

Chapter 11

DRIVEN FROM JACKSON COUNTY

Phelps remained undaunted in his quest to build Zion even after being ousted from his home and printing establishment. The same was true of the other Jackson County high priests. They desired to be obedient to God's designs and were willing to sacrifice everything, even their own lives, to do God's will. Phelps realized, however, that the road would likely be bumpy in achieving these righteous ends.

RESPONSE FROM OHIO

The issues of long-distance communication between the Saints in the two headquarters of the church—Zion in Missouri and Kirtland in Ohio—continued to be a major problem. It would not be until August 9, 1833, more than two weeks after the atrocities against the Saints in Jackson County, that Joseph Smith, his council of high priests in Kirtland, and church members generally in Ohio would learn “firsthand news” of this tragedy from Zion’s emissary, Oliver Cowdery.¹ The two weeks’ journey was record time.

Only a few days before Cowdery arrived, Joseph Smith sought the will of the Lord regarding the building up of Zion, including constructing a temple there. Also, the Prophet had learned from a July 9 letter from Missouri church leaders (written eleven days before the mob action) that a school had started in Jackson County according to instructions from the Olive Leaf revelation (D&C 88). Hence, on August 2 Joseph Smith received a revelation (D&C 97) that addressed these important issues. The Lord was pleased, read the revelation, that “many of [the brethren in Zion] are truly humble and are seeking diligently to learn wisdom and to find truth.” Phelps would have considered himself one of that number, for he had sought truth and ways to expound it ever since his conversion to Mormonism more than two years earlier. The revelation commended the creation of the “school in the land of Zion” and praised its teacher, Parley P. Pratt. Most

importantly, the revelation directed that “a house [or temple] should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have given you.” This pattern had indeed been received on the previous July 23, three days after the Saints there had been assaulted by their enemies. The revelation also promised that if the Saints became pure in heart, the Lord’s presence would be in the house. “Surely Zion is the city of our God.”²

No doubt Phelps and his associates in Zion were encouraged when they received this revelation by mail in late September 1833. However, for the time being they knew that a large proportion of the original settlers were bent on driving the Saints out of the county. Yet Phelps had unwavering faith that all would be well in God’s good time.

On August 6, a few days after receiving D&C 97 and before Cowdery’s arrival, the Prophet dictated yet another revelation pertaining to the salvation of Zion in Missouri (D&C 98). Because Joseph Smith had not yet received notice of the late-July depredations in Jackson County, the revelation’s references to those persecutions must have come through inspiration alone. The Lord directed the Saints to abide the constitutional law of the land and to “renounce war and proclaim peace.” Furthermore, if enemies came upon the Saints, they should bear it patiently until the fourth occasion before taking up arms in defense. If the Saints were righteous in all things, God would fight their battles for them.³ This revelation is known in LDS Church history as “the Lord’s Law of War.”⁴

When the Prophet Joseph Smith finally learned from Oliver Cowdery of the atrocities against the Saints, he too flew into action. He directed Cowdery to write immediately to the leaders in Zion, that is, William W. Phelps, John Whitmer, Edward Partridge, Isaac Morley, John Corrill, and Sidney Gilbert (in the order listed at the head of the letter). Cowdery’s letter was posted only a day after his arrival.⁵

Smith demonstrated his spiritual empathy as he wrote to the Missouri brethren in a postscript to Cowdery’s letter: “Brethren if I were with you I should take an active part in your sufferings & although nature shrinks yet my spirit would not let me forsake you unto death God helping me.” He added, “Oh be of good cheer for our redemption draweth near Oh God save my Brethren in Zion Oh brethren give up all to God forsake all for Christ sake.”⁶

Cowdery’s arrival had prompted an immediate council of the Kirtland high priests. His letter was in their behalf and reflected their beliefs. They commended those leaders in Missouri (including Phelps) who had been willing on July 25 to lay down their lives for the cause of Christ. The Kirtland brethren also suggested that the leaders in Zion look for other properties on which to locate, but to do so wisely without giving up on the sacred properties already obtained in and near Independence. Cowdery’s letter indicated that “this great tribulation would not have come upon Zion had it not been for rebellion” against Joseph Smith in 1832 and 1833. It decried the false coloring of Smith’s motives that was sometimes demonstrated in person or by letters from Edward Partridge, W. W. Phelps, John Corrill, Sidney Gilbert, and many other Missouri Saints. The severe persecutions laid upon the Saints were necessary, the letter added, “to cleanse the church.”⁷

