

THE SETTLEMENT OF ILLINOIS FROM 1830 TO 1850

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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
1905

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

MADISON, WISCONSIN
1908

CHAPTER XII

THE MORMONS IN ILLINOIS

The decade 1841-50 in the history of Illinois settlement is particularly and peculiarly interesting owing to the foundation of several settlements, within the limits of the state, whose impelling motive was either religion or a desire to build up a new and reformed social structure. First in order of time came the Mormons, a sect believing themselves thoroughly imbued with the true religion and wishing, by taking up their abodes within the limits of friendly Illinois, to escape the persecution which had followed them from place to place.

It is not necessary to speak of the doctrines of the Mormon church which have made this institution a source of suspicion and distrust to society in general and of hatred to those who have come into direct opposition to its members. Of its early history little need be said save that after the discovery of the Golden Plates by Joseph Smith the prophet, the church grew with rapidity. A permanent settlement was not to be founded however, since the people who were compelled to live as neighbors of the Latter Day Saints looked upon them with a feeling of aversion.

First settling in Ohio, they afterwards moved to Missouri where they lived in peace for a short space of time. Here again, after accumulating much property and bringing their lands to a high state of cultivation, they were driven from their homes by the Missourians, who, incensed by thefts and robberies committed in the neighborhood of the Mormon colony, did not stop to inquire into causes or to seek out the guilty ones but in the midst of the winter of 1838-39 fell upon the settlement and expelled the whole church from the state. In the dead of winter,

suffering from hunger, cold and sickness, numerous families set out on foot walking the entire distance to Illinois.¹ Others, by virtue of a treaty made with the men of Missouri, were allowed to stay until spring. They offered their lands for sale at small prices and even bartered farms for wagons and teams² by means of which to convey their families out of the state.

In the spring of 1839, the main body of the Saints arrived in Illinois where they told tales of persecution and privation which, linked with the spectacle of utter destitution and wretchedness which they presented upon arriving, awakened the warmest sympathy among the citizens³ of Hancock county where they landed. Great hospitality and kindness were shown them by the Illinoisans.

The town of Venus, later called Commerce, containing a few hundred inhabitants,⁴ and occupying one of the most beautiful sites on the Mississippi river was the destination of the Mormon emigrants. Here they settled to the number of 5,000⁵ and changing the name of Commerce to Nauvoo, which, according to the Prophet means in the Hebrew "the beautiful," they began to build their habitations. They were soon located at different points all over Hancock county and to some extent through the adjoining counties of Pike, Schuyler, McDonough, Henderson and Warren. The largest settlements outside of Nauvoo were at LaHarpe, Plymouth, Macedonia, Green Plains and Montebello—all in Hancock county.⁶ Besides land purchased in Illinois, additional purchases were made in Iowa territory just across the river. Together the total amount of land purchased was about \$70,000 in value.⁷ On the Iowa side of the river some 2,000 people were located.⁸

With almost incredible rapidity the town of Nauvoo sprang

¹ Smith and Smith, *Hist. of the Church of Jesus Christ and of the Latter Day Saints*, 2, 340.

² *Ibid.*, 2, 340.

³ Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 139.

⁴ *Overland Monthly*, 16, N. S., 620.

⁵ Buckingham, *Eastern and Western States*, 3, 193. For illustrations of Nauvoo see Berry, *The Mormon Settlement in Illinois in Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society*, (1906).

⁶ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 156.

⁷ *Niles' Register*, 57, 320.

⁸ *Cincinnati Chronicle*, Aug. 26, 1840.

up. By May, 1840, about three hundred dwellings had been erected.⁹ These were block houses,¹⁰ small wooden dwellings,¹¹ and occasional structures of more imposing size and appearance.¹² Many more were in the process of construction. The city was laid out with geometrical exactness. In dimension, it was four miles in length and three in breadth,¹³ filling up the semicircular bend made by the river. The streets were wide, crossing each other at right angles¹⁴ forming squares having an area of four acres each. These squares were subdivided into four lots of an acre each.¹⁵ In the center of the city was the Temple Block.

