through the door, which passed between us, and showed The Prophet Joseph Smith that our enemies were desperadoes....

"... Joseph Smith, Mr. Taylor and myself sprang back to the front part of the room, and ... Hyrum Smith retreated two-thirds across the chamber directly in front of and facing the door.

"A ball was sent through the door which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose, when he fell backwards, extended at length, without moving his feet.

"From the holes in his [clothing], it appears evident that a ball must have been thrown from without, through the window, which entered his back on the right side, and passing through, lodged against his watch.... At the same instant the ball from the door entered his nose.

"As he struck the floor he exclaimed emphatically, 'I am a dead man.' Joseph looked towards him and responded, 'Oh, dear brother Hyrum!' and opening the door two or three inches with his left hand, discharged one barrel of a six shooter (pistol) at random in the entry.... A ball [from the musket of one of the mob] grazed Hyrum's breast, and entering his throat passed into his head, while other muskets were aimed at him and some balls hit him.

"Joseph continued snapping his revolver round the casing of the door into the space as before while Mr. Taylor with a walking stick stood by his side and knocked down the bayonets and muskets which were constantly discharging through the doorway... .

"When the revolver failed, we had no more firearms, and expected an immediate rush of the mob, and the doorway full of muskets, half way in the room, and no hope but instant death from within.

"Mr. Taylor rushed into the window, which is some fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. When his body was nearly on a balance, a ball from the door within entered his leg, and a ball from without struck his watch ... in his vest pocket near the left breast.... the force of which ball threw him back on the floor, and he rolled under the bed which stood by his side...."

"Joseph attempted, as the last resort, to leap [from] the same window from whence Mr. Taylor fell, when two balls pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward, exclaiming, 'Oh Lord, my God!'... He fell on his left side a dead man" (History of the Church, 6:619-20).

Elder John Taylor was shot four times but recovered from his wounds. In fulfillment of a prophecy that the Prophet had made more than a year before, Elder Willard Richards received no wounds. Elder Richards recalled that in this prophecy, the Prophet had told him that "the time would come that the balls would fly around him like hail, and he should see his friends fall on the right and on the left, but that there should not be a hole in his garment" (History of the Church, 6:619).

•Read D&C 135:6. What are your feelings as you think about the sacrifice the Prophet and his brother Hyrum made for their testimonies of the gospel?

Before Joseph Smith Sr. died, he gave the Prophet a blessing and told him: "You shall even live to finish your work.... You shall live to lay out the plan of all the work which God has given you to do" (quoted in Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley [1958], 309-10). Joseph Smith valiantly completed his mission, doing all that God asked him to do.

•From what you know about the Prophet Joseph Smith's life, what impresses you most about him?

2. The Prophet Joseph Smith did more for the salvation of men in this world than anyone except Jesus.

•Read D&C 135:3. According to this verse, what were some of the Prophet Joseph Smith's major achievements? In what ways did he do "more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it"?

Answers could include that his work blessed not only the Saints of this dispensation, but also the billions of people who have lived at all other times without receiving the blessings of the gospel or the saving ordinances of the priesthood. Use the following material to discuss these contributions in detail. Write the headings on the chalkboard. Explain that we can better appreciate the Prophet's

life and mission when we review how his many contributions bless our daily lives and will bless us eternally.

Truths about the Godhead

•What truths about the Godhead were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith? (See D&C 130:22-23; Joseph Smith-History 1:17; and the following quotation.) In a sermon given at the funeral of Elder King Follett on 7 April 1844, the Prophet **Joseph Smith** taught:

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible, -I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form-like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 345).

•Why are the truths about the Godhead that were restored through Joseph Smith important to us?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve said: *"Knowledge of God is the greatest truth in all eternity.... Joseph Smith came to reveal God, in a day of almost total spiritual darkness, in a day when men no longer knew the nature and kind of Being whom they should worship" ("This Generation Shall Have My Word through You," Ensign, June 1980, 55).*

The authority of the priesthood

Through Joseph Smith, heavenly messengers restored the Aaronic Priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood, and keys of the priesthood (D&C 13; 110:11-16). As the Restoration unfolded, the Lord gave revelations about priesthood offices, organization, covenants, ordinances, duties, and blessings. We would not understand the priesthood or how it operates without these revelations.

•What blessings do you have in your life because of the priesthood? How can we show our appreciation for the blessings of the priesthood?

Truths about our origin and relationship to God

•What truths about our origin and relationship to God were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith? (Answers could include that we are literally the spirit

children of God and that we lived with Him before we were born on earth. See D&C 76:23-24; Abraham 3:22-28.)

•How is the knowledge that you are literally a child of God a blessing in your life?

Scriptures

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said that the Prophet Joseph Smith *"has given to our present world more holy scripture than any single prophet who ever lived"* (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 142; or Ensign, May 1976, 95). These scriptures include the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.

While serving in the Quorum of the Twelve, **Elder Gordon B. Hinckley** said: *"[Joseph Smith] translated and published the Book of Mormon, a volume of 522 pages which has since been retranslated into [many] languages and which is accepted by millions across the earth as the word of God. The revelations he received and other writings he produced are likewise scripture to these millions. The total in book pages constitutes the equivalent of almost the entire Old Testament of the Bible, and it all came through one man in the space of a few years"* (in Conference Report, Apr. 1977, 96; or Ensign, May 1977, 65).

•How have the scriptures that were brought forth through the Prophet Joseph Smith been a blessing in your life?

Truths about the plan of salvation

•What truths about the plan of salvation were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith?

•How has knowing these truths been a blessing in your life? Truths about the salvation of the dead

•What truths about the salvation of the dead were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith? (Answers could include that we can perform vicarious baptisms in temples for those who died without receiving this ordinance. See D&C 128:18.) Why are these truths important?