Cowdery’s letter also specifically requested that Phelps write an “extra” for *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which Cowdery was planning to reconstitute in Ohio. (Cowdery

would in short order travel to New York to obtain a new press for the church to be used in Kirtland.) This extra would explain in detail how the W. W. Phelps & Co. offices were ransacked and the type and printed documents destroyed. Cowdery further requested that Phelps send him a list of the newspaper's subscribers so that he could send copies to the appropriate people when he started republishing.⁸ Phelps and John Whitmer followed through on these requests.

About a week later, on August 18, and after he had a chance to digest Cowdery's report, Smith wrote with his own hand a letter to Phelps and the other leaders in Zion. The Prophet rarely wrote his own letters, choosing instead normally to dictate his letters to scribes. In this very personal missive, he poured out his soul, albeit in his imperfect spelling. He reported that he wrote this letter after receiving "the word of the Lord" through the Holy Ghost and conferring at length with the indefatigable Cowdery, whose own heart was bleeding for his brothers and sisters in Zion.⁹

Smith said the Lord had promised him that the Saints in Zion would once again flourish "in spite of hell." God would judge the wicked and bring about his righteous purposes, and the harder the persecution the Saints would be called on to endure, the greater the gifts of God would be on his church. The Prophet suggested that when possible Phelps should again set up a printing establishment in Missouri, but for the time being the Ohio leaders would obtain a press and start up *The Evening and the Morning Star* anew in Kirtland. Joseph assured the Missouri Saints of the pure love toward them from the Ohio Saints, who indeed were willing if required by the Lord to go to Zion to fight and even die for their brothers and sisters there. He reiterated that the Saints allow "not one foot of land" owned by the church in Jackson County to be surrendered to their enemies.¹⁰

From this point forward, Oliver Cowdery became a prominent member of Joseph Smith's council of high priests in Ohio and frequently served as the Prophet's scribe, even as he had done earlier with the Book of Mormon and portions of the Bible revision. This council considered on a near daily basis how to aid the Saints in Missouri and to redeem Zion. Among other things, they decided to send emissaries to work with the Jackson County high priests. On September 4 or shortly thereafter, Elders Orson Hyde and John Gould left Kirtland for Missouri with instructions "to seek redress by the laws of our country, for your grievances."¹¹ Hyde and Gould carried with them numerous documents.

One of these multipage documents was a revision of the plan for the temple and layout of the city of Zion. In a letter accompanying the drawings, Cowdery explained that the earlier patterns that had been sent in June and received in Independence in July were "incorrect in some respects," having been drawn in too great a haste. These revised plans demonstrated that Smith still strongly desired the redemption of Zion and the building of a temple complex there. Cowdery's accompanying personal observation is especially noteworthy:

I have found since my arrival [less than a month earlier in Kirtland], that our brethren here, have spared no pains nor labor to assist us in Zion in all things, as fast as they had understanding communicated to them. They have withheld no revelations, nor precious knowledge of any kind. . . . I may say, that our brethren here have always had the warmest feelings of friendship and esteem for us, and as deep an interest for

the cause of Zion as ourselves; and even now, they pray for her deliverance unceasingly, and manifest a love for her inhabitants, stronger than death!

This uplifting information from one of their own doubtlessly comforted Phelps, his brethren, and their families. Phelps also likely relished these feelings about Zion expressed by his ever-close friend Cowdery: "I can say in truth, that my affections, my heart, and my all are in Zion—I love her trees—I love her springs—I love her rivers—I love her pearly streams—I love her beautiful and soul-charming landscapes and prairies."¹²

Joseph Smith and the Ohio brethren sorrowed deeply that their fellow Saints had been called on to suffer in such a brutal manner. In another document delivered by Elders Hyde and Gould to Zion, the Prophet let loose his emotions in prayer: "O Lord let Zion be comforted let her waste places be built up and established an hundred fold let thy saints come unto Zion out of every nation let her be exalted to the third heavens and let thy Judgments be sent forth unto victory, and after this great tribulation let thy blessings fall upon thy people."¹³ Henceforth throughout the rest of the 1830s, nothing would be tenderer to the heart of Joseph Smith than the redemption of Zion and her people.

