1963 reprint

Chapter II - "The Mormons"

Pages 15-26 of this edition correspond to pages 17-26 of the 1855 edition; and pages 16-17 of this edition (on polygamy) correspond to pages 18-19 of the 1855 printing.

There are no significant variations between these editions re: polygamy.

The BANDITTI of the PRAIRIES
or, THE MURDERER'S DOOM !!
A Tale of the Mississippi Valley

By Edward Bonney
With an Introduction by
PHILIP D. JORDAN

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS · NORMAN
INTRODUCTION
By Philip D. Jordan

Some time in May of 1844, a small, compact man with "iron features and a calm black eye," moved with his wife and three small daughters, aged two, five, and twelve, from Indiana to the Mormon stronghold of Nauvoo, on the Mississippi River in Illinois. There Edward Bonney settled his growing family (his wife was carrying another child) and took employment in a general store. At the age of thirty-seven, Bonney was starting a new life, one that not only would instill in him a dislike for Mormons but would also bring him into contact with the vicious criminal elements which terrorized the vicinity. Eventually Bonney was to record his adventures as a man hunter in The Banditti of the Prairies, or The Murderer’s Doom!! A Tale of the Mississippi Valley, a best-seller in its time and even today a classic in the literature of the wild Middle Western frontier.

Reticent and taciturn, Bonney talked little about his background. The family genealogy supplies only the barest details, although it is generous enough in providing information about relatives who were both respectable and successful, and not black sheep. Edward Bonney, son of Jethro M. and Laurana Webster Bonney, was born on August 26, 1807, in Essex County, New York, where, years later, the body of mad John Brown lay in state before its burial at North Elba.
What schooling young Edward received or what trade he followed as a young man is uncertain. He married Maria L. Van Frank in Homer, New York, on January 17, 1832. No one knows how adequately Bonney supported his family before locating in Nauvoo. His success probably was undistinguished, for he left New York prior to 1843 to settle in the Hoosier State.

From Indiana, he fiddle-footed his way to Nauvoo, a Mormon stronghold which the Illinois legislature, by a most exceptional charter approved December 16, 1840, had made what was virtually a state within a state. Indeed, the incorporation act was so liberal that the city could levy taxes, regulate police powers, establish educational institutions, and organize an independent militia, provided that such actions were not repugnant to either the federal or state constitution. In 1845, Nauvoo's population was perhaps somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty thousand. W. Aiken, an Englishman who described the community while Bonney knew it, found little to his liking and expressed his hostility to Mormonism in A Journey Up the Mississippi River, From Its Mouth to Nauvoo.

Bonney's sojourn in the bustling City of the Saints coincided with the revolt of William and Wilson Law against the practice of polygamy, with the political ambitions of Joseph Smith, with the destruction of the press of the Expositor, and with the arrest and mob killing of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage, Illinois, on June 27, 1844. But Bonney noticed that more than religious strife agitated Nauvoo. He felt it was a haven of refuge for at least some of the many criminals who intimidated the region. The city's pecu-
stand by each other, right or wrong." This Bonney believed.

Although Hickman's autobiographical *Brigham's Destroying Angel: Being the Life, Confessions, and Startling Disclosures of the Notorious Bill Hickman, The Danite Chief of Utah* has been accepted as authentic by anti-Mormons and rejected as spurious by such Mormon historians as B. H. Roberts and Orson F. Whitney, one fact seems certain: Hickman was in and out of Nauvoo during the time Bonney resided there. Hickman also was indicted in Lee County, Iowa Territory, for stealing meat from a settler's smokehouse. The cunning Hickman, some frontiersmen believed, sent Danites as spies through the countryside "dressed in the homespun garb of farmers, or disguised as mechanics or laborers, carrying tools of their trade, so as to delude unsuspecting people, who like all people on the frontier are free to give information about themselves and their neighbors." A local historian, perhaps letting his imagination run riot, wrote that Danites went about the country at night on horseback "disguised in long, white robes, with red girdles."

Whether or not this was true, it is a fact that newspapers of the period were filled with accounts of honest settlers' being robbed, beaten, or raped by respectable-appearing strangers. Bonney himself catalogued crimes. Pioneer reminiscences and county histories recite gory details, describe the depredations of the "Bandits of the Prairie" in La Salle County, Illinois, and bare the illegal exploits of the W. W. Brown gang which operated from Bellevue. These nineteenth-century gangsters extended their activities through portions of Wisconsin, northern Illinois, and down the Mississippi River into Missouri. Among their members were several—William Fox, Aaron and John Long, and Granville Young—whom Bonney would help bring to justice.