At the time of the coming of the Mormons, two political parties were contending for supremacy in the state and the advent of so many voters necessitated the party leaders taking steps to gain control of the new vote and consequently each vied with the other in its efforts to conciliate the Saints.¹⁶ Just previous to the election of 1840, the politicians crowded around the Prophet offering various inducements, but Smith, who was a shrewd man, if nothing else, wisely kept from giving pledges to either side until his price was offered.¹⁷

The price asked and given proved to be a high one and one which was to cause the citizens of the surrounding country as well as the state officers much trouble before many years had passed. Charters for the city of Nauvoo; for the Nauvoo Legion, a military organization wholly under the control of the city but nominally part of the Illinois militia; for the Nauvoo University, and for manufacturing purposes was the price.¹⁸ The Whig party, believing the price satisfactory, signified its willingness to pay it and the Mormons at the command of their leader cast a solid Whig vote, cutting down the Democratic

⁹ *Niles' Register*, 58, 192.

¹⁰ Smith and Smith, *Latter Day Saints*, 2, 450.

¹¹ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 200.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Smucker, *History of the Mormons*, 158.

¹⁵ *Overland Monthly*, 16, N. S., 620.

¹⁶ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints in Fortnightly Review*, 13, 526.

¹⁷ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 204.

¹⁸ Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 139.

majority in the state to 1,900, the lowest it had ever been known to be.¹⁹ The charters were granted at the meeting of the state legislature.

The charter to the city granted almost unlimited powers. It established a government within a government.²⁰ It placed the legislative power of the city in the hands of a mayor, a vice-mayor, four aldermen and nine counsellors.²¹ This council, the charter said "shall have power and authority to make, ordain, establish and execute all such ordinances not repugnant to the constitution of the United States or this state as they may deem necessary for the peace, benefit, good order, regulation, convenience and cleanliness of the city."²² This, it will be observed, did not bind the Mormon council to observe the individual laws of the state and they could claim the right to establish a distinct and independent code of laws and it so happened.²³ Jurisdiction within the city was granted to a municipal court composed of the mayor acting as Chief Justice and the four aldermen as Associate Justices.²⁴

A power as great, or even greater, was conceded in the charter for the Nauvoo Legion. This was a military body composed of divisions, brigades, cohorts, regiments, battalions and companies under the command of the Prophet,²⁵ and at the disposal of the mayor for executive purposes. The number of troops was 3,000.²⁶ The university was organized with a President, a Board of Regents and chairs of Mathematics, English Literature, Languages, Rhetoric and Belles Letters, and Church History.²⁷

For a time, the power granted by these several charters was used wisely enough and Nauvoo prospered, but the plenitude of power was too much for those in command and it was abused eventually when the authorities of the city went so far as to

¹⁹ Norris and Gardner, *Illinois Annual Register and Western Business Directory* (1847), 40.

²⁰ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 209.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

²² *Ibid.*, 208.

²³ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints*, in *Fortnightly Review*, 12, 526.

²⁴ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 207.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

²⁶ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints*, in *Fortnightly Review*, 12, 526.

²⁷ *The New York Weekly Herald*, Jan. 15. 1842.

establish a recording office in which alone transfers of land could be recorded.²⁸ In addition to this an office for the issue of marriage licenses was established which was in direct opposition to the rights of Hancock county.²⁹ At last it was presumed by the municipal council to ask that the mayor be allowed to call in and use the United States troops whenever he should deem it necessary for the protection of himself or followers.³⁰

Here, in the powers of the charters granted by the state of Illinois to the city of Nauvoo lay both the strength and weakness of the Mormon government. The strength was due to privileges granted which allowed the feeling of security to the inhabitants necessary to development; the weakness, in the jealousy aroused in the minds of the citizens of the surrounding country due to the rapid advance of the Mormons in wealth and the overbearing attitude arising therefrom.

