

Chapter 20

THE BOTTOM FALLS OUT

William W. Phelps was perhaps at the pinnacle of his leadership in the restored church and gospel of Jesus Christ in early 1837. As one of the ten church presidents,¹ he was respected by nearly every church member in Missouri and Kirtland. Indeed, he had given much to the church membership since his baptism six years earlier. He was now forty-five years old and likely saw an important future for himself in church leadership as the Saints prepared for the New Jerusalem and the second coming of the Savior.

As the beauties of spring arrived in Caldwell County in 1837, most would agree that nearly everything was going well for the Missouri Saints. Far West resident Reed Peck wrote that confidence in Far West soared because soon there were six stores “all doing very good business.” Peck claimed that the leadership of Phelps, John Whitmer, Edward Partridge, and John Corrill “had gained [Mormons] an honorable character among their immediate neighbors, which with their industry and economy bade fair to make Caldwell one of the most respectable & thriving counties in Upper Misso.”² Notably, however, Caldwell County’s prosperity in 1837 was not matched for the Saints in Kirtland, where monumental financial reverses were at that very moment taking place. Apostasy would arise in Ohio that would have severe implications for the Missouri Saints, and most definitely for William W. Phelps.

CHARGES AGAINST PHELPS AND JOHN WHITMER

Despite enthusiastic prospects in Far West, over the next year Phelps would find himself in serious trouble. It would come about through complex circumstances, including imprudent leadership and financial decisions by Phelps and John Whitmer, petty leadership jealousies and squabbles in Missouri, lack of good communication among the members,

wholesale apostasy and economic challenges for the church in Ohio, and a definite misunderstanding of events in Missouri on Joseph Smith's part.

Phelps's challenges, and also those of his good friend and colleague John Whitmer, began with souring relationships with the two most senior apostles—Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten, who resided in Far West. The break in good relations with Elder Marsh is especially ironic. Phelps and Marsh had known each other since 1830 in Canandaigua, New York, where they discussed the restored gospel together. Marsh and his family moved to Jackson County in 1832 and were in Clay County when Zion's Camp arrived in June 1834. He was one of the several high priests in Zion and frequently had met in council meetings with Phelps. He was one of the original high council members under the presidency of David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer. Elder Marsh was called as one of the first twelve apostles in February 1835. Phelps and Marsh remained good friends with each other in Kirtland. After the Kirtland endowment, Phelps and Marsh returned to their respective families in Clay County.

They worked harmoniously together in May, June, and July 1836 until Marsh was called on his financial mission by Phelps and Whitmer in behalf of "Poor Bleeding Zion" (referred to in chapter 19). Marsh returned to Missouri in October, bringing Elder Patten and Patten's wife Phoebe (the Pattens were childless) with him. In a few months a serious breach took place between presidency members Phelps and John Whitmer (President David Whitmer still being absent) and the two apostles. It was a leadership power struggle of sorts owing to poor judgment by both sides of the conflict. Before long, jealousies got out of hand. In essence, Marsh and Patten would stage a coup to oust Phelps and Whitmer from their leadership positions and ultimately push them out of the church.³ Another part of the irony is that Elder Marsh, through his actions, would ultimately contribute immensely to circumstances involved with violence against Joseph Smith and the church in October and November 1838. Thus, to understand Phelps's travails, we first need to see what led up to Marsh and Patten's role in the fissure.

Thomas Baldwin Marsh was reportedly born November 1, 1799, in Acton, Massachusetts. Genealogists in the twentieth century, however, came to the conclusion that his birth year should have been 1800 instead.⁴ David Wyman Patten was born November 14, 1799, in rural Vermont.⁵ Had Joseph Smith and Thomas Marsh known that Marsh was younger than Patten, Patten would have been the senior member of the twelve apostles since seniority was based originally on age.

Back in July 1836, Elder Marsh had been serving as an acting high council member in Missouri.⁶ At that point in time, being a member of one of the two high councils (the other being in Kirtland) carried as much influence as being a member of the twelve apostles. From time to time, apostles sat in on one or the other high council when there was a vacancy.⁷ They did this, however, in noncompliance with Joseph Smith's original directions to the apostles when he charged them regarding their duties on May 2, 1835. At that time the Prophet informed them that their authority was only outside the Missouri and Kirtland centers of the church, each of which had a presidency and high council. The apostles were not charged to serve in any capacities in Zion or any of its stakes or to

regulate the affairs of the high councils.⁸ Apparently, Joseph Smith later changed his mind, because he was present on many occasions in Kirtland when apostles sat on high council courts. Their apostolic office—supervising the taking of the gospel to the world—seemed not to be part of what they did occasionally on standing high councils.

Not until 1841 in Nauvoo would the Twelve become much more important in the hierarchy. At that point there would be only one church presidency, not two as in 1834–37, and the Twelve would stand next to the First Presidency in leadership over the whole church, not just in branches outside Missouri and Kirtland. And high councils would exist only in stakes, and any stake presidency would be under the First Presidency and the Twelve.