Bonney's antagonism to the Mormons, obvious in *The Banditti of the Prairies*, resulted from this climate of lawlessness and from what he witnessed, for he once stated that he was ignorant of Mormonism before emigrating to Illinois and that he was "not much of a religionist." Indeed, he considered leaving Nauvoo and even visited Galena, Illinois, then prospering as a lead-mining region, and he inspected other upriver sites in his search for a new home.

Finally, in April, 1845, Bonney moved from Nauvoo across the Mississippi River to the jerry-built, almost primitive village which only a handful of years earlier had changed its name from Cut Nose to Montrose. This bedraggled hamlet was located in Lee County, Iowa, a few miles south of Port Madison. Although the manuscript drafts of *The Banditti of the Prairies*, now in the Indiana University Library, indicate that Bonney planned to build a storehouse and engage in the mercantile business, he actually operated a livery stable.

His Montrose horse barn first served as office and headquarters for Bonney's career as a self-appointed agent of justice. It is incorrect to describe him either as a "detective" or as any type of peace officer if these terms mean that he was officially commissioned or deputized. Bonney himself does not make this claim. It is true that he worked closely and efficiently with law-enforcement officials, but he never actually was one of them. He was more the bounty-hunter type, seeking reward either in money or in notoriety or both. Perhaps he was influenced in part by his distaste for the Mormons. Whatever his motives, Bonney was not averse to
passing the “long green” of counterfeit bills when it suited his purpose or to double-crossing individuals whose confidence he had won.

No valid evidence exists, however, that Bonney ever was in league with the Danites and knew in detail all the secret outrages committed by them or their confederates. Nor is there adequate reason to believe J. Monroe Reid’s estimate of Bonney in the former’s Sketches and Anecdotes of the Old Settlers and Newcomers, the Mormon Bandits and Danite Band. Reid, without justification, maintained that Bonney was an “unmitigated scoundrel” and the “scheming projector of all the operations of the band, which resulted in getting money.” He charged Bonney with sharing the proceeds of the band’s villainy and then, if the outlaws failed in a crime, pursuing and arresting them. Reid was generous enough to admit that Bonney was not present personally when a crime was committed, but he insisted that there was little doubt but that Bonney was an accessory generally before and always after the fact.

Reid’s volume has been justly criticized on the grounds that the author was an eccentric and that some of his judgments were unduly false. This is not all. Reid’s brother, Thompson Reid, was the prosecutor for the state against the Hodge brothers. Had J. Monroe consulted his brother Hugh, or had he even examined the records of the trial court, he could never have directly tied Bonney in with either the Danite Band or with the guilt of the Hodges. Nor can it be correctly said that Hugh Reid was anti-Mormon, for he had defended Joseph Smith when the latter was tried in Carthage in 1844. Frank Luther Mott, in his Literature of Pioneer Life in Iowa, completely rejected Reid’s evaluation of Bonney. The judgment remains unchanged today.

Perhaps the worst that can be said of Bonney is that he was a snooper, a spy, a lover of blood money. He traveled much, consorted with all manner of men, and was adept at piecing together all sorts of odd and apparently unrelated information and rumor. The very nature of his activities made him a man of mystery and earned him enemies. His foes succeeded in 1846 in having Bonney indicted in the district court of Lee County, Iowa, on charges of murder, of keeping a bogy instrument, of putting off counterfeit coin, and of assisting in murder. Because of lack of witnesses, the cases never came to trial. In December, 1846, Bonney’s enemies again attempted to smear his reputation. He was tried in the United States District Court of the Southern District of Illinois and was acquitted. Even Thomas Ford, governor of Illinois, agreed that Bonney was innocent.

The best that can be said of Bonney is that, no matter what his motives, he played a prominent role in bringing to the gallows the cold-blooded killers of John Miller and his son-in-law, Henry Leicy or Leiza (whose name is consistently spelled “Liecy” in Bonney’s account). He assisted in apprehending the slayers of Colonel George Davenport.

Miller, a bearded Mennonite preacher, and Leicy were German settlers who had come from Ohio to Iowa. Together with their wives, they occupied a log cabin on Sugar Creek, about three miles west of the village of West Point in Lee County. About midnight on May 10, 1845, three banditti broke into the shack, stabbed Miller to death with a bowie knife, and wounded Leicy, who later died from a fractured
skull and a bullet wound. Bonney identified a cloth cap, trimmed with fur and without a visor, as belonging to one of the three Hodge brothers.