Before following out the adverse effects of the charters upon the Mormon Community, a glance must be taken at the rapid development of the city in size and wealth. The latter part of 1841 and the early months of 1842 may be regarded as the high tide of Mormon prosperity in Illinois,—“the season of peaceful sunshine before the storm.”³¹ Great improvements were made in the city during the time. Several hundred houses, some of them brick and stone were erected,³² and on April 6, 1841, the eleventh anniversary of the founding of the church in New York, the cornerstone of the Temple was laid in the presence of several thousand assembled Saints.³³ It was an imposing structure of gray limestone³⁴ and represented on outlay of \$1,000,000.³⁵

Industry did not lag in the meantime. Sawmills at Nauvoo

²⁸ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 207.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

³² *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, Sept. 15, 1841.

³³ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 183.

³⁴ The building was one hundred and twenty feet by eighty feet. It was sixty feet in height and to the top of the dome measured one hundred and fifty feet. (*Ibid.*, 383.)

³⁵ *New York Weekly Tribune*, July 15, 1843. Gregg (383) cites an estimate of the cost at \$1,500,000, which he says is an exaggeration.

and Black River Falls³⁶ in Wisconsin were in operation, manufacturing lumber for building purposes. A steam flour mill, a tool factory, a foundry and a factory for chinaware were in busy operation, bearing testimony of Mormon industry.³⁷ The city also owned a steamboat.³⁸

It is hard to fix the population exactly at this or any other date during the colony's stay in Illinois, for the various writers seldom, if ever, agree. Estimates of the population of Nauvoo during 1841 vary from 3,000³⁹ given by the Prophet himself to 10,000 given by a later writer.⁴⁰ Probably the former is nearer the correct number. Estimates of the Mormon population in Nauvoo the next year show similar discrepancies. Agreeing upon one point alone, that the growth of the community was wonderfully rapid, the authors proceed to place the numbers at anywhere from 5,000⁴¹ to 30,000.⁴² Here again, fortunately, we have an estimate made by a Mormon and published in the *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, which places the population of the city itself at 10,000.⁴³ Allowing for others scattered through the towns around Nauvoo, 16,000⁴⁴ may be said to cover the entire number.

In the latter half of 1842, Nauvoo had its greatest population. Not only had the Saints from Missouri occupied the new city, but hundreds from all over the country, complying with the summons of the Prophet to assemble at Nauvoo and aid in the construction of the Temple and the University, turned their faces toward the home of the church and hastened to take up their abodes either within the city or its immediate neighborhood.⁴⁵

³⁶ Brunson, *A Western Pioneer*, 2, 168.

³⁷ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 199.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Smith and Smith, *The Latter Day Saints*, 2, 501.

⁴⁰ Caswell, *The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century*, 212.

⁴¹ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 228.

⁴² *The New York Herald*, June 17, 1848.

⁴³ *The New York Weekly Herald*, Jan. 15, 1842—copied from *The Nauvoo Times and Seasons*.

⁴⁴ Davidson and Stuvé, *History of Illinois*, 498; *New York Weekly Tribune*, July 15, 1848, estimates 15,000—17,000; *Madison City Express*, July 27, 1848, copies from the *Burlington Iowa Gazette* and estimates 15,000 to 17,000.

⁴⁵ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 162.

The plans of Joseph Smith were far-reaching and he determined that the sinners of other lands should be called to repentance. Elders were appointed to go to England,⁴⁶ Scotland, Ireland and Nova Scotia, besides others who were to spread the new doctrine in the eastern states, Wisconsin Territory and Galena.⁴⁷ Handsome young women were chosen also to aid in the missionary work.⁴⁸