PETITIONING THE GOVERNOR

What took place among the Jackson County Saints from the time of the mobbing in late July until the arrival of Elders Hyde and Gould two months later? They simply tried to reclaim their lives and move forward. Temporarily, the Phelpses must have taken up residence with other Independence Saints. Perhaps they were able to reclaim space in the torn-up house that had also been the printing office. In a later history written in 1839, John Corrill reported that "between two and three months passed off in peace."¹⁴ The Anti-Mormon faction in Jackson County appeared somewhat satisfied at that point that the Saints would abide by the "treaty" to start leaving the county by the next January. However, according to Bishop Partridge, "the saints were not pleased with the idea of leaving the county; and few of them, at first, believed that they would have to leave it, thinking that the government would protect them, in their constitutional rights." He also indicated that a petition was quietly being circulated among the Saints that would be presented to Missouri government officials.¹⁵ Phelps likely spent much of his available time going about gathering signatures.

As soon as Orson Hyde and John Gould arrived in Independence in late September, they met with Phelps and the other high priests to plot strategy. They crafted a letter to accompany the petition to be hand delivered to Governor Daniel Dunklin in the state capital, Jefferson City. Phelps, the most literate among them, did most of the letter writing, as he had done many times before. The letter was dated September 28, 1833. Phelps and Hyde were selected by the high priests to represent the church in Jefferson City. The petition was signed by nearly all Jackson County Saints.¹⁶

The petition detailed in chronological order all the atrocities committed by the non-Mormon settlers against the church dating back to the spring of 1832. It was written in measured language, not in inflammatory terms. It also explained the sufferings of

the Phelps family directly on the day the press building was demolished. The petition included the exact text of the agreement forced on church leaders on Tuesday, July 23, that required Phelps, Partridge, and other chief leaders to move out of Jackson County by the first of January 1834. Damages to property were identified:

The damages which your petitioners have sustained in consequence of this outrage and stipulation are, at present, incalculable. A great number of industrious inhabitants who were dependent on their labors for support, have been thrown out of employment, and are kept so by the threatenings of those who compose the mob. In estimating the damages which have resulted from the beginning to this time from those illegal and inhuman proceedings against your poor and persecuted petitioners, were they to name many thousands of dollars, it would be short of a remuneration. Most of the mechanic's shops have been closed; two pair of blacksmith's bellows have been cut in pieces; our merchant, as you will see by the foregoing stipulation, has been forbidden to import or bring into the country any more goods, by which his business has been ruined.

The petition also explained that some Mormons, following the depredations, tried to relocate in Van Buren County to the south but were repulsed by its inhabitants, who drew up an agreement among themselves that they would drive the Mormons from that county. In the meantime, since late July, even after the agreement was entered into, Phelps and Hyde wrote, "Some of our houses have been broken open and the inmates threatened to be shot if they stirred, and also, some of our houses have been stoned or brick-batted." Worst of all, the non-Mormon Jackson County leaders started again threatening death to anyone who sought redress by law for damaged or destroyed property.¹⁷

Phelps indicated that the Mormons were influenced by Jesus's admonition to "turn the other cheek." Figuratively, he claimed, when their coat was taken, "we have given them our cloak also; when they compelled us to go with them a mile, we have gone with them twain." Even though they had not yet murmured, Phelps stated, "we cannot bear [the outrages] any longer; according to the laws of God and man, we have borne enough." Phelps suggested also that "no republican will suffer the liberty of the press, the freedom of press, the freedom of speech, and the liberty of conscience, to be silenced by the mob." The petition ended with an appeal to Governor Dunklin that he provide sufficient troops so that the Saints "may sue for damages in the loss of property—for abuse—for defamation."¹⁸

John Corrill reported, "We accordingly drew up a petition and circulated it in as prudent a manner as possible; for the mob threatened, that if we petitioned or prosecuted, they would massacre us in toto."¹⁹

On October 8 Phelps and Hyde gained an appointment with Governor Dunklin and presented him with the lengthy petition with the hundreds of signatures. Dunklin was impressed with this effort. He deferred answering it until he could consult with the state attorney general, Robert Wells, who was then absent from the capital.²⁰