The Hodges lived in Nauvoo and were Mormons. On this occasion, Nauvoo authorities made no protest when Iowa peace officers arrested William and Stephen Hodge (the third brother escaped and eventually was murdered) and returned them to Lee County, where they were indicted on May 15, 1845 for the murder of Miller and Lecy. Bonney was one of six witnesses appearing before the grand jury. Later, when the cap was exhibited, Bonney said, “I know that cap as well as I know my jack knife; it belongs to Bill Hodges.” (Bonney always spelled the name with a final “s.”) On May 17 the Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser commented that evidence against the Hodges was strong because a cap left at the theater of bloodshed had been identified as belonging to one of them. But conviction did not hang entirely upon the evidence of the cap. Leicy lived long enough to identify the Hodge brothers.

The Hodges were arraigned and pleaded not guilty on May 21. They then requested and obtained a change of venue, which took the case from Lee County to Burlington in Des Moines County. They were found guilty on June 21 and sentenced to be hanged. Bonney’s volume does not describe the execution, which took place in a narrow ravine on the afternoon of July 15. The condemned went to their death clad in long white robes with their arms pinioned at the elbows with cords. A full account of the circus-like atmosphere surrounding the hanging appeared in the Burlington Hawk-Eye for July 16. The Des Moines County sheriff re-

ceived four hundred dollars for securing and executing the Hodges, plus fifteen dollars to reimburse him for the cost of the hangman’s rope. A spectator quoted the last words of Stephen Hodge: “You are now putting two innocent men to an ignominious and shameful death. Hang us. We are Mormons.” It is said that the Church of Latter-day Saints deleted the names of the Hodges from the membership roll after their execution.

Bonney’s account of the apprehension, trial, and execution of the Hodges, although not complete in every detail, is accurate in every major particular. Thirty-four years ago, I compared Bonney’s narrative with the trial records in the Des Moines County Courthouse and found no significant contradictions. Moreover, accounts in two local journals, the Burlington Gazette and the Burlington Hawk-Eye, agreed essentially with Bonney’s version, as did stories in the St. Louis New Era, New Orleans Daily Picayune, and the Herald, the Tribune, and the Evening Post of New York City. One exception must be noted: Bonney overemphasized his role in helping to bring the Hodges to the noose. He also dramatized public reaction to his identification of the cap. “I was told,” he wrote, “that it would not be safe for me to be seen abroad, and that if I showed myself in the streets of Nauvoo, I should have my throat cut, and my body chopped into mincemeat, and that forty men in Nauvoo were ready to carry this threat into execution.”

If such dire warnings were, indeed, made, Bonney did not take them too seriously, for, on July 8, 1845, several days before the Hodges were executed, Bonney undertook to track down the murderers of Colonel Davenport. Davenport, a
former fur trader and now a frail old man, had been brutally slain in his home on Rock Island, Illinois, on July 4. Bonney had never met Davenport. A reward of $1,500 was offered by public-spirited citizens for the apprehension of the killers. Bonney, although at first reluctant, eventually agreed to undertake the task, but he demanded and received a pledge that his family would be supported and his children educated if he lost his life. The trail led him, during a period of about four months, through Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, and Ohio. At times he posed as a counterfeiter and, on occasion, as a dealer in horseflesh. His arms, he wrote, consisted of a pair of rifle pistols, a revolving six-shooter, a bowie knife, and a dirk cane.

Bonney believed, on the basis of handbills describing the killers and a tip from an unsavory rascal who talked too much while offering to sell him a pair of bay horses, that Davenport's killers were members of the old Brown gang, which for so many years had headquarters in Bellevue. These included John and Aaron Long, William Fox, Grant Redden, and Robert Birch, who once, disguised as a Methodist preacher, had robbed a settler. Bonney also suspected John Baxter and William H. Redden. Acting on this assumption, he methodically tracked them down. Once again, the genuineness of Bonney’s narrative is attested by court records and contemporary newspaper accounts.

Finally, as Bonney records it, Fox was arrested in September, 1845, in Ohio, and John Long and Birch in Lower Sandusky. Bonney sent Fox for safekeeping to Indianapolis, where he escaped and never was recaptured. Bonney himself delivered John Long and Birch to Rock Island on Sep-

tember 27. Soon afterward, Aaron Long was taken near Galena, Illinois, and Baxter was picked up not far from Jefferson City, Wisconsin. The sheriff of Lee County, Iowa, arrested the three remaining gang members—Granville Young, Grant Redden, and William H. Redden. All in all, eight men were taken into custody.