The work prospered, especially in England, from which place many came to swell the congregation at Nauvoo. On June 6, 1840, a colony of forty emigrants sailed from England, under the leadership of Elder Moore.⁴⁹ Three months later the *Liverpool Chronicle* mentions the sailing of a packet from that port having on board two hundred steerage passengers belonging "to a sect called Latter Day Saints and bound for Quincy in the state of Michigan, on the borders of the Mississippi, where a settlement has been provided for them by one of their sect, who has purchased a large tract of land in Michigan."⁵⁰

Occasionally newspapers recorded the movement of these colonies to Nauvoo. The *Cincinnati Chronicle*, evidently meaning the first colony mentioned, speaks of thirty Mormons arriving in that city by keel-boat.⁵¹ They had split into two parties at Pittsburg and the route of the second party does not seem to have been known by the writer. He, however, states that another party of the same sect, (probably the larger party which left in September) is on the way from England destined for Nauvoo. In all there were two hundred and forty who came in 1840.⁵²

The years 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844 and 1845 saw additional converts from foreign lands come to dwell under the direct guidance of the Prophet.⁵³ The immigrants generally came in

⁴⁶ Beadle, *Life in Utah*, 59.

⁴⁷ *Niles' Register*, 64, 336.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 63, 400.

⁴⁹ Smith and Smith, *The Latter Day Saints*, 2, 450; Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 219, states the colony was under the leadership of Brigham Young.

⁵⁰ *Niles' Register*, 59, 144.

⁵¹ *Cincinnati Chronicle*, Aug. 26, 1840.

⁵² Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 219.

⁵³ Smith and Smith, *The Latter Day Saints* (3, 1) give the following figures: 1841 (769); 1842 (1991); 1843 (769); 1844 (501); Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism* (219), gives: 1840 (240); 1841 (1135); 1842 (1614); 1843 (769); no statistics for 1844 and 1845.

large colonies numbering sometimes two,⁵⁴ three⁵⁵ or even five hundred⁵⁶ souls. They landed at various ports from Quebec⁵⁷ to New Orleans⁵⁸ and came to Nauvoo either by way of the Ohio or Mississippi river. The unanimous opinion of people coming in contact with these emigrants on their way to the West was that they were respectable looking⁵⁹ farmers or mechanics and by no means from the lowest classes in England,⁶⁰ people "who would make good settlers if they were free from the infatuation of Mormonism."⁶¹

This constant stream of immigration, it will be seen, did much towards aiding the rapid growth of Nauvoo and the peculiarity worthy of most attention seems to be that by far the greatest number of foreign converts were English. One writer who visited Nauvoo during 1844 says that "of the 16,000 followers assembled at Nauvoo, 10,000 are said to be from England."⁶² The other foreigners were from Germany and Scotland.

With increase of numbers, an increase of prosperity came and with increased prosperity, more effort was made towards beautifying the city. In the construction of houses taste was shown and often evidences of wealth.⁶³ The work on the temple progressed steadily, additional manufactures were added to the number already in operation, evincing industry and economic success.⁶⁴ New farms were enclosed, the land was put under cultivation and a general air of success pervaded the whole neighborhood.⁶⁵

Nauvoo impressed visitors in various ways. One visitor in speaking of the city says, "Such a collection of miserable

⁵⁴ *New York Weekly Herald*, Apr. 9, 1842.

⁵⁵ *Museum of Foreign Literature*, 45, 9.

⁵⁶ *Niles' Register*, 64, 96.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 60, 304.

⁵⁸ *New York Weekly Herald*, Apr. 9, 1842; *Madison City Express*, Apr. 25, 1844. (From *St. Louis Era*.)

⁵⁹ *New York Weekly Herald*, Apr. 9, 1842; *Cincinnati Chronicle*, Aug. 26, 1840.

⁶⁰ *Museum of Foreign Literature*, 45, 9.

⁶¹ *Madison City Express*, Apr. 25, 1844. (From *The St. Louis Era*.)

⁶² Lewis, *Impressions of America and the American Churches*, 265.

⁶³ *Madison City Express*, July 27, 1843.