The salvation of the dead is one of the most enlarging and inspiring doctrines restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The building of temples and the performance of temple ordinances

•What are some of the blessings that have come into your life because of temples and temple ordinances? (You may want to discuss the blessing of eternal families, which is made possible by the sealing ordinance in the temple.)

Other contributions

Review briefly some of the other contributions of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the blessings they bring to our lives:

- a. The Church was restored through him (see lesson 9).
- b. He began the work in this dispensation of taking the gospel to all nations and gathering Israel (see lesson 12).
- c. The law of consecration was revealed through him (see lesson 14).
- d. The Word of Wisdom was revealed through him (see lesson 22).
- e. Information about the building of the latter-day Zion was revealed through him (see lessons 27 and 46).
- f. He wrote the Articles of Faith (see the first additional teaching idea).

•Why is it important that we each have a testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God? How did your testimony of Joseph Smith's calling develop? How has this year's study of the Doctrine and Covenants strengthened your testimony?

•How can we show our gratitude for the life and mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith?

Conclusion: Emphasize the importance of the contributions of the Prophet Joseph Smith in our lives. You may want to bear your own testimony of his calling as a prophet of God.

Additional Teaching Ideas:

1. The Articles of Faith

The Articles of Faith state many of the basic doctrines of the Church. They were written by the Prophet Joseph Smith as part of a letter to John Wentworth, a newspaper editor in Chicago who had requested a statement on the Church's history and beliefs. They were later canonized as scripture in the Pearl of Great Price.

President Spencer W. Kimball asked: *"How many of you know the Articles of Faith? ... Do you know them? Have you repeated them? You are always prepared with a sermon when you know the Articles of Faith. And they are basic, aren't they? I would think it would be a wonderful thing if [we] would learn them word-perfect. That means that you don't miss and you don't forget"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, 119; or Ensign, Nov. 1975, 79).

•Why is it important that we know the Articles of Faith? Invite class members to tell of experiences in which the Articles of Faith have helped them.

2. "Praise to the Man"

Prepare to have class members sing "Praise to the Man" (Hymns, no. 27). Or invite a class member or a group of class members to prepare to sing it. Explain that William W. Phelps wrote the text of this hymn to honor the Prophet Joseph Smith.

3. Video presentations

If the videocassette Teachings from the Doctrine and Covenants and Church History (53933) is available, consider showing "Joseph Smith: The Prophet of the Restoration," a 13-minute segment.

If Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Video Presentations (53912) is available, consider showing "The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith," a 2-minute segment.

Our Heritage, A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, pp 62-66.

The Martyrdom

While the years in Nauvoo provided many happy times for the Saints, persecution soon began again, culminating in the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. This was a dark and mournful time never to be forgotten. Recording her feelings upon hearing of the martyrdom, Louisa Barnes Pratt wrote: "It was a still night, and the moon was at the full. A night of death it seemed, and everything conspired to make it solemn! The voices of the officers were heard calling the men together and coming in the distance made it fall on the heart like a funeral knell. The women were assembled in groups, weeping and praying, some wishing terrible punishment on the murderers, others acknowledging the hand of God in the event."¹¹ Like Louisa Barnes Pratt, many Latter-day Saints remembered the events of 27 June 1844 as a time of tears and broken hearts. The martyrdom was the most tragic event in the Church's early history. However, it was not unexpected.

On at least 19 different occasions, beginning as early as 1829, Joseph Smith told the Saints that he would probably not leave this life peacefully.¹² While he felt that his enemies would one day take his life, he did not know when. As the spring of 1844 became summer, enemies both within and without the Church worked toward Joseph's destruction. Thomas Sharp, editor of a nearby newspaper and a leader in Hancock County's anti-Mormon political party, openly called for the Prophet's murder. Citizens' groups, apostates, and civic leaders conspired to destroy the Church by destroying its prophet.

The governor of Illinois, Thomas Ford, wrote to Joseph Smith, insisting that the city council members stand trial before a nonMormon jury on a charge of causing a civil disturbance. He said that only such a trial would satisfy the people. He promised the men complete protection, although the Prophet did not believe he could fulfill his pledge. When it appeared that there were no other alternatives, the Prophet, his brother Hyrum, John Taylor, and others submitted to arrest, fully aware that they were guilty of no crimes.

As the Prophet prepared to leave Nauvoo for the county seat of Carthage, about 20 miles away, he knew that he was seeing his family and friends for the last time. He prophesied, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning."¹³

As the Prophet started out, B. Rogers, who had worked on Joseph's farm for more than three years, and two other boys hiked across the fields and sat on the rail fence waiting for their friend and leader to pass by. Joseph stopped his horse beside the boys and said to the militiamen who were with him: "Gentlemen, this is my farm and these are my boys. They like me, and I like them." After shaking each boy's hand, he mounted his horse and rode on to his rendezvous with death.¹⁴

Dan Jones, a Welsh convert, joined the Prophet in the Carthage Jail. On 26 June 1844, the last night of his life, Joseph heard a gun fire, left the bed, and lay on the floor near Jones. The Prophet whispered, "Are you afraid to die?" "Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death would have many terrors," Jones replied. "You will yet see Wales and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die," Joseph prophesied.¹⁵ Thousands of faithful Latterday Saints enjoy the blessings of the Church today because Dan Jones later served an honorable and successful mission to Wales.

Shortly after five o'clock in the afternoon of 27 June 1844, a mob of about 200 men with painted faces stormed the Carthage Jail, shot and killed Joseph and his brother Hyrum, and seriously wounded John Taylor. Only Willard Richards remained unharmed. Upon hearing shouts of "the Mormons are coming," the mob fled, as did most of Carthage's residents. Willard Richards cared for the wounded John Taylor,

both of them mourning their slain leaders. Hyrum's body was inside the jail, while Joseph, who had fallen from a window, lay beside the outside well.

One of the first Latter-day Saints to arrive on the scene was the dead martyrs' brother Samuel. He and others helped Willard Richards prepare the bodies for the long, sorrowful journey back to Nauvoo.