Three of the eight—John and Aaron Long and Granville Young—were tried for the murder of Davenport, found guilty, and hanged, with appropriate ceremonies, on October 19, 1845. Baxter was sentenced to life imprisonment, William H. Redden received one year, Grant Redden was released, and Birch broke jail and disappeared. The Bellevue outlaws, who were not Mormons, had at long last met a just fate. Bonney could take satisfaction in his statement, “The result of the trial and punishment of the murderers of Davenport has been to completely rout and disperse the gang from the north and western part of the state of Illinois, and from Iowa.”

Unfortunately, The Banditti of the Prairies indicates nothing of Bonney’s career after 1846. He moved from Montrose to Rock Island some time in the late autumn of 1845 or the early spring of 1846. From Rock Island, he established residence near Prospect Park in Du Page County, Illinois, where, in 1847, he campaigned for election as justice of the peace and was defeated. Some time prior to 1852, he left Prospect Park to make his home in Aurora, Illinois. A neighbor remembered playing checkers with him and said that Bonney’s home was equipped with wooden shutters and Bonney would not venture out after sundown.

If an account, which originally appeared in the New York
Clipper" and was reprinted in the *California Spirit of the Times and Fireman's Journal* for October 1, 1859, can be believed, Bonney was still active as a sleuth in 1854. A *Clipper* correspondent wrote that he saw Bonney arrest a counterfeiter on a river steamboat and that Bonney himself was using bogus money on the Bank of St. Anthony, Territory of Minnesota. The reporter also stated that he met Bonney the following winter in the Sherman House, Chicago, and that Bonney then was "laying for some land-rats." During the last year or two of his life, Bonney lived in Chicago at the corner of Leavitt and Madison streets. Curiously enough, his occupation in the 1863 directory was listed as that of soldier. He died at his home on February 4, 1864.

Bonney wrote *The Banditti of the Prairies* not only to make public his part in the Miller and Leisy and the Davenport murders, but also to demonstrate, once and for all, that he had been convicted of no illegal acts. The volume is both a justification and a defense. Just when Bonney began putting his account together is uncertain, but it must have been in the two-year period of 1847-49. The first printing was deposited for copyright by James R. Bull as proprietor on September 10, 1849. It was published by Bonney, bore the imprint of W. W. Danenhower, and was printed by the Chicago Steam Press. In 1850, when the first edition appeared, Danenhower not only operated the People's Book Store at 125 Lake Street but also was a publisher, bookseller, and stationer. He advertised that he specialized in "cheap" publications.

Bonney's book immediately became popular. At least six editions by various publishers were issued before 1858. Then followed a gap until 1881. Between 1881 and the turn of the century apparently five editions were published. In addition, *The Banditti of the Prairies* ran serially in such newspapers as the Springfield Illinois State Journal, the Freeport Journal, and the Aurora Beacon-News from 1909 until about the time of World War I. Portions were quoted in 1888 in J. M. D. Burrow's *Fifty Years in Iowa*; Ruth A. Gallaher commented upon Bonney's role as a "counterfeiter" in the January, 1934, issue of the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*; and in 1936, Russel B. Nye contributed an altogether false and unreliable sketch of Bonney in *A Baker's Dozen: Thirteen Unusual Americans*. The last is more of a curiosity than a contribution. Miss Doris M. Reed, curator of manuscripts at Indiana University, described the Bonney papers in *The Indiana University Bookman* for November, 1937.

Whether Bonney was the sole author of his spritely and entertaining narrative has, from time to time, been a subject for conjecture. Alfred T. Andreas first raised the question in his *History of Chicago*, where he said flatly that Henry A. Clark wrote *The Banditti of the Prairies*, but no proof was offered. Clark, an attorney who came to the Windy City from Massachusetts about 1848 to establish an office at Washington and State streets, was the author of a novel, *The War Scout of Eighteen Hundred and Twelve*. This book was published by Danenhower in the same year that Bonney's volume appeared. A review of Bonney's book was published in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* for September, 1946, which indicated that *The Banditti of the Prairies* might have been ghost written, but no evidence was set forth to substantiate the implication.
The Banditti of the Prairies

The Indiana University Library holds two partial drafts of The Banditti of the Prairies, but "neither is the final draft from which the book was printed." Miss Reed is convinced that considerable rewriting, polishing, and condensation was done between the later draft and the printed version. It, therefore, is possible that Clark or some other person assisted Bonney in editing the manuscript, but again no satisfactory evidence exists to prove this or to demonstrate that Bonney was not the author.