⁶⁴ Smucker, *History of the Mormons*, 159.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

houses and hovels I could not have believed existed in one place."⁶⁶

Other writers who have visited the place speak more highly of it and some with marked enthusiasm. Among these a certain Mr. Newhall, who visited Nauvoo in the autumn of 1843, published his impressions in a New England newspaper, giving a description which is both vivid and interesting. He says, "Instead of seeing a few miserable log cabins and mud hovels which I had expected to find, I was surprised to see one of the most romantic places that I had visited in the West. The buildings, though many of them were small, and of wood, yet bore marks of neatness which I have not seen equalled in this country. The far-spread plain at the bottom of the hill was dotted over with the habitations of men, with such majestic profusion that I was almost willing to believe myself mistaken, and instead of being in Nauvoo of Illinois among Mormons, that I was in Italy at the city of Leghorn which the location of Nauvoo resembles very much. I gazed for sometime with fond admiration on the plain below. Here and there rose a tall majestic brick house, speaking loudly of genius and the untiring labor of the inhabitants. I passed on into the more active parts of the city looking into every street and lane to observe all that was passing. I found all the people engaged in some useful and healthy employment. The place was alive with business—much more than any place I have visited since the hard times commenced. I sought in vain for anything that bore marks of immorality but was both astonished and highly pleased at my ill success. I could see no loungers around the streets nor any drunkards about the taverns. I did not meet with those distorted features of ruffianism or with the illbred and impudent. I heard not an oath in the place. I saw not a gloomy countenance, all were cheerful, polite and industrious."⁶⁷ From this description we may conclude that there was something to commend in Nauvoo and its inhabitants, for the writer had visited many places in his trip through the

⁶⁶ *Overland Monthly*, 16, N. S. 617.

⁶⁷ Smucker, *History of the Mormons*, 152. (Extract from the *Salem (Mass.) Advertiser*.)

West and had had abundant opportunities offered for comparisons.

The newly built dwellings of the rural districts around Nauvoo did not present the same uniform prosperity. This can be explained by the fact that these farms were just being opened up and the habitations erected upon them were in keeping with the general character of pioneer dwellings.

Such was Nauvoo, the city of the Latter Day Saints, when the storm broke over them. The city itself was the largest one in Illinois, having in 1845 some 15,000⁶⁸ inhabitants. Next to St. Louis, it was the most important central point and supply depot of the western territory.⁶⁹ Some families had left by 1844, already anticipating a visitation similar to the one experienced in Missouri, but others had been added in greater numbers to take their places⁷⁰ until by the end of 1844, 30,000 Mormons resided in Nauvoo and its vicinity.⁷¹

In order to understand the expulsion of the Mormons, it is necessary to return to the early history of the settlement. Scarcely had the Mormons settled in Hancock county when trouble arose. Several inhabitants of Shelby county became converts, whereupon a mob attacked them. The Mormons in retaliation secured warrants from Judge Breese calling for the arrest of fifteen of the leaders, but the militia, when called upon to assist in serving the warrants, flatly refused.⁷²

Little by little the opposition grew, quietly at first, but turned by later events into an open and bitter hostility. The extraordinary privileges granted by the charter⁷³ to Nauvoo were instrumental at first in exciting the envy and distrust of the citizens of the surrounding country. An independent military force devoted to the Prophet and the right claimed by him to disregard warrants for the arrest of any person in Nauvoo, if issued from other places, seemed more than the people could bear. Moreover, the political party which had not re-

⁶⁸ Beadle, *Life in Utah*, 134.

⁶⁹ *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 6, 1886.

⁷⁰ *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*, 5, 743.

⁷¹ Smith and Smith, *Latter Day Saints*, 3, 1.

⁷² *Niles' Register*, 56, 336.

⁷³ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints*, in *Fortnightly Review*, 12, 527.