However, in 1837 Elders Marsh and Patten of the Twelve presumed that because of their apostleship they had superior authority over Phelps and John Whitmer of the Missouri church presidency. This is key to understanding what would tragically transpire for Phelps and Whitmer in 1837 and 1838.

Marsh and Elisha Groves, representing the Missouri high council, went on their financial mission for “Poor Bleeding Zion” in July 1836 under the direction of Presidents Phelps and Whitmer.⁹ Marsh, of course, knew that he was a member of the Twelve, the senior member even, but he was not on an apostolic mission at this time, although he may have thought he was. The whole Quorum of the Twelve had not met together and delivered assignments to each other since April 1836 and would not do so again until July 1837. Joseph Smith could have sent any apostle out on a mission, as he sometimes did, but this was not the case in this instance.

Even as Elders Marsh and Groves embarked on their mission, Elder Patten of the Twelve was serving a mission in Tennessee. Marsh and Groves met up with Patten and proselytized in Tennessee and Kentucky in addition to gathering funds for Missouri. When the missionaries felt they had finished their mission, Marsh convinced Patten and Patten’s wife Phoebe to join Marsh’s family in Missouri. Together Marsh, Patten, and Groves left “for Zion” on September 19, 1836, and probably arrived in Far West about two weeks later. They brought with them \$1,450 that they had obtained from Saints in Kentucky and Tennessee and handed the sum over to Presidents Phelps and John Whitmer. Both Marsh and Patten then fared well in their own circumstances by obtaining lots in Far West and building themselves houses. They also attended councils and preached throughout the winter.¹⁰

It soon became clear that all was not well in the Missouri leadership councils. Jealousy seemed to be a large part of the problem, and it certainly involved Elders Marsh and Patten. Some high council members also were dissatisfied with Phelps and John Whitmer. Marsh led the way in undercutting the influence of Phelps and Whitmer.

Marsh evidently had outstanding speaking ability and was renowned for his missionary prowess.¹¹ However, throughout his ministry Marsh frequently had hurt feelings and an authority complex as he strove to fulfill his calling as senior member of the Twelve Apostles. Perhaps he was annoyed in 1837 that Phelps was basking in success as leader of the Saints in Zion when he, Marsh, should be recognized as a senior leader. Phelps was

known as a successful printer and writer, and Marsh always aspired to be such. (Before he would apostatize in October 1838, Marsh would serve for two months as publisher of and contributor to the main organ for the church at that time—the *Elders' Journal*.) Marsh could easily have been jealous of Phelps's plum political appointments—chief county judge, commissioner of chancery, postmaster, and officer in the Caldwell County militia—that he had received as the town's cofounder. Probably most aggravating of all to Marsh was the fact that he had to turn over the considerable monies he had worked so diligently to obtain for “Poor Bleeding Zion” to Phelps and John Whitmer. He likely figured that he should be the one to administer those funds. It appears that Marsh convinced fellow apostle Patten to follow his lead in undermining Phelps and Whitmer.

Phelps and Whitmer should not be excused for their part in the rift that would take place. They used church funds to buy properties that would become the essence of the city of Far West. They placed the properties in their names, a practice that they essentially were required to do because the church was not recognized in Missouri and thus could not own property in its own name. They sold subdivided properties for inflated costs. In all these transactions, they should have worked more closely in counsel with the bishopric and the high council, particularly in the manner in which they sold lots that were in their names. In not doing so, Phelps and Whitmer undercut their efforts and allowed themselves to be accused of enhancing their personal wealth through real estate transactions.

Furthermore, Phelps was known to be presumptuous and prideful at times. As for John Whitmer, after leaving the church in 1838, he displayed petty arrogance toward Joseph Smith and other church leaders. In April 1837, Phelps was forty-five, Patten thirty-six, Marsh thirty-six, and Whitmer thirty-four.

In 1837 Marsh and Patten sometimes served as acting members of the Missouri high council. Then on April 3, Marsh and Patten prompted a meeting of the high council without anyone from the presidency participating, specifically Phelps and Whitmer in this instance. No precedent existed in the church up to that time for a high council to meet without at least one member of the presidency present, yet it happened. Marsh and Patten sat on the high council that day.¹² John Murdock, the oldest member of the high council, appears to have been in league with Marsh and Patten in the animosity against Phelps and Whitmer.¹³ According to John Corrill's history, these feelings against Phelps and Whitmer had existed for several months. Perhaps anger and distrust had started soon after Marsh, Patten, and Groves had turned over the \$1,450 to the presidents the previous October. Corrill wrote, “A difficulty arose between them [Phelps and Whitmer] and the church, on account of their having entered the town plot and some other lands in their own names.”¹⁴ In Phelps's and Whitmer's minds, they would use the profits to pay for the House of the Lord that they planned to build in the town's center.¹⁵

Members of the high council under Marsh and Patten's direction prepared nine questions they wanted to ask Phelps and Whitmer in a meeting scheduled for April 5. The nine questions indicate a jealousy of sorts on the part of some individuals as well as legitimate concerns:

1. By what authority and by whom was Far West established as a gathering place and a location for the House of the Lord?
2. By what authority was a committee created to superintend the building of a temple?
3. By what authority was Jacob Whitmer approved to be ordained a high priest?
4. Does the presidency—W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer—have the authority to create a city and build a temple without the counsel of either the high council or the bishopric?
5. By what authority was a member of the high council disfellowshipped in the name of the high council without the high council present?
6. Can the Missouri presidency members recommend a change in the high council membership in Missouri without the knowledge of the high council?
7. Should not members of the high council and Bishop Edward Partridge be granted their inheritances in the core of the city in preference to anyone who does not do business in behalf of Zion?
8. Should any information pertaining to the building of Zion be withheld from the high council?
9. Are W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer allowed to receive profits from the sale of lands in Far West independent of those in the high council who have gone through similar tribulations?