There is one further point. The manuscript drafts of The Banditti of the Prairies turned up in Chicago sometime in the 1940's in the possession of a Miss Jessamine Hoagland, who claimed to be Bonney's granddaughter. She sold them to W. J. Holliday of Indianapolis, who, in turn, deposited the manuscript with Wright Howes. Howes sold them to David Randall of Scribner's Book Store, and from there they went to the Indiana University Library. Furthermore, there is a strong family tradition which holds that Bonney was, indeed, the author. Mrs. Gus Ramage, Waxahachie, Texas, whose great-great uncle was Bonney, is among those relatives. The only other reference I have to other writings by Bonney is a letter to the editor of the Illinois Journal which was reprinted in the Chicago Weekly Journal of January 19, 1846.

Although Bonney held no great affection for the Mormons, it would be unfair to characterize his book as essentially and completely anti-Mormon. It is far less abusive and vituperative than is generally believed. The Banditti of the Prairies, while its literary style leaves something to be desired, is a straight-forward, readable, personalized account of Bonney's adventures on a lawless frontier. It deserves to be recognized as a classic in that vast volume of Western literature which mirrors rather faithfully attempts to bring law and order to a rough-and-ready, villainous, and venal frontier. It is a unique addition to the Western Frontier Library of the University of Oklahoma Press.
pitality and good wishes for the cause of Mormonism. Little time, however, had elapsed ere one of them returned, and entering the old man's house in the night, took every cent of money he possessed, including the hundred-dollar bill he had kindly exchanged for them, and made his escape undiscovered.

Early in the spring of 1845, three men, carefully disguised, entered the dwelling of a Norwegian family in Lee County, Iowa, during the dark hours of night, fully armed and prepared for robbery and bloodshed. With fearful oaths and imprecations, they demanded money. The terrified family gave the robbers all they possessed, but which, however, amounted to but a few dollars. Disbelieving the words of the terrified ones, they proceeded to search the house, but without success, and having found a quantity of provisions ready cooked, they supped with much composure, and then, taking a quantity of clothing, left the house.

Soon after this, a Mr. Smith was robbed in a similar manner, in the same county, and apparently (from their operations) by the same band, and yet no clue could be obtained as to who they were, although Mr. Smith and his family were confident that they could recognize the robbers if they could see them.

Briefly have we sketched a few of the most daring robberies that were successfully carried through in the surrounding country, and that but to relate the facts, without embellishment, and now turn to what is of deeper interest, praying patience for the uninteresting style of our narrative.

Nauvoo, the headquarters of the Mormon chief and his satellites, had already increased to a population of sixteen or eighteen thousand. The great temple, which, by the way, was built for the purpose of a fort or stronghold, was in process of erection, and rapidly being pushed on towards completion. Like the old-established system of England, each member was required, aye, even compelled, to give one-tenth of all he possessed, and annually thereafter give one-tenth of his income, to the leaders of the church. The male members were also required to labor one-tenth of the time upon the temple or pay an equivalent therefor, in case of failure in money, to the amount of such labor to the temple committee.

A rod of iron—a scepter of might—was held constantly over their heads to enforce these things, and woe betide the man who dare disobey the arbitrary mandates of that church militant.

While the Mormons were rapidly increasing in numbers and daily increasing their power and wealth, the country around was suffering severely from a succession of robberies almost without a parallel in the annals of crime. Stock of every description and goods of all kinds were constantly taken, and all in the vicinity trembled lest they, like their
neighbors, might be stripped of their all without a hope of restoration or revenge.

The offenders were frequently tracked in the direction of Nauvoo, and sometimes, though rarely, the property was recovered, but in no case could the perpetrators of the crime be arrested and brought to justice. In case of an arrest at Nauvoo the accused were immediately released by the city authorities, and the cry of "Persecution against the Saints" raised, effectually damping the plea for justice of the injured, and the officer forced to return and tell the tale of defeat. This done, the fugitive found a safe shelter under the widespread wings of the Mormon leaders and laughed at pursuit.

Repeated threats were made by the robbed and injured, and as often answered by the cry of "Persecution against the Saints!" This cry was responded to from abroad by those who knew nothing of the real cause of complaint, with sympathy for the "poor, persecuted Mormons," and bitter denunciations against their persecutors who were the real sufferers and most deserving of sympathy. Thus affairs stood while still worse grew the troubles, and the bud of revenge was bursting into blossom. Even among themselves, the seeds of discord were planted, and bitter words were telling that even "Saints" were not perfection, whatever they might claim for themselves or whoever were their leaders.