The governor conferred as promised with the attorney general and wrote Phelps on October 19. The letter did not arrive until Monday, October 28. Dunklin stated, "I should think myself unworthy of the confidence with which I have been honored by my

fellow-citizens, did I not promptly employ all the means which the constitution and laws have placed at my disposal, to avert the calamities with which you are threatened." He attested that the rights of citizens like the Mormons should be upheld and not trampled. But Dunklin said that he couldn't imagine that any portion of Missouri citizens would have no respect for the laws. Thus he gave the Mormon leaders the suggestion he had received from his attorney general: "Obtain a warrant, let it be placed in the hands of the proper officer [either the circuit judge or the justice of the peace], and the experiment will be tested whether the laws can be peaceably executed or not." Dunklin then added that if this experiment did not work, he would take other means to enforce the law. He suggested that the Mormons procure legal advocates to help them sue for damages.²¹

Upon receipt of this letter, the high priests parleyed in Independence. Being somewhat encouraged by the governor's response, they decided to direct the Jackson County Saints to fix up their houses and gardens from the degradations and to go about business as usual. They started planning to stay in their Zion after all! The priesthood even met and pledged donations for constructing the House of the Lord at the temple lot in Independence.²²

NEGOTIATIONS FALTER

W. W. Phelps, Edward Partridge, and their brethren went to work immediately in "devising means of redress for their grievances." They consulted with four friendly lawyers from Clay County across the Missouri River to the north. Their names were William T. Wood, Amos Reese, Alexander W. Doniphan, and David R. Atchison. These men sympathized with the Mormons, but they wrote in a letter on Wednesday, October 30, that they would have to command high fees (\$250 apiece) since they stood to lose a great deal of patronage in the future and could just as easily be hired by the other side for the same fees. Realizing that they had virtually no other choice if they were to solve the present dilemma peacefully, Phelps and Partridge delivered a promissory note of \$1,000 to the four attorneys.²³

Tragically, the hiring of these attorneys and seeking redress only served to ignite the flames again. Newel Knight reported that when the Jackson County clique heard of the church's retaining of these four prominent attorneys, "they disregarded the [July] compact and assembled together vowing vengeance on all the 'Mormons,' being determined that we should leave forthwith."²⁴ John Corroll, one of the seven leading high priests, reported, "They soon began to rage again, and to threaten to do their mischief in the night."²⁵

The Jackson County vigilantes reconnoitered Thursday morning, October 31, 1833. Actual fighting broke out that evening. After dark about fifty armed men arrived at the church's Whitmer Branch on the Big Blue River. They unroofed and partially demolished ten dwelling houses. In the words of the official Joseph Smith History (written by W. W. Phelps and Willard Richards in 1843), the vigilantes "amid the shrieks and screams of the women and children, whipped and beat in a savage and brutal manner, several of the men: while their horrid threats frightened women and children into the wilderness." The men were threatened with death if they resisted.²⁶ The next morning, the families emerged from their plight and held a conference to decide what to do. They concluded that they now had a right to defend their families by force of arms if necessary.

During the morning of November 1, Partridge and Phelps, after hearing of the desperate plight of their brothers and sisters westward in Jackson County, prepared a peace warrant against certain leaders of the mob. They took it to the justice of the peace, Samuel Weston, who sneered at the request. Weston, it will be remembered, had been part of the mob that tore down the Phelps printshop in July. When presented with Governor Dunklin's letter, he also disregarded that, saying he cared nothing about it.²⁷

MORMONS FORCED FROM THEIR HOMES

Hence, throughout the day church leaders, Phelps among them, hastened to each Mormon settlement to warn them to prepare to defend themselves, with arms if necessary. John Corrill explained: "We could see no relief from any quarter; our only strength was within our own body, trusting in God: but something must be done; night was approaching in which we expected more or less of us to suffer."²⁸

That evening, Friday, November 1, the rough-and-tumble vigilantes desired to visit their wrath upon another Mormon settlement, this time the Colesville Branch about three miles farther west and closer to the Missouri state line. But they were thwarted by the bold Parley P. Pratt, who, in spite of being beaten over the head by a rifle butt, detained two of them sent as spies. This "prevented a general attack of the mob that night."²⁹