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.⁷⁴ Joseph Smith's brother, at that time a member, spoke earnestly against the proceeding, appealing to the Locofoco 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 instigation of Smith, had made an attempt upon the life of ex-governor Boggs of Missouri.⁷⁵ 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.⁷⁶

Still another episode helped to inflame the Illinoisans. John C. Bennett, at one time the right hand man of Smith and commander of the Nauvoo Legion, quarreled with his chief and left the city in great wrath.⁷⁷ Having been for several years in high circles in Nauvoo, he worked great harm to the Saints by publishing an exposé⁷⁸ of Mormonism, severe and scathing in its nature, and substantiating in every respect reports of corruptness and immorality existing within the city. Eagerly grasping at anything which would give them a right to work vengeance 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.⁷⁹

As time went on the hatred increased and difficulties multiplied. One of the many charges made against these people was that they were prone to appropriate the property of their Gentile neighbors.⁸⁰ This was strenuously denied by the Mor-

⁷⁴ *Niles' Register*, 63, 304.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 63, 389.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 63, 389.

⁷⁷ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 222.

⁷⁸ The work is entitled, *History of the Saints: or an Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*, (Boston, 1842.)

⁷⁹ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 222.

⁸⁰ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 189.

mons. Extremely poor when they arrived in Illinois, owing to the fact that they had been dragged about from place to place and robbed of their goods either by unbelievers or by the elders of the church in attempts to accumulate property for their own personal benefit, the Mormons had gained in wealth so rapidly that their honesty was questioned.

The doctrines of the church did not support theft but they did teach that, sooner or later, the goods of the Gentiles were to fall into the hands of the Saints.⁸¹ Since they were the true children of the Lord to whom belonged the earth and its richness, it was only just and proper that the Mormons should appropriate such portions as were deemed necessary.⁸² Such were the allegations of their critics.

Out of fairness to that part of the Mormon population of Nauvoo which believed in the church and tried to live moral lives it must be said that probably a large number of the thefts committed were the work of a class of horse-thieves, house-breakers and villains who gathered in Nauvoo that they might cloak their deeds in mystery.⁸³ This class cared nothing for religion and were baptised that they might find refuge in the city, for refuge was given to all claiming a part in the church. When stolen property was traced to Nauvoo, which was often the case, neither the owner nor even officers of the law were able to recover it. Pursuers were set at defiance within the Mormon stronghold, often robbed of their horses and driven out of the city with insults.⁸⁴ Because of this protection it was not long until thefts were committed in broad daylight before the eyes of the farmers themselves who were powerless to prevent depredations.

Moreover, it was charged that Nauvoo harbored a nest of counterfeiters who operated in the surrounding county.⁸⁵ Specie alone would be taken at the government land offices in payment for lands. These men would on occasions load their bogus

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Letter of Henrietta C. Jones in *Stories of the Pioneer Mothers of Illinois*. (MSS. in Ill. Hist. Library.)

⁸³ Gunnison, *The History of the Mormons*, 116.

⁸⁴ *Niles' Register*, 69, 110.

⁸⁵ *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 afloat in the country, which supported by 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 1844.⁸⁶ 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."⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸

The action of the Mormon authorities was construed as an attack upon free speech, liberty of the press and the right of private property,⁸⁹ and writs for the arrest of Joseph Smith and others were secured at Carthage, the county seat of Hancock county.⁹⁰ Officers were sent to make the arrests but after they were effected 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.⁹¹ Feeling against the Mormons ran high and many of them foreseeing serious trouble

⁸⁶ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 237.

⁸⁷ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 234.

⁸⁸ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints in Fortnightly Review*, 12, 527; *Niles' Register*, 66, 278.

⁸⁹ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 234.

⁹⁰ *Niles' Register*, 66, 278.

⁹¹ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 239.

left 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.⁹²

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.⁹³ 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 militia-men and both the Smiths were murdered.⁹⁴

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.⁹⁵ The shock was too great for the Mormons and they made no attempt to take vengeance.⁹⁶ Nine men were indicted, charged with the murder of the Smiths but were acquitted after trial.⁹⁷

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 obnoxious to the Gentiles were elected.⁹⁸ 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.⁹⁹ This was followed in June, 1844, by another act, passed by the citizens of Warsaw, being

⁹² *Niles' Register*, 66, 278.