In the spring of 1844, Wm. Law, a leading Mormon, openly charged the Prophet (Joseph Smith) with an attempt to seduce his wife. (This soon after became the spiritual wife doctrine, and was believed and even preached to some extent by the leaders of the Mormon church.) This charge was promptly denied by the Prophet, and Law was denounced in the most bitter terms for an alleged attempt to slander the Prophet—the holy head of the church—and as a persecutor of the Saints. Summoned by the high tribunal of the church, Law appeared, refused to retract what he had said, and again avowed its truth, for which he was immediately cut off from the church. Being a man of considerable influence, Law drew with him a few of the disaffected members of the church, who were already tired of bowing in humble submission, and paying tribute to the Prophet Joseph, and being held the ready subjects of his will and pleasure.

Among these deserters were Wilson, Law, Frank, Higby, Foster, and others, who determined to put the world in possession of their grievances by publishing a long train of corruption and crimes countenanced and practiced by the Prophets and heads of the church, in which they had long been accomplices or accessory. In order more effectually to accomplish their designs and bring themselves into notice, they at once set about establishing a principal office at Nauvoo, in direct opposition to the will and special edict of the Prophet.

In the month of May, A.D. 1844, the new press was put in operation, and the prospectus and first number of a newspaper published under the title of the Nauvoo Expositor. It contained a series of charges against Joseph Smith and the leading men in the church, including bigamy, adultery, larceny, counterfeiting, &c. In reply to this, the Nauvoo Neighbor, a newspaper printed under the direction and control of
the Prophet, charged the dissenters from the Mormon faith with the same crimes and sustained many of the charges by the publication of numerous affidavits, made, without doubt, by the Prophet's standing witnesses. Each appeared determined to outdo the other in the promulgation of slander and abuse, with which, according to their own stories, each had long possessed a knowledge of. If either were guilty of half they were accused of, the gallows had long been defrauded of its just dues, and earth was teeming with the base, the vile, and the blood-stained.

But while the surrounding country was suffering by and remonstrating against the perpetration of these crimes, and charging them justly upon the Mormons, they with one united voice echoed the cry of "Persecution for Righteousness' sake." Then was it that the old adage was freely proved, that when "rogues fall out, honest men get their dues."

Upon the issue of the first number of the *Expositor*, the Prophet and his adherents determined to at once silence them by the destruction of the press, and the total annihilation of the office. The subject was brought before the City Council, and many inflammatory speeches were made, in most of which the members of the said council participated. Smith, the Prophet, told them "that the time had come to strike the blow! That God no longer required them to submit to the oppression of their enemies, and that he should vote for the destruction of the press; that it was a nuisance, and he should order it destroyed as such!"

Hiram Smith spoke in substance the same as his brother, and also denounced, in unmeasured terms, Sharp, the editor of the *Warsaw Signal*. He said "he would give any man five hundred dollars who would go into the *Signal* office with a sledge and demolish the press. That it should be done at all hazards, even if it took his farm to pay for it!"

Upon calling for the vote, eleven voted for, and one against, declaring the *Expositor* a nuisance, and immediate measures were taken for carrying the ordinance for its destruction into effect. This dissenting vote was a Mr. Waring, and the only anti-Mormon in the council, and little was he regarded by the hot-headed ones who were bent on destruction.

The city marshal, acting under the orders of the council, raised a force of several hundred men, headed by Gen. Dunnham of the Nauvoo Legion, armed with clubs, &c., and proceeded to the printing office. Meeting with no resistance, they entered the office, took the blank paper and other materials, and burned them in the streets, pied the type, and taking the press into the street, broke it into pieces with hammers.

This done, they repaired to the house of the Prophet, who addressed them in terms of praise, applauding them for their services and telling them that they had but done their duty and upheld the law. In return he was loudly cheered by the mob, after which they quietly and immediately dispersed. Some of the leaders, however, remained and congratulated each other upon their success, and the downfall of the power of their enemies. Foremost among them was the marshal, who thus addressed the Prophet: "General, this is the happiest hour of my life!"

"Thank you, my good fellow," was the reply, "you have
done well, done your duty, and shall be rewarded for it."