That same night, a few other mobocrats attacked Mormon sites in Independence. They stoned numerous houses, broke down doors and windows, and destroyed furniture. They thrust long poles through the shutters into the rooms of defenseless women and children, the Phelps family among them. Their main objective was the Gilbert & Whitney Store. After midnight the goods such as calicos, handkerchiefs, and shawls lay scattered in the muddy streets. A party of leading Mormon elders had gathered in their own defense about a half mile from town, and when they heard of the attack on the Saints' homes, they marched into Independence and caused the mob to disperse. They caught one, Richard McCarty, in the act of throwing rocks and brickbats. Phelps and four other brethren took McCarty straight to the justice of the peace, Samuel Weston again, to request a warrant for McCarty's arrest. Weston stubbornly refused to do anything, so McCarty was released. No more damage was done that night.³⁰

Saturday, November 2, was attended by even more fear than that of the previous day. Partridge, Phelps, and the leading brethren discussed the prospect of bringing all Jackson County Saints to one spot for mutual protection. This would not be easy because, as Corrill evaluated, "we had no houses nor shelters for our families, nor fodder for our cattle." But because the mob went about marauding each night, church leaders at least arranged for the Independence Mormons to remove to the temple lot a half mile west of town. Whatever goods could be salvaged from the store were also taken to the temple lot. The leaders also decided to send Parley P. Pratt, Thomas B. Marsh, Joshua Lewis, and Hiram Page forty miles away to Lexington in Lafayette County the next day to see the circuit judge and obtain a peace warrant.³¹

That night a party of raiders painted as Indians attacked the Whitmer settlement again. According to eyewitness Porter Rockwell, the mob was led by the same respected citizens of Jackson County that had put together the “secret constitution” the previous July.³²

Sunday, November 3, the Lord’s Sabbath, was hardly a day of rest. The Mormons’ enemies spent the day feverishly gathering all the forces they could to attack every Mormon group wherever they might be found in the county. They garnered the use of a cannon as well. Some neutral Jackson County residents warned the Saints that the intention of the crazed mob was to massacre them. Church leaders arranged for armed protection of the Independence Saints at the temple lot and for most of the others at the Colesville Branch west of the Big Blue.³³ Two Mormons sought out another justice of the peace in Independence, Esquire Silvers, and requested a peace warrant, “but he refused to issue one on account, as he afterward declared, of his fears of the mob.”³⁴

Meanwhile, the attempts to gain help from Judge John F. Ryland in Lexington did not produce any fruit. He refused to issue a peace warrant against the mob and instead advised the Mormons to fight back if attacked. In any event, the Mormon representatives did not make it back until the next day, when quite literally hell had already broken loose.³⁵

Monday and Tuesday, November 4 and 5, 1833, turned out to be two of the ugliest and brutal days in Latter-day Saint history. A portion of the mob gathered Monday morning at the ferry at the Big Blue operated by the Rockwell family. They took it over and threatened the lives of any who disagreed with them. The mob leaders then gathered at their leader Moses Wilson’s store west of the river. A group of nineteen Mormon men volunteered to help out some Saints stranded east of the river. The mob heard of this and went after the nineteen, causing them to scatter. The vigilantes searched for the Mormons through cornfields and threatened women and children. They found Christian Whitmer and threatened to kill him. David Whitmer and thirty armed men then appeared at the river to defend their fellow Saints. About sunset, when the Missourians saw the Whitmer party, they commenced firing. The Whitmer men fired back. The mob retreated, leaving two of their number dead. On the Mormon side, several were wounded, one of whom, Andrew Barber, expired the next day. Barber went down in Mormon history as the first direct martyr to the cause.³⁶

Later Monday night the Missourians in a frenzy sent out runners throughout the county, and even into adjoining counties, calling for the formation of a militia. They spread untrue rumors: that “the ‘Mormons’ had taken Independence, and that the Indians had surrounded it, the ‘Mormons’ and Indians being collegued together.”³⁷

Meanwhile, in Independence Richard McCarty, in a total miscarriage of justice, asked Justice of the Peace Samuel Weston to arrest the same men—W. W. Phelps, John Corroll, Isaac Morley, Sidney Gilbert, and William E. McLellin—that had taken him three nights earlier to Weston for breaking the law. Weston charged them with false imprisonment! Phelps could not be found, but the other four were apprehended. Weston proceeded with a trial of the four other Mormon men into the night. While the trial was in session, a Gentile messenger from the Battle of the Big Blue arrived and falsely declared that the Mormons had gone into the house of Moses Wilson and shot his son. Many people then rushed after these Mormon prisoners to lynch them, but officers of the law protected them

and put them into the dungeon of the Jackson County Jail across the street. Throughout the night, the brethren heard what they considered “yells of more than heathen savages.” These prisoners learned that the next day would be one of general slaughter, so they sent a Mormon messenger to the Saints where they were huddled together in fright to say that the next day would be outright warfare. Corril, Morley, Gilbert, and McLellin were fired at in the jail but not hurt. In the morning, they were liberated by citizens led by Lt. Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, who said they had better leave the county immediately or be shot.³⁸