The high council also planned to invite Bishop Partridge and his counselors John Corrill and Isaac Morley to the same meeting two days later.¹⁶

The April 5 meeting proved to be contentious and actually continued for two more days before an agreement was reached. When the meeting convened, Presidents Phelps and Whitmer requested that the two apostles—Marsh and Patten—leave the meeting along with Bishop Partridge “and his counsel.” These men refused to leave, saying that they had a right to remain. Phelps then said that he would dissolve the council. Marsh responded that if the council were dissolved, he would prefer charges against Phelps and Whitmer before a bishop’s council and twelve high priests. Phelps replied that the council would then move forward with these five men allowed to stay. The council asked the presidents the nine questions and felt the answers were unsatisfactory. The minutes of the meeting reveal that Elder Patten “spoke against them with apparent indignation; stating that [their] proceedings had been ini[q]uitous & fraudulent in the extreme, in the unrighteously appropriating church funds to their own emolument which had been plainly proven.”¹⁷

Similar interrogations of Phelps and Whitmer continued through the next day, the sixth. On April 7 it was agreed by all parties that Phelps and Whitmer would be required to hand over title to the lands in the center of Far West to the bishopric and that any profits gained thereby would be for “the benefit and upbuilding of ‘Poor Bleeding Zion.’”¹⁸ John Corrill reported that “on an investigation of the matter [Phelps and Whitmer] gave the town plot and some other lands into the hands of the bishop, as the property of the church.”¹⁹

The problems appeared to be settled as a result of the high council meetings in early April.²⁰ However, similar issues would reappear in October–November 1837 and March 1838, and with some justification owing to ongoing unwise financial decisions made by Phelps and Whitmer. Historian Lyndon W. Cook observed that the financial charges against Phelps and Whitmer “provided the setting for Thomas Marsh to exert an influence that resulted in a power struggle between the Missouri presidency and the members of the Quorum of the Twelve.”²¹

Phelps and Whitmer proceeded in May 1837 to put the Far West church properties into the name of Bishop Edward Partridge. However, it appears that they placed an undue economic burden on Partridge and his wife Lydia. According to historians of the Joseph Smith Papers Project, “when Phelps and Whitmer agreed to turn over the land to Partridge, they made the transaction conditional on a mortgage and two bonds that required Partridge to pay them \$1,450 and to take responsibility for [Phelps’s and Whitmer’s] subscription of \$2,000 for the House of the Lord in Far West.” (The temple building plans ultimately fell through. Subsequently, Phelps and Whitmer withdrew their subscriptions and sought payment in cash from Partridge for the \$2,000 and \$1,450.) “Because the original money was donated by church members for the cause of Zion or was still owed with interest and because the sale of public lands was supposed to support the church, the high council [came to believe] that Phelps and Whitmer had swindled the church.”²²

SUMMER OF 1837

For the time being, W. W. Phelps continued in his leadership of the Missouri Saints. Minutes of meetings in April through August reveal that he presided over various high council meetings in which Elders Marsh and Patten of the Twelve occasionally sat as acting members—that is, until these two apostles temporarily left Missouri for Ohio.²³

In June, Elders Marsh and Patten headed for Kirtland to meet with other members of the Twelve Apostles. Through correspondence with friends in Ohio, they had learned that some members of the Twelve were planning to depart on foreign missions. This totally frustrated Marsh, who felt that he, as president of the Twelve, should be the one to send apostles on foreign missions and that he likely should lead the first foreign mission as a participant.²⁴ Before Marsh and Patten left, they met with Phelps, Whitmer, and the high council and asked for financial support to embark on their mission as apostles. Their request was granted.²⁵ Marsh’s and Patten’s experiences in Kirtland will be discussed below.

In July 1837, Phelps wrote a letter to Oliver Cowdery, editor of the *Messenger and Advocate*. The letter was published immediately. Phelps excitedly wrote:

Monday the 3d of July, was a great and glorious day in Far West; more than fifteen hundred saints assembled in this place, and, at 1/2 past 8 in the morning, after a prayer, singing, and an address, proceeded to break the ground for the Lord’s House; the day was beautiful, the Spirit of the Lord was with us, a cellar for this great edifice, 110 long by 80 broad was nearly finished: on Tuesday the fourth, we had a large

meeting and several of the Missourians were baptized: Our meetings, held in the open prairie, are, in fact larger than they were in Kirtland when I was there. We have more or less to bless, confirm and, baptize every Sab[b]ath.

Phelps also reported that the Saints were safe