This outrage upon the public peace helped to fan the flame already kindled against the Mormon outlaws by their repeated depredations upon the citizens of the surrounding country, and plainly foreshadowed the storm that was to burst with startling fury.

The dissenting Mormons at once united with those opposed to that sect, and various meetings were called, and all parties urged to arm and prepare themselves to resist any further aggression: to be ready at all hazards to protect themselves and meet the worst. Warrants were issued against the Smiths, and other leaders, in the destruction of the printing office of the *Expositor*, and though served by the proper officers, they refused to obey the mandates of the law, and laughed at its power!

As in all former cases, the writ of habeas corpus was resorted to, and all the arrested at once set at liberty and discharged from arrest, the same persons that were arrested acting as officers of the courts that discharged them! Thus effectually defeating the ends of justice, and compelling the officer to return to Carthage without a single prisoner!

This mock administration of law, added new fuel to the flame. The public being convinced that Nauvoo was the headquarters of nearly all the marauders who were preying upon the surrounding community, together with the full belief that the Mormon leaders were privy to their depredations and the resistance and defeat of justice, now became enraged, and determined to rise in their might and enforce the law, even though it should be at the point of the bayonet or sabre. Determined to rid themselves of the harpies that were gnawing at their very vitals, and if need be, rid themselves of the whole Mormon population. Thoroughly aroused and conscious not only of their power but also the justice of their cause, they fearlessly avowed their purposes, and though still defying, the most secret recesses of Mormondom trembled in view of the bursting of the tempest they had raised, but could not avert.

The officer from whose custody the Smiths and others were discharged proceeded to summon a posse and renew the arrest from the adjacent counties, rallied under the banner of law and justice. The Mormon leaders, learning this fact, gathered also their forces. The Nauvoo Legion, organized at the call of the Prophet, fully armed and equipped and numbering nearly four thousand, with their pieces of artillery prepared for a desperate resistance.

The city of Nauvoo was declared under martial law, and all necessary preparations were made to sustain the edicts of the Prophet and the freedom of the crime-stained ones or die in the attempt.

The officer, finding his force, or posse, far inferior to that of the Mormons, called upon the Governor of the state for aid to enforce the law and allow right, for a time, to triumph over might. Governor Ford, learning the true state of affairs in Hancock County, immediately ordered out several companies of state troops, and repaired with them, in person, to suppress the disturbances and enforce the law. On his arrival, he proceeded to examine into the causes of the difficulty, and dispatched a messenger to Nauvoo, requiring the Prophet, Smith, to send a deputation to meet him at Carthage, and explain the conduct of the Mormons. Smith ap-
pointed John Taylor, one of the twelve apostles of the church, and Dr. Burnhise, a leading Mormon, to wait on the Governor.

A full investigation was entered into and Gov. Ford, instructing the officer having the writs from which the Mormons had discharged themselves, to proceed to Nauvoo and demand the surrender of the Smiths and others upon whom the writs had already been served, and in case of a refusal to obey the law, to enforce it at the point of the bayonet. At the same time pledging himself, as the Chief Executive of the state, to protect them from personal violence, and the troops under his command pledged themselves to sustain him.

The officer with a sufficient guard set off for Nauvoo, having also an order to disband the Nauvoo Legion, which on his arrival was disbanded. The several persons named in the writs, also agreed to accompany him on the following morning without trouble: and how well it would have been had their promise been faithfully kept.

Morning came, and the hour of their departure arrived, but the Prophet could not be found, having crossed the Mississippi River during the night with his brother Hiram and secreted themselves in Iowa, and the officer was again forced to return to Carthage without the prisoners.

Nauvoo was again a scene of confusion, all the inhabitants taking part in the trouble. Some rejoicing at the escape of the Prophet, while others were loud in their curses, avowing that he had deserted them, in the hour of danger left them to the mercy of their enemies, and was the cause of all their difficulty.

Smith before leaving had instructed his wife to take her children, with the family of his brother Hiram, on board the steamer Maid of Iowa, then lying at the foot of Main Street ready for departure, and leave the city. With these instructions, however, she refused to comply, and remained at home.

During the day, several dispatches crossed the river to and from the Prophet, some advising him to seek safety in flight, and others urging him to return and save the city. Thus urged, the Prophet and his companion in flight, recrossed the river about sunset, and on the following morning started for Carthage, and Nauvoo was again quiet. When within a few miles of Carthage, they were met by a detachment of state troops on their way to Nauvoo to demand the state arms there in possession of the Nauvoo Legion. The Smiths immediately retraced their steps, delivered up the arms on the order of the Governor, and again left for Carthage on the morning of the 26th of June.