⁹³ Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism*, 240-242.

⁹⁴ *Niles' Register*, 66, 311.

⁹⁵ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 280.

⁹⁶ *Niles' Register*, 66, 329.

⁹⁷ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 298.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 320.

⁹⁹ *Niles' Register*, 65, 70.

much more threatening in character. The resolutions called for the expulsion of the Mormons from the township and advised the neighboring townships to adopt the same plan. Moreover, they favored driving all Mormons into Nauvoo and demanding from them their leaders. A refusal would be taken as a signal for a war of extermination and, the resolutions continue "we shall hold ourselves at all times at readiness to co-operate with our fellow-citizens in this state, Missouri and Iowa to exterminate, utterly exterminate, the wicked and abominable Mormon leaders."¹⁰⁰

The state legislature took up the matter in December, 1844, and before the end of January, 1845, a bill to repeal all the Mormon charters had passed both houses and the fate of Nauvoo was sealed.¹⁰¹ Although at this time it was the largest and most prosperous town in the state it began to decline in spite of all efforts made by the Mormons to sustain it.¹⁰²

For the remainder of the year 1845 the Saints remained at Nauvoo and the vicinity but not unmolested. Over two hundred houses belonging to Mormons were burned at Morleytown, Bear Creek, and Green Plains.¹⁰³ Deputies were sent to Young in September telling him that the Mormons were to be expelled from the state, to which notification he replied that he had already determined to leave Nauvoo.¹⁰⁴

A formal treaty was made to the effect that the Mormons should leave in the spring of 1846, provided they were protected from attacks in the meantime and allowed to dispose of their property in peace.¹⁰⁵ Representatives from Brown, Pike, Adams, Schuyler, Knox, Henderson and other counties, men of high standing who earnestly desired the welfare of the state, met in Carthage early in October and passed resolutions stating that in their belief the removal of the Mormons was the only solution to the existing difficulty and recommending to the peo-

¹⁰⁰ *Niles' Register*, 66, 278.

¹⁰¹ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 321.

¹⁰² Smith and Smith, *Latter Day Saints*, 3, 122.

¹⁰³ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 328; Beadle, *Life in Utah*, 137.

¹⁰⁴ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints*, in *Fortnightly Review*, 12, 534.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

ple of the surrounding counties that the proposition of the Mormons to move in the spring be accepted.¹⁰⁶

All during the winter of 1845-46 prodigious preparations were made in Nauvoo for removal in the early spring. All the houses and even the Temple were turned into workshops and before the river was clear of ice in the spring 12,000 wagons were ready for use.¹⁰⁷ While the river was yet frozen and the cold was intense, the first band, numbering one thousand, left Nauvoo for the West,¹⁰⁸ but the great body of the Saints remained in the city until they had performed a sacred duty—the completion of the Temple. Although they knew they could never use it, yet it was finished with elaborate care and consecrated early in May.¹⁰⁹ By the middle of the month 16,000¹¹⁰ had left, leaving only about one thousand who had not yet been able to dispose of their property.¹¹¹

Some wished to remain, saying they had left the church and could no longer be obnoxious, others had not the means to get away. The Gentiles, however, were not willing to agree to this, believing that peace could not be restored as long as a vestige of Mormonism was left. The prevailing sentiment was that "Every Saint, mongrel or whole-blood" and every thing that looked like a Saint, talked or acted like a Saint, should be compelled to leave.¹¹²

The more often the Mormons expressed a desire to remain in Illinois the more determined were the citizens that they should not. Things approached a crisis and it soon appeared that those Mormons who remained, now probably six hundred in number, seemed resolved to defend their city to the last.¹¹³ The Gentiles began to gather their forces and 1,200 under the leadership of Rev. Brockman laid regular seige to Nauvoo in September, 1846.¹¹⁵ After a pitched battle, which resulted in the death of

¹⁰⁶ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 335.