Where was Phelps at this frightful time? Some thought that he was among those arrested and put on trial the night of November 4 and into the morning of November 5. In actuality, he had succeeded in hiding himself away. About 1:00 a.m. on Tuesday the fifth, Lilburn Boggs located Edward Partridge and W. W. Phelps and “told them to flee for their lives.” Boggs’s conscience “seemed to vacillate at its moorings, and led him to give the secret alarm to these men.”³⁹ Before dawn Phelps dashed by ferry over the Missouri River to Liberty in Clay County. There together with two other leading refugees—Sidney Gilbert and William McLellin—Phelps prepared a legal affidavit explaining the foregoing week’s atrocities. They planned to send it by express to Governor Dunklin in Jefferson City.

Meanwhile, Jackson County became a war zone that fateful Tuesday, November 5. With Lt. Governor Boggs’s urging and to give the day’s activities some semblance of legality, the Jackson County militia mobilized in Independence under the direction of Colonel Thomas Pitcher, one of the authors of the July “secret constitution.” Another prime reason for the frantic gathering of armed men was the threat of a Mormon invasion from the vicinity of the Big Blue. Rumors were rampant that the Mormons were preparing to attack Independence and do some killing of their own. Tragically, miscommunication on both sides heightened everybody’s emotions and fears.⁴⁰

Circumstances went quickly from bad to worse for the Saints. About one hundred armed Mormons marched toward Independence to free their leaders from jail. They were halted by a legitimate militia, but whose members were actually part of past and present mobs. The Mormon contingent was tricked into disarming.⁴¹

No sooner had the disarmed Mormons dispersed than groups of mobbers under the direction of Rev. Isaac McCoy and other religious ministers began raiding Latter-day Saint settlements and telling the inhabitants to leave the county immediately. Newel Knight reported, “Knowing that the Saints were now without arms, they rode through the country in small bands pillaging houses, insulting women, whipping men and threatening two-fold vengeance.” Men, women, and children, but often not together as families, fled in every direction. About 150 hid for days in the woods before reaching safety. To make matters worse, cold rain began falling in torrents.⁴² Alexander Majors reported that the Mormons “had to leave their homes, their crops, and in fact every visible thing they had to live upon. Many of their houses were burned, their fences thrown down, and the neighbors’ stock would go in and eat and destroy the crop.”⁴³

AFTERMATH OF THE ASSAULT

Stricken and suffering but at least safe from immediate danger in Clay County, Phelps on November 7 hurriedly composed a preliminary report of the recent awful developments to send to the Kirtland brethren. "Since I last wrote we have had horrible crimes," he began. He reported the worst of the basic events that had transpired over the previous week. Then the next day, after learning of even more murderous threats from the mob, Phelps acknowledged, "All hopes of going to the south [back to their holdings in Jackson County] was given up last night, when it was resolved that we should be driven forthwith into Clay county. The brethren have been driven into the woods, and God only knows what will become of them." He reported that women and children were flocking to the ferries to cross the wide Missouri River into Clay County. "Our families will have to take the ground for a floor to-night." He ended his poignant missive with "Yours in affliction."⁴⁴

Over the next two weeks, even as many Saints strove to come to grips with their cold and dreary refugee status, Phelps, Partridge, and Corrill wrote reports of the horrid events leading to the Saints' expulsion from Jackson County and sent them on to Kirtland. Cowdery promptly published them in the reconstituted *Evening and the Morning Star* that he had been called upon to edit.⁴⁵

An important contribution that Phelps made to the church was his training of Cowdery in the printing craft. Cowdery would use this training effectively in Kirtland over the next two years in editing and printing *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, and the 1835 first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

