THE SETTLEMENT OF ILLINOIS FROM 1830 TO 1850

BY

WILLIAM VIPOND POOLEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
1905

(REPRINTED FROM THE BULLETIN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
HISTORY SERIES, VOL. 1, PP. 287-595.)

MADISON, WISCONSIN
1908
ceived the Mormon vote was exasperated and combining forces
with others, incensed by different causes, they conspired against
the power of the Saints. On December 9, 1842, a motion was
made in the legislature of Illinois to repeal the charter.31
Joseph Smith's brother, at that time a member, spoke earnestly
against the proceeding, appealing to the Leedsban party to
sustain his city. As a result no vote was taken and the Nauvoo
charter was safe for the time.

Reports also spread through the state that some Mormons
at the instance of Smith, had made an attempt upon the life
of ex-governor Boggs of Missouri.32 Some foundation was
given to the reports when Governor Reynolds issued requisition
papers for the arrest of Smith as a fugitive from justice. After
some delay, caused by the Mormon authorities at Nauvoo, Smith
gave himself up for trial, and after being heard, was released,
owing to insufficient evidence being produced against him.33

Still another episode helped to inflame the Illinoisians. John
C. Bennett, at one time the right hand man of Smith and com-
mander of the Nauvoo Legion, quarreled with his chief and left
the city in great wrath.34 Having been for several years in
high éclat in Nauvoo, he worked great harm to the Saints by
publishing an exposé35 of Mormonism, severe and scathing in
its nature, and substantiating in every respect reports of corrupt-
ness and immorality existing within the city. Eagerly grasping
at anything which would give them a right to work ven-
geance upon the citizens of Nauvoo, many good and patriotic
men began to believe that Nauvoo was a second Sodom and a
foul spot which should be blotted out.36

As time went on the hatred increased and difficulties multi-
plied. One of the many charges made against these people
was that they were prone to appropriate the property of their
Gentile neighbors.37 This was strenuously denied by the Mor-

31 Vide Register, 63, 304.
32 Ibid., 63, 380.
33 Ibid., 63, 309.
34 Kennedy, Early Days of Mormonism, 222.
35 The work is entitled, 'History of the Saints: or an Exposé of Joe Smith
and Mormonism,' (Boston, 1842.)
36 Kennedy, Early Days of Mormonism, 222.
37 Otten, 'The Prophet of Palmyra,' 188.

n Ibid.
(MSS in Ill. Hist. Library.)
32 Vide Register, 63, 110.
34 New York Weekly Tribune, Jan. 5, 1846.
coin into a wagon, cover it with light articles of merchandise to give the outfit the appearance of a peddler's wagon, and proceed into land districts where specie was in demand. There they would trade off their coin for paper money. Tales of the "spiritual-wife" doctrine were also abroad in the country, which supported the exposé of Bennett added fuel to the fire.

Even this list of grievances shows but in part the reason for the downfall of the Church of Mormon in Illinois. Jealousy, rivalry and dissension within the church itself at last opened the road, by means of which the final expulsion took place. A new church with William Law as President was established during the spring of 1844. Not satisfied with this move Law, with the faction, decided to establish a newspaper in the stronghold of Mormonism with the avowed purpose of making an attack upon the leaders of the church. Accordingly on June 7 of the same year, the Nauvoo Expositor appeared, bearing the motto, "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." It boldly attacked Smith and his associates for immorality. The first issue was the last, for on the tenth of the month the city council declared the Expositor a nuisance and the city marshal at the head of the police force destroyed the press, while the editors fled from the city making appeals to the laws of the state for redress. The action of the Mormon authorities was construed as an attack upon freedom of speech, liberty of the press and the right of private property and writs for the arrest of Joseph Smith and others were secured at Carthage, the county seat of Hancock county. Officers were sent to make the arrests but after they were executed the constable of Nauvoo produced a writ of habeas corpus sworn out before the municipal court of the city and compelled the release of the prisoners. Feeling against the Mormons ran high and many of them foreseeing serious trouble that the city. Joseph Smith placed the city under martial law, while armed bands of Gentiles formed throughout the country enrolled under the sheriff's orders, ready to march upon Nauvoo.

Here Governor Ford interfered. Coming to Carthage he sent a message to the prophet demanding an explanation of the trouble. Smith went in person to Carthage to make his defence and was bound over, together with the members of the Nauvoo city council, to appear at the following term of court. Almost immediately after the hearing, the prophet with three followers was arrested upon the charge of treason and thrown into jail. Rumors were afloat that an attempt would be made to rescue the prisoners, and, to frustrate this plan, an entrance was forced into the jail by a party of militiamen and both the Smiths were murdered.

The Mormons in Nauvoo feared a general attack upon their city, while a panic spread through Carthage. In two hours the town was deserted. Men, women and children, all fearing Mormon vengeance fled on foot, on horseback and in wagons. The shock was too great for the Mormons and they made no attempt to take vengeance. Nine men were indicted, charged with the murder of the Smiths but were acquitted after trial. The Mormon power, although it had received a severe blow, was not broken. Brigham Young took up the reins of government and Nauvoo gave promise of prosperity but another setback was experienced almost immediately. The August election had resulted in the success of the Mormon ticket in Hancock county and officials abominated to the Gentiles were elected. The previous September had seen a body of resolutions passed by the citizens of the county stating that they would refuse to obey officers elected by the Mormons. This was followed in June, 1844, by another act, passed by the citizens of Warsaw, being

---

"Gratz, The Prophet of Palmyra, 277.
"Kennedy, Early Days of Mormonism, 234.
"Amherst, The Latter Day Saints in Fortnightly Review, 12, 327; Niles' Register, 60, 278.
"Kennedy, Early Days of Mormonism, 234.
"Niles' Register, 60, 278.
"Kennedy, Early Days of Mormonism, 230.
"Niles' Register, 60, 329.
"Gratz, The Prophet of Palmyra, 278.
"Ibid., 329.
"Niles' Register, 65, 70.