Meanwhile, in Warsaw, Illinois, the James Cowley family, who were members of the Church, prepared for their evening meal. Fourteen-year-old Matthias heard about some unusual excitement in town and joined a gathering crowd. The principal speaker saw young Cowley and ordered him to go home to his mother. Boys who were not Church members followed, pelting him with rubbish before he escaped by running through a neighbor's yard.

Believing that things had quieted down, Matthias started for the river to get a pail of water. Members of the mob spotted him and paid a drunken tailor to throw him into the river. When Matthias stopped to dip the water, the tailor caught him by the back of his neck and said, "You ... little Mormon, I'll drown you." Matthias said, "I asked him why he would drown me, and if I ever did any harm to him? No, says he, 'I won't drown you.... You're a good boy, you may go home.'" That night mobsters unsuccessfully attempted three times to set fire to the Cowley home, but through faith and prayers the family was protected.¹⁶ Matthias Cowley grew and remained faithful in the Church; his son Matthias and grandson Matthew later served in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Illinois Governor Thomas Ford wrote of the martyrdom: "The murder of the Smiths, instead of putting an end to ... the Mormons and dispersing them, as many believed it would, only bound them together closer than ever, gave them new confidence in their faith."¹⁷ Ford also wrote, "Some gifted man like Paul, some splendid orator who will be able by his eloquence to attract crowds of the thousands.... may succeed in breathing a new life into [the Mormon church] and make the name of the martyred Joseph ring ... loud and stir the souls of men." Ford lived with a fear that this would happen and that his own name would, like the names of Pilate and Herod, be "dragged down to posterity." Ford's fear came true.

President John Taylor recovered from his wounds and later wrote a tribute to the slain leaders that is now section 135 of the Doctrine and Covenants. He said: "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it... He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in

death they were not separated! ... They lived for glory; they died for glory; and glory is their eternal reward" (D&C 135:3, 6).

Endnotes:

11. "Journal of Louisa Barnes Pratt," 8:231.
12. History of the Church, 4:587, 604; 6:558.
13. History of the Church, 6:555.
14. Kenneth W Godfrey "A Time, a Season, When Murder Was in the Air," Mormon Heritage, July/Aug. 1994, 35-36.
15. History of the Church, 6:601.
16. Matthias Cowley, "Reminiscences" (1856), 3; in LDS Church Archives.
17. Thomas Ford, A History of Illinois, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, 2 vols. (1946), 2:217.

Church History in the Fulness of Times, Religino 341-343, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Chapter 22, pp 273-285.

**CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
THE MARTYRDOM**

Time Line	
<i>Date</i>	<i>Significant Event</i>
24 Mar 1844	Joseph Smith revealed to Saints a conspiracy against him
6Apr. 1844	Joseph Smith thwarted designs of conspirators at general conference
7 June 1844	Conspirators published the first and only edition of Nauvoo Expositor
10 June 1844	Nauvoo city council ordered destruction of Expositor
18 June 1844	Joseph Smith placed Nauvoo under martial law
22 June 1844	Governor Ford insisted Joseph and Hyrum Smith go to Carthage to answer charges against them
24 June 1844	Joseph and Hyrum went to Carthage
27 June 1844	Joseph and Hyrum murdered in Carthage by a mob

EVEN WHEN HE BEGAN his ministry, the Prophet Joseph Smith knew he might have to die for his religion. While Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon the Lord promised him eternal life if he was "firm in keeping the commandments ... even if you should be slain" (D&C 5:22). A month later the Lord again spoke of possible violent death. "And even if they do unto you even as they have done unto me, blessed are ye, for you shall dwell with me in glory" (D&C 6:30). The Prophet also received some important assurances, however, regarding his earthly mission. Several years later in Liberty Jail the Lord promised him: "Thy days are known, and

thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever" (D&C 122:9).

In 1840 his father's dying blessing promised him, "'You shall even live to finish your work.' At this Joseph cried out, weeping, 'Oh! my father, shall I?' 'Yes,' said his father, 'you shall live to lay out the plan of all the work which God has given you to do.'"¹ Joseph Smith, heeding the Spirit's promptings, valiantly completed his mission, suffered martyrdom, and qualified for a glorious reward; thus these prophecies were fulfilled.

FOREBODINGS OF DEATH

As the Prophet continued his ministry during the Nauvoo period, he increasingly felt the forebodings of the Spirit that his ministry on earth was nearing its end. He expressed these feelings to those closest to him and occasionally spoke of them to the Saints in general. To a large congregation in the uncompleted Nauvoo Temple on 22 January 1843, Joseph spoke of the power of the priesthood being used to establish the kingdom of God in the latter days. He explained that the temple endowment would "prepare the disciples for their mission into the world." Referring to his own role, Joseph declared, "I understand my mission and business. God Almighty is my shield, and what can man do if God is my friend. I shall not be sacrificed until my time comes. Then I shall be offered freely."²

One of the most pointed and poignant of Joseph Smith's martyrdom prophecies was made to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the spring of 1844. Orson Hyde remembered the account: "We were in council with Brother Joseph almost every day for weeks. Says Brother Joseph in one of those councils, there is something going to happen; I don't know what it is, but the Lord bids me to hasten and give you your endowment before the temple is finished. He conducted us through every ordinance of the holy priesthood, and when he had gone through with all the ordinances he rejoiced very much, and said, now if they kill me you have got all the keys and all the ordinances and you can confer them upon others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down the kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up."³

Like everyone, the Prophet wanted to live. He wanted to enjoy the company of his wife, play with his children, speak to the Saints, and enjoy the fellowship of good people. Despite knowing that he would probably soon die, he was a man who loved life. He met often with the Saints, and some of his greatest sermons were delivered within weeks of his martyrdom.

CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE PROPHET

In stark contrast to the righteousness of most of the Saints who lived in prospering Nauvoo was the spreading apostasy in their midst. William Law, second counselor to Joseph Smith, and his brother Wilson led the conspiracy against the Prophet. Throughout the early months of 1844 their followers gradually grew to approximately two hundred people. Other leaders included the brothers Robert and Charles Foster, Chauncey and Francis Higbee, and two influential non-Mormons—Sylvester Emmons, a member of the Nauvoo city council, and Joseph H. Jackson, a notorious criminal.

On Sunday, 24 March 1844, Joseph Smith spoke at the temple about the conspiracy, having just learned of it from an informant. He revealed who some of his enemies were and added that, "The lies that Higbee has hatched up as a foundation to work upon is, he says that I had men's heads cut off in Missouri and that I had a sword run through the hearts of the people that I wanted to kill and put out of the way. I won't swear out a warrant against them for I don't fear any of them. They would not scare off an old setting hen."⁴

At the April general conference, the conspirators sought the downfall of the Prophet. Confident that the majority of the Saints would oppose the principle of plural marriage, they planned to bring up the subject at the business session of the conference. They were also prepared to argue that Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet because few if any revelations had been published and circulated among Church members in the previous months. In an effort to thwart the conspirators, the Prophet testified at the beginning of the conference that he was not a fallen prophet, that he had never felt nearer to God than at that time, and that he would show the people before the conference closed that God was with him.⁵ The next day he addressed the conference for two hours in what became known as the King Follett Discourse. On that occasion, the faithful witnessed the majesty of their Prophet.

The Nauvoo Expositor, published on 7 June 1844, attempted to rally anti-Mormons against the Church in Nauvoo. The suppression of the paper, the destruction of the press, and the accidental razing of the building brought legal charges against Nauvoo mayor Joseph Smith, which resulted in his going to Carthage.

THE EXPOSITOR AFFAIR

Leaders of the conspiracy were exposed in the Times and Seasons and were excommunicated from the Church. Thwarted in their plans, the dissenters decided to publish an opposition newspaper. The first and only issue of their paper, which was called the Nauvoo Expositor, appeared on 7 June 1844. Throughout the paper they accused Joseph Smith of teaching vicious principles, practicing whoredoms, advocating so-called spiritual wifery, grasping for political power, preaching that

there were many gods, speaking blasphemously of God, and promoting an inquisition.

The city council met in long sessions on Saturday, 8 June and again the following Monday. They suspended one of their members, the non-Mormon Sylvester Emmons, who was the editor of the *Expositor*, and discussed the identity of the publishers and their intent. Using the famous English jurist William Blackstone as their legal authority and having examined various municipal codes, the council ruled that the newspaper was a public nuisance in that it slandered individuals in the city. Moreover, they reasoned that if nothing were done to stop the libelous paper, the anti-Mormons would be aroused to mob action.

Joseph Smith, as mayor, ordered the city marshal, John Greene, to destroy the press, scatter the type, and burn any remaining newspapers. The order was carried out within hours. The city council acted legally to abate a public nuisance, although the legal opinion of the time allowed only the destruction of the published issues of the offending paper. The demolition of the press was a violation of property rights.⁶

After the destruction of the press, the publishers rushed to Carthage and obtained a warrant against the Nauvoo city council on charge of riot for the action. On 13 and 14 June, however, Joseph Smith and the other council members were released following a habeas corpus hearing before the Nauvoo municipal court. This further aroused the public. Also, even though Illinois had experienced twenty similar destructions of printing presses over the previous two decades without such a reaction, the enemies of the Church proclaimed the *Expositor* incident a violation of freedom of the press.

These actions prompted citizens' groups in Hancock County to call for the removal of the Saints from Illinois. Thomas Sharp vehemently expressed the feelings of many of the enemies of the Church when he editorialized in the *Warsaw Signal*: "War and extermination is inevitable! Citizens ARISE, ONE and ALL!!!-Can you stand by, and suffer such INFERNAL DEVILS! to ROB men of their property and RIGHTS, without avenging them. We have no time for comment, every man will make his own. LET IT BE MADE WITH POWDER AND BALL!!!"⁷

The situation was so dangerous that Joseph Smith wrote Governor Ford apprising him of the circumstances and including many affidavits to explain the threats against the Saints. Hyrum Smith wrote Brigham Young that the Twelve and all other elders on political missions should return at once to Nauvoo. Hyrum stated, "You know we are not frightened, but think it best to be well prepared and be ready for the onset."⁸ Joseph mobilized his guards and the Nauvoo Legion, and on 18 June placed the city under martial law. Meanwhile Hancock County citizens asked

Governor Ford to mobilize the state militia and bring the Nauvoo offenders to justice.

The excitement was so intense that Ford published an open letter urging calmness and then went to Carthage to neutralize a situation that threatened civil war.⁹ He also wrote to Joseph Smith insisting that only a trial of the city council members before a non-Mormon jury in Carthage would satisfy the people. He promised complete protection for the defendants if they would give themselves up. The Prophet did not believe that the governor could fulfill his pledge. He wrote back, "Writs, we are assured, are issued against us in various parts of the country. For what? To drag us from place to place, from court to court, across the creeks and prairies, till some bloodthirsty villain could find his opportunity to shoot us. We dare not come."¹⁰

In counsel with his brethren, Joseph Smith read a letter from the governor that seemed to show no mercy toward them, and they considered what should be done next. In the course of the deliberations, Joseph's face brightened, and he declared, "The way is open. It is clear to my mind what to do. All they want is Hyrum and myself; then tell everybody to go about their business, and not to collect in groups, but to scatter about.... We will cross the river tonight, and go away to the West."¹¹ Stephen Markham, a close friend of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was present in the all-night council and heard Joseph Smith say that "it was the voice of the Spirit for him to go to the West among the Natives and take Hyrum and several others along with him and look out a place for the Church."¹²