What was the church population in Jackson County in early November 1833 when the members were driven out? Latter-day Saint growth had been moderate but steady since August 1831, when the first immigrants began to settle in Jackson. Phelps estimated twelve hundred when he combined the seven hundred "disciples" with an estimated five hundred children.⁴⁶

The fleeing Saints took refuge in adjoining counties. Most were forced out of their homes and pushed by their assailants in a specific direction. About 130 were forced south to Van Buren and others east to Lafayette. In a few weeks, Saints in these two counties would be driven and compelled to flee by local citizens. The majority of Mormons went north to Clay County, as Phelps and his family had already done. Later, virtually all the refugees settled in Clay, having had to cross the wide and rapidly flowing Missouri River. "The Mormons principally used Everett ferry near Independence Landing [two miles north of Independence] and Hancock ferry west of where the Big Blue River empties into the Missouri."⁴⁷ Ferrying all the exiles actually took days because only a small number could go at a time. It was also very expensive for the penniless Saints. It was a miracle that they crossed in safety.⁴⁸ Most Clay County citizens received the Mormons with kindness and charity.⁴⁹

Throughout this exceptionally dramatic period, a largely forgotten tidbit pertaining to Phelps deserves to be mentioned. On October 10, just as Phelps was involved in petitioning Governor Dunklin for aid, Frederick G. Williams, counselor to Joseph Smith in the presidency of the high priesthood, wrote a letter to Phelps and the other Missouri high priests in behalf of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, who a few days earlier had

embarked on a proselytizing mission to Upper Canada. Williams knew, of course, that Phelps and his family had been forcibly removed from their home in Independence, but he knew nothing more about their plight. Williams wrote that if Phelps were “obliged” to leave Missouri for his own safety, he should come to Kirtland and take with him Oliver Cowdery’s wife, Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery. (No doubt Cowdery severely missed his bride of less than a year whom he had to leave behind in his quick exit the previous July from Independence.) On the other hand, Williams noted, Phelps might be required to stay in Missouri in order to help with the redress projects.⁵⁰ As it turned out, by the time Phelps heard of this offer from Williams, he and all the other Saints were being forcibly driven from Jackson County. This idea of Phelps removing to Kirtland at this time became moot. He needed to stay for two reasons: to help the distressed Saints resettle and to appeal to the Missouri government for protection and aid.

NOTES

1. *JSP*, D3:238.
2. D&C 97:1, 3–5, 10–12, 15–19; *JSP*, D3:193–203; *JSP*, MRB:536–41.
3. See especially D&C 98:6–8, 16, 32–38; *JSP*, D3:221–28; *JSP*, MRB:546–59.
4. Later, when Phelps was caught in the middle of the 1838 Mormon Missouri War, he observed how the Saints both correctly and incorrectly applied principles of the “Law of War” in that instance (see chapter 21 herein).
5. Cowdery’s letter of October 10, 1833, along with discussion of its historical significance, is found in *JSP*, D3:238–43.
6. *JSP*, D3:243.
7. *JSP*, D3:239–43.
8. *JSP*, D3:242.
9. This letter, along with discussion of its historical setting and significance, is found in *JSP*, D3:258–69.
10. *JSP*, D3:262–69.
11. MHC, vol. A-1, 344–45; *HC*, 1:407, 409–10, 417.
12. Cowdery’s letter and the accompanying drawings in the hand of Frederick G. Williams, along with discussion of their historical setting and significance, are in *JSP*, D3:269–87.
13. *JSP*, D3:293; MHC, vol. A-1, “Addenda, Note A, 9 September 1833”; *HC*, 1:408.
14. John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* (St. Louis: printed for the author, 1839), in *JSP*, H2:147.
15. *JSP*, H2:211–12.
16. MHC, vol. A-1, 346–55; *HC*, 1:410–15; “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin, Governor of the State of Missouri,” *EMS* 2, no. 15 (December 1833): 114–15.
17. MHC, vol. A-1, 346–55; *HC*, 1:410–15; “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin,” 115; underlining in original.
18. MHC, vol. A-1, 354–55; *HC*, 1:414–15; “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin,” 115.
19. John Corrill, “From Missouri,” *EMS* 2, no. 16 (January 1834): 124.
20. MHC, vol. A-1, 356; *HC*, 1:423.
21. MHC, vol. A-1, 363–64; *HC*, 1:423–24; “To His Excellency, Daniel Dunklin,” 115.

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