On arriving there, the prisoners were examined on the charge of riot in destroying the printing press, and held to bail for their appearance at the next term of the Hancock Circuit Court. Joseph and Hiram Smith were arrested on charge of treason, and committed to await their examination.

All being tranquil, and Governor Ford thinking an armed force no longer necessary, disbanded his troops on the morning of the 27th, leaving but a small force to guard the jail, and proceeded with his suite to Nauvoo. Here he addressed the Mormons, urging upon them the necessity of observing and upholding the laws, preserving order, and respecting the rights of their fellow citizens, and telling them the inevitable result of a continuance of their former course of conduct.
After the troops were disbanded, the most hostile of them believing the Smiths eventually would be acquitted on the charge of treason, and the Mormons still continued their depredations, and deeming that the only way to secure safety was by ridding them of their leaders, they still continued to fan the flame of revenge that had heretofore been burning but too brightly. Urged on by the Mormon dissenters, who were thirsting for blood, they collected, to the number of about 140, armed and disguised, and proceeded to the jail about five o'clock in the afternoon of the 27th. Having dispersed the guard, they attacked the jail, and Joseph and Hiram Smith in an effort to escape were both shot dead. Four balls pierced each of them, and any one of the wounds would have proved fatal. Having accomplished this cold-blooded murder (for surely no other name will apply to it) and glutted their appetite for blood, the mob instantly dispersed.

Great indeed had been the provocation, and revenge had been nursed and fostered by a long series of injuries, and yet they can, as we look calmly at the past, but little atone for the blood shed on that night, the breaking of the law, and the wanton sacrifice of human life on the fearful altar of the human passions.

Post haste from Carthage, whose streets were now stained with blood, a messenger was despatched to Nauvoo with the news of this double murder, who met Gov. Ford and suite on his return from Nauvoo, and a few miles from that city.

The Governor hastened to Carthage, and fearing that the Mormons would rise in force, massacre the citizens, and burn the city, advised the immediate evacuation of the town. Most of the inhabitants fled in disorder, fearful that to avenge the death of their leaders, the Mormons would spare none. Gov. Ford, having placed General Demming in command of a small body of troops with instructions to guard the town and watch the movements of the Mormons, proceeded at once to Quincy, a distance of about fifty miles.

The effect upon the Mormons was far different from what had been anticipated, for, apparently disheartened by the loss of their leaders, no effort at revenge was made. Sad, silent, and gloomy, they seemed to brood over the past rather than to think of violence, and all remained quiet.

The bodies of the deceased were conveyed to Nauvoo on the 28th, and met at the entrance of the city by a large concourse of people of both sexes and all ages, who followed them to the late residence of the Prophet. Here they were addressed by several prominent men of their church and exhorted to keep from all violence and quietly submit to the persecution of their enemies.

All remained quiet for a few weeks, during which time the Mormons reorganized, acknowledging the twelve apostles to be at the head of the church. The building of the temple and other public works were resumed, and again security and peace were felt by all.

Soon, however, complaints from the surrounding country told that the ruffians were again at work, and as heretofore, all attempts to bring the offenders to justice proved abortive. If arrested, witnesses were always ready to swear them clear, and all again was in a state of disorder and fear. The smolder-
ing fires were again ready to burst forth, and riot and bloodshed take the place of law and order. Another tragedy was to be enacted, fearful and bloody, and another victim sent unprepared into the presence of his maker.

CHAPTER III
THE MURDER OF MILLER AND LIECY

On the night of the 10th of May, 1845, a most barbarous and bloody murder was committed in Lee County, Iowa, about twelve miles from Nauvoo, and three and one-half from West Point, the county seat of Lee County, startling and affrighting all.

To properly understand the sequel, it will be necessary for us briefly to explain the circumstances prior to the deed of blood.

About the 25th of the previous April, Mr. John Miller with his son-in-law emigrated from the state of Ohio, located himself in Lee County, and offered to pay cash for a good farm. It was reported that he was possessed of a large sum of money, and at once he was marked as a prey by the lawless and blood-stained ones.

A few days after this two strangers appeared in the neighborhood, who said they had just moved into that part of the country and were searching for an ox they had lost. They described him fully, and made particular inquiries as well as indirect ones about the settlers in the vicinity. They stayed at a house about one-fourth of a mile from Miller's one night, and the next morning went to Miller's and endeavored to get a bank note changed, alleging that they wanted the change to pay for their lodging.