Late in the evening of 22 June 1844, Joseph and Hyrum tearfully bade farewell to their families and, together with Willard Richards and Orrin Porter Rockwell, crossed the Mississippi River in a skiff. The boat was so leaky and the river so high that it took most of the night to get to the other side. Early in the morning a posse arrived in Nauvoo to arrest Joseph and Hyrum, but did not find them. The posse returned to Carthage after threatening the citizens with an invasion of troops if Joseph and Hyrum did not give themselves up. That same morning some of the brethren who had gone to see Joseph argued that mobs would drive the Saints from their homes despite his departure. Joseph replied, "If my life is of no value to my friends it is of none to myself." Joseph and Hyrum then made plans to return to Nauvoo and to submit to arrest the next day.¹³

JOSEPH AND HYRUM GO TO CARTHAGE

Carthage was the county seat of Hancock County and the location of the county jail. Many of the mob were state militia who had been released from duty and came to Carthage on the road from Warsaw.

Upon returning to Nauvoo, Hyrum performed the marriage ceremony of his daughter Lovina to Lorin Walker. This small measure of joy preceded the sorrow that would soon come. Joseph wanted to speak to the Saints once more, but there was not enough time. He went home to his family, fully aware that it would probably be his last evening with them.

At 6:30 A.M. on Monday, 24 June, Joseph, Hyrum, John Taylor, and fifteen other members of the Nauvoo city council set out on horseback for Carthage, accompanied by Willard Richards and a number of other friends. It had rained for weeks, but this morning was sunny and beautiful. Pausing at the temple site, the Prophet looked on the sacred edifice, then on the city, and remarked, "This is the loveliest place and the best people under the heavens; little do they know the trials that await them."¹⁴ To the assembled Saints, he said, "If I do not go there [to Carthage], the result will be the destruction of this city and its inhabitants; and I cannot think of my dear brothers and sisters and their children suffering the scenes of Missouri again in Nauvoo; no, it is better for your brother, Joseph, to die for his brothers and sisters, for I am willing to die for them. My work is finished."¹⁵

At about ten o'clock the group arrived at a farm four miles west of Carthage, where they met a company of sixty mounted Illinois militia. Captain Dunn presented an order from Governor Ford for all the state arms in the possession of the Nauvoo Legion to be surrendered. At Dunn's request, Joseph Smith agreed to return to Nauvoo to forestall any resistance. Joseph then sent a note explaining his delay to the governor in Carthage. Before returning to Nauvoo, Joseph prophesied, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward all men. If they take my life I shall die an innocent man, and my blood shall cry from the ground for vengeance, and it shall be said of me 'He was murdered in cold blood!'"¹⁶

Upon returning to Nauvoo, Joseph directed that three small cannons and about two hundred firearms be turned over to the militia. This action revived agonizing memories of the Mormon disarmament that had preceded the Missouri massacre. The Prophet also had another opportunity to bid farewell to his family. He left for Carthage at 6:00 P.M.

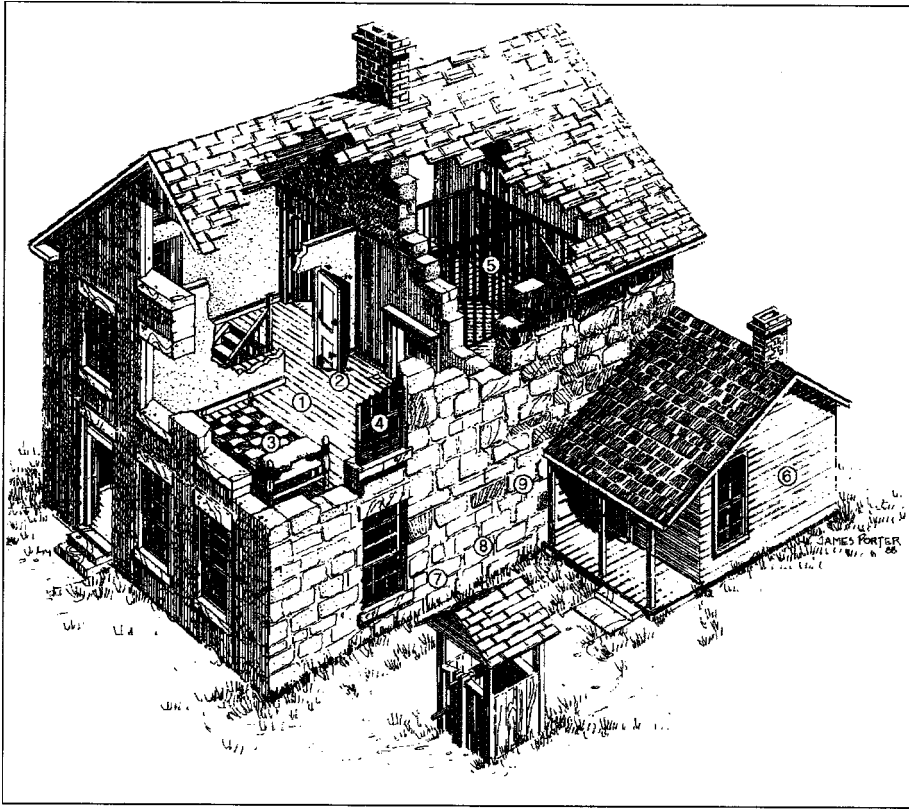
Five minutes before midnight on 24 June, Captain Dunn and his company of sixty mounted men of the Augusta militia rode into Carthage with Joseph and Hyrum Smith and the members of the Nauvoo city council as voluntary captives. Joseph and Hyrum were weary from flight, hiding out, and the threat of assassination. Nevertheless the brothers were imposing figures as they rode into town—the Prophet, age thirty-eight, and Hyrum, forty-four—both tall men who towered over most of the others.

Carthage was in a riotous state. Mobs of irate townsmen and farmers from throughout western Illinois had been clamoring for the arrest of the Mormon prophet. They were now eager to see the captives. Among the mob were more than fourteen hundred unruly militia, including the local Carthage Greys. Crowds had been roaming the town all day, drinking and brawling. They wanted to get their hands on the Smith brothers. Through Captain Dunn's efforts, the prisoners were safely placed in the Hamilton House hotel. The Greys still clamored to see Joseph Smith. Finally Governor Ford put his head out the window and calmed the crowd by announcing that Mr. Smith would be paraded before the troops the next day.

Early the next morning Joseph and his brethren surrendered to constable David Bettisworth on the original charge of riot. Almost immediately Joseph and Hyrum were charged with treason against the state of Illinois for declaring martial law in Nauvoo. At 8:30 that morning the governor ordered the troops to the public ground where he addressed them. He told them that the prisoners were dangerous men and perhaps guilty, but that they were now in the hands of the law, and the law must take its course. These remarks only incited the soldiers to greater rage. Joseph and Hyrum were then paraded before the troops where they endured many vulgar insults and death threats.

At four o'clock that afternoon a preliminary hearing was held before Robert F. Smith, a justice of the peace who was also captain of the Carthage Greys and active in the anti-Mormon party. Each member of the Nauvoo city council was released on five hundred dollar bonds and ordered to appear at the next term of the circuit court. Most of the accused men then left for Nauvoo, but Joseph and Hyrum remained for an interview with Governor Ford. That evening a constable appeared with a mittimus (a commitment to prison) signed by Judge Smith to hold Joseph and Hyrum in jail until they could be tried for treason, a capital offense. Joseph and his lawyers protested that the mittimus was illegal, since there had been no mention of that charge at their hearing. Their complaints were taken to the governor, but he said he could not interrupt a civil officer in the discharge of his duty.

Judge Smith, as captain of the Greys, sent his soldiers to carry out the mittimus he had issued as justice of the peace. Joseph and Hyrum were hustled to Carthage Jail amidst a great rabble in the streets. Eight of their friends went with them, including John Taylor and Willard Richards. Dan Jones with his walking stick and Stephen Markham with his hickory cane, which he called the "rascal beater," walked on either side of the Prophet and his brother warding off the drunken crowd. As it turned out, the stone jail was the safest place in town. Several of Joseph and Hyrum's friends were permitted to stay with them.



The jail was begun in 1839 and completed two years later at a cost of \$4,105. It was used for about twenty-five years. Later it was used as a private residence and became one of the nicest homes in Carthage. Under the direction of President Joseph F Smith, the Church purchased the building and property in 1903 for \$4,000. In 1938 the Church restored the building.

1. This is where Hyrum Smith lay after the bullet penetrating the door hit him in the face. This room was also the jailer's bedroom.
2. Willard Richards stood behind the door and tried to ward off the attackers with a cane.
3. John Taylor crawled under the bed after being wounded.
4. The Prophet fell from the second story window and landed by the well-having received four bullets, which took his life.
5. There was a cell for prisoners located in this room; this area was called the dungeon, or criminal cell.
6. This was a summer kitchen and porch used by the jailer and his family.
7. The living room was located on the main floor
8. The dining room was located on the main floor
9. The debtor's cell is located on the northwest side of the main floor. This room was used to hold prisoners accused of a less severe offense.

The next day, 26 June, a hearing was held on the charge of treason. The defendants had no witnesses present; since treason was a non-bailable charge, they were required to remain in custody until another hearing could be held on 29 June. Some of the brethren met with Governor Ford and told him that if he went to Nauvoo, Joseph and Hyrum would not be safe in Carthage. Ford promised that he would take Joseph and Hyrum with him. Joseph spent the afternoon dictating to his scribe, Willard Richards, while Dan Jones and Stephen Markham whittled at the warped door to their room in the jail with a penknife so it could be latched securely to prepare against possible attack.

That night Willard Richards, John Taylor, and Dan Jones remained with Joseph and Hyrum in jail. They prayed together and read from the Book of Mormon. Joseph bore his testimony to the guards. Much later, Joseph was lying on the floor next to river boat captain Dan Jones. "Joseph whispered to Dan Jones, 'are you afraid to die?' Dan said, 'Has that time come, think you? Engaged in such a cause I do not think that death would have many terrors.' Joseph replied, 'You will yet see Wales [Jones's native land], and fulfill the mission appointed you before you die.'"¹⁷ Elder Jones later fulfilled the prophecy, serving a great mission in Wales.

Dan Jones (1811-62) was born in Flintshire, Wales, and later emigrated to America, where he joined the Church. In fulfillment of a prophetic promise given him by the Prophet in the Carthage Jail, Dan served a mission in Wales from 1845 to 1849. He wrote and translated Church publications for the Welsh, and assisted in bringing over two thousand converts into the Church.

He was called a second time to Wales in 1852 and became mission president in 1854, where he again performed a great work among the people of his native land. About midnight several men surrounded the jail and started up the stairs to the prisoners' room. One of the brethren grabbed a weapon that had been smuggled into their room during the day. Members of the mob, standing near the door, heard them moving and hesitated. "The Prophet with a 'Prophet's voice' called out 'Come on ye assassins we are ready for you, and would as willingly die now as at daylight.'"¹⁸ The mob retreated.

THE TRAGEDY AT CARTHAGE

The next morning, Thursday, 27 June, "Joseph requested Dan Jones to descend and inquire of the guard the cause of the disturbance in the night. Frank Worrell, the officer of the guard, who was one of the Carthage Greys, in a very bitter spirit said, 'We have had too much trouble to bring Old Joe here to let him ever escape alive, and unless you want to die with him you had better leave before sundown; ... and you'll see that I can prophesy better than Old Joe....'

"Joseph directed Jones to go to Governor Ford and inform him what he had been told by the officer of the guard. While Jones was going to Governor Ford's quarters, he saw an assemblage of men, and heard one of them, who was apparently a leader, making a speech, saying that, 'Our troops will be discharged this morning in obedience to orders, and for a sham we will leave the town; but when the Governor and the McDonough troops have left for Nauvoo this afternoon, we will return and kill those men, if we have to tear the jail down.' This sentiment was applauded by three cheers from the crowd.

"Captain Jones went to the Governor, told him what had occurred in the night, what the officer of the guard had said, and what he had heard while coming to see him, and earnestly solicited him to avert the danger.

"His Excellency replied, 'You are unnecessarily alarmed for the safety of your friends, sir, the people are not that cruel.'

"Irritated by such a remark, Jones urged the necessity of placing better men to guard them than professed assassins....

"... Jones remarked, 'If you do not do this, I have but one more desire, ...

"... 'that the Almighty will preserve my life to a proper time and place, that I may testify that you have been timely warned of their danger.'... .

"... Jones' life was threatened, and Chauncey L. Higbee said to him in the street, 'We are determined to kill Joe and Hyrum, and you had better go away to save yourself.'"¹⁹

That morning Joseph wrote to Emma, "I am very much resigned to my lot, knowing I am justified, and have done the best that could be done. Give my love to the children and all my friends.... May God bless you all. "²⁰ The Prophet also sent a letter to the well-known lawyer Orville H. Browning asking him to come and defend him. Soon afterward, Joseph's friends, with the exception of Willard Richards and John Taylor, were forced to leave the jail.

Contrary to his promise, Governor Ford left that morning for Nauvoo without Joseph and Hyrum, taking instead Captain Dunn's Dragoons from McDonough County, the only troops that had demonstrated neutrality in the affair. En route, he sent an order to all other troops at Carthage and Warsaw to disband, except for a company of the Carthage Greys to guard the jail. The Greys were Joseph's most hostile enemies and could not be depended upon to protect him. They were part of a conspiracy to feign defense of the prisoners when enemies of the Prophet would later storm the jail.

In Nauvoo, Ford delivered an insulting speech. He said, "A great crime has been done by destroying the Expositor press and placing the city under martial law, and a severe atonement must be made, so prepare your minds for the emergency. Another cause of excitement is the fact of your having so many firearms. The public are afraid that you are going to use them against government. I know there is a great prejudice against you on account of your peculiar religion, but you ought to be praying Saints, not military Saints."²¹

Meanwhile, Colonel Levi Williams of the Warsaw militia read to his men the governor's orders to disband. Thomas Sharp then addressed the men and called for them to march east to Carthage. Shouts followed for volunteers to kill the Smiths. Some of the men disguised themselves by smearing their faces with mud mixed with gunpowder and started for Carthage.

At the jail, the four brethren sweltered in the sultry afternoon heat. Joseph gave Hyrum a single-shot pistol and prepared to defend himself with the six-shooter smuggled in that morning by Cyrus Wheelock. Gravely depressed, the brethren asked John Taylor to sing a popular song entitled "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief," about a suffering stranger who revealed himself at last as the Savior. Joseph asked John to sing it again, which he did. In view of their circumstances, one of the verses seems especially poignant:

*In pris'n I saw him next-condemned
To meet a traitor's doom at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored him 'mid shame and scorn.
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked, if I for him would die;
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But my free spirit cried, "I will!"²²*

At 4:00 P.m. the guard at the jail was changed. Frank Worrell, who had threatened Joseph Smith earlier that morning, was then in charge. A few minutes after five, a mob of about one hundred men with blackened faces arrived in town and headed for the jail. The prisoners heard a scuffle downstairs followed by a shout for surrender and three or four shots. The Prophet and the others rushed to the door to fight off the assailants who had ascended the stairs and poked their guns through the half-closed door. John Taylor and Willard Richards attempted to deflect the muskets with their canes. A bullet fired through the panel of the door struck Hyrum in the left side of his face, and he fell, saying, "I am a dead man!" Joseph, leaning over Hyrum exclaimed, "Oh dear, brother Hyrum!" John Taylor said the look of sorrow he saw on Joseph's face was forever imprinted on his mind. Joseph then stepped to the door, reached around the door casing, and discharged his six-shooter

into the crowded hall. Only three of the six chambers fired, wounding three assailants.

Willard Richards (1804-54) was ordained an Apostle in 1840 and served as one of the personal secretaries to Joseph Smith. He was also appointed as historian in 1842 and general Church recorder in 1845. From his experiences in Carthage he wrote the moving account "Two Minutes in Jail. " He became second counselor to President Brigham Young in 1847 and served in that position until his death.

John Taylor (1808-87), a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles since 19 December 1838, was severely wounded at Carthage. He and Willard Richards became the apostolic witnesses to the shedding of the innocent blood of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. John Taylor presided over the Church from the death of Brigham Young on 29 August 1877 until his own death on 25 July 1887.

The shots delayed the assassins only a moment. John Taylor attempted to jump out of the window, but was hit by gunfire. A shot through the window from below hit the watch in his vest pocket, stopping it at 5:16 and knocking him back into the room. He fell to the floor and was shot again in his left wrist and below his left knee. Rolling to get under the bed, he was hit again from the stairway, the bullet tearing away his flesh at the left hip. His blood was splattered on the floor and the wall. "Joseph, seeing there was no safety in the room," tried the same escape. Instantly the mob fired on him, and he fell mortally wounded through the open window exclaiming, "Oh Lord, my God!" The mob on the stairs rushed outside to assure themselves that Joseph Smith was dead.²³

Willard Richards alone remained unscathed, having only had a bullet graze his ear. Earlier Joseph had prophesied in Willard's presence that one day he would stand while bullets whizzed around him and would escape unharmed. Only then did Willard fully understand what Joseph had meant. He dragged the terribly wounded John Taylor into the next room, deposited him on straw, and covered him with an old filthy mattress. The straw, Elder Taylor believed, saved his life by helping stop his bleeding. Meanwhile Willard, expecting to be killed at any moment, was surprised when the mob fled and left him alone with his dead and wounded comrades.

Samuel Smith, brother to the Prophet, heard about death threats to his brothers and hurried to Carthage. He arrived in Carthage that evening physically exhausted, having been chased by the mobbers. Through the exertion and fatigue of a life and death chase, Samuel contracted a fever that led to his death on 30 July. At Carthage, Samuel helped Elder Richards move the bodies of his martyred brothers to the Hamilton House. After a coroner's inquiry, Willard Richards wrote to the Saints at Nauvoo, "Joseph and Hyrum are dead."²⁴

Mobbers fled to Warsaw, their hometown, and then, fearing retaliation from the Mormons, continued across the river into Missouri. Governor Ford heard about the assassinations shortly after he left Nauvoo to return to Carthage. When he arrived he urged the few remaining citizens to evacuate the town and had county records moved to Quincy for safety. None of this was necessary. When the Saints heard of the deaths of their beloved leaders, they were overwhelmed with grief rather than desire for revenge.

Joseph Smith and his family moved into the Mansion House in August 1843. Later a wing was added to the east side of the main structure, making it L-shaped in appearance with a total of twenty-two rooms. Beginning in January 1844, Ebenezer Robinson managed the Mansion House as a hotel. The Prophet maintained six rooms for himself and his family.

On the morning of 28 June 1844 the bodies of the slain leaders were gently placed on two different wagons, covered with branches to shade them from the hot summer sun, and driven to Nauvoo by Willard Richards, Samuel Smith, and

Artois Hamilton. The wagons left Carthage about 8 A.M. and arrived in Nauvoo about 3 P.M. and were met by a great assemblage. The bodies lay in state the following day in the Mansion House while thousands of people silently filed past the coffins. The shock of the deaths was devastating to the families of the martyrs. Joseph and Hyrum were buried in secret in the basement of the Nauvoo House so that those who wanted to collect a reward offered for Joseph's head could not find the remains. A public funeral was held and caskets filled with sand were buried in the Nauvoo Cemetery. For weeks the Saints sorrowed deeply over the tragedy at Carthage.

GREATNESS OF JOSEPH SMITH

Elder John Taylor, who miraculously survived Carthage, wrote an account of the event and a eulogy to the Prophet, which are found in Doctrine and Covenants 135. "Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it" (v. 3). He added that the names of Joseph and Hyrum Smith "will be classed among the martyrs of religion; and the reader in every nation will be reminded that the Book of Mormon, and this book of Doctrine and Covenants of the church, cost the best blood of the nineteenth century to bring them forth for the salvation of a ruined world" (v. 6). The martyrdom, he said, fulfilled an important spiritual purpose: Joseph "lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people; and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; and so has his brother Hyrum. In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!" (v. 3).

While Joseph Smith lived only thirty-eight and a half years, his accomplishments in the service of mankind are incalculable. In addition to translating the Book of Mormon, he received hundreds of revelations, many of which are published in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. He unfolded eternal principles in a legacy of letters, sermons, poetry, and other inspired writings that fills volumes. He established the restored Church of Jesus Christ on the earth, founded a city, and superintended the building of two temples. He introduced vicarious ordinance work for the dead and restored temple ordinances by which worthy families could be sealed by the priesthood for eternity. He ran for the presidency of the United States, served as a judge, mayor of Nauvoo, and lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion.

Josiah Quincy, a prominent New England citizen who later became the mayor of Boston, visited Joseph Smith two months before the Martyrdom. Many years later he wrote about the people who had most impressed him during his life. Regarding Joseph Smith, he wrote, "It is by no means improbable that some future text-book, for the use of generations yet unborn, will contain a question something like this: What historical American of the nineteenth century has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen? And it is by no means impossible that the answer to that interrogatory may be thus written: Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet."²⁵

ENDNOTES

1. Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith, ed. Preston Nibley (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), pp. 309-10.
2. Wilford Woodruff journals, 22 Jan. 1843, LDS Historical Department, Salt Lake City; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized; see also Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Joseph Smith's Prophecies of Martyrdom," in Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, 1980 (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1980), pp. 1-14.
3. In "Trial of Elder Rigdon," Times and Seasons, 15 Sept. 1844, p. 651; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized.
4. Wilford Woodruff journals, 24 Mar. 1844; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization standardized.
5. See Wilford Woodruff Journals, 6 Apr. 1844.
6. See Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the Nauvoo Expositor," Utah Law Review, Winter 1965, pp. 890-91.
7. Warsaw Signal, 12 June 1844, p. 2.
8. History of the Church, 6:487.

9. The previous six paragraphs are derived from James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), pp. 191-93.

10. History of the Church, 6:540.
11. History of the Church, 6:545-46.
12. Letter from Stephen Markham to Wilford Woodruff at Fort Supply, Wyoming, 20 June 1856, LDS Historical Department, Salt Lake City, p. 1; spelling standardized.
13. History of the Church, 6:547-49.
14. History of the Church, 6:554.
15. Dan Jones, in "The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith and His Brother, Hyrum," Ronald D. Dennis, trans., in Brigham Young University Studies, Winter 1984, p. 85.
16. History of the Church, 6:555; see also Doctrine and Covenants 135:4.
17. History of the Church, 6:601.
18. Letter from Dan Jones to Thomas Bullock, 20 Jan. 1855, in "The Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," cited in Brigham Young University Studies, Winter 1984, p. 101.
19. History of the Church, 6:602-4.
20. History of the Church, 6:605.
21. In History of the Church, 6:623.
22. History of the Church, 6:615; or Hymns, no. 29.
23. History of the Church, 6:617-18.
24. In History of the Church, 6:621-22; see also Dean Jarman, "The Life and Contributions of Samuel Harrison Smith," Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1961, pp. 103-5.
25. Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old journals, 5th ed. (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1883), p. 376.