¹⁰⁷ Beadle, *Life in Utah*, 142.

¹⁰⁸ Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra*, 343.

¹⁰⁹ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints*, in *Fortnightly Review*, 12, 534.

¹¹⁰ Smith and Smith, *Latter Day Saints*, 3, 164.

¹¹¹ Beadle, *Life in Utah*, 142.

¹¹² *Madison Express*, Feb. 12, 1846.

¹¹³ *Niles' Register*, 7, 272.

¹¹⁵ Amberley, *The Latter Day Saints*, in *Fortnightly Review*, 12, 534.

several on each side,¹¹⁶ the Mormons surrendered and agreed to leave the state at once.¹¹⁷

Nauvoo was now abandoned save for the lone Mormon agent who remained in charge of the property,¹¹⁸ wistfully looking for purchasers or tenants, and waiting for any possible answer to the following advertisement:

"Temple for Sale.

The undersigned Trustees of the Latter Day Saints propose to sell the Temple on very low terms, if an early application is made. The Temple is admirably designed for Literary or Religious purposes. Address the undersigned Trustees.

Almon W. Babbitt,
Joseph L. Heywood,
John S. Fullmer.

Nauvoo, May 15, 1846."¹¹⁹

To Illinois, the expulsion of this sect seems to have been a blessing, for peace and quiet had for years been almost unknown in that portion of the state lying around the Mormon stronghold. Of the four religious or communistic settlements in Illinois this one alone was not welcome, and alone of all was not allowed to work out its own destiny unmolested. One reason may be assigned. The people of the state firmly believed the Mormons nothing more than a band of imposters and rascals. While the Mormon settlement in Illinois is an exceptional case in the settlement of the state it can be considered as a phase of the westward expansion. It is an example of a body of religious enthusiasts attempting to find a place on the frontier where they could put into operation their social and religious views.

Originating in western New York which was a hot-bed for religious excitement, the followers moved to Ohio, then to Missouri, then to Illinois and finally to the far West. Smith was born in Windsor county, Vermont, and moved to New York in 1815. The people among whom he found himself were ex-

¹¹⁶ *Niles' Register*, 71, 64.

¹¹⁷ *Warsaw Signal*, Oct. 13, 1846.

¹¹⁸ Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States*, 129.

¹¹⁹ *Nauvoo New Citizen*, Feb. 24, 1847.

tremely religious and superstitious. Prophecies and miracles were believed in and the Bible accepted literally making the state a natural field for wild religious speculation. With increased converts came the vision of a community devoting itself entirely to the teachings of the Book of Mormon. The frontier was the natural place for such a community to work out its destiny and a home was sought, first in Ohio, then in Missouri and then in Illinois.

However free the life and thought of the West might be it could not be brought to agree with or even, at last, to allow the exercise of views which seemed to be pernicious and destructive to religious and social order. The expulsion of the Mormons from Missouri and from Illinois shows another pioneer characteristic yet in the early stages of development. It was one of the first signs of "border ruffianism" which was developed so rapidly in the Kansas struggle of the next decade. In this early stage the characteristic displayed was the beginning of the intolerant spirit towards a disliked institution. The expulsion was arbitrary; it was done simply because of antagonism and while Mormon ideals, beliefs and customs can in no way be supported, the action of the citizens of the states is open to condemnation.

In some ways the city of the Mormons followed the general tendency and laws of development of western towns. Situated on a convenient transportation line and having a good back country to draw upon, it was bound to grow should external conditions not hinder. The development cannot, however, be attributed to natural causes at work in the western country; but it must be attributed to an immigration growing under fanatical religious pressure and here again Nauvoo is the exception in westward expansion. Aside from the desire of a body of people to work out a social, communistic and religious experiment near the frontier line, the Mormon colony is not typical in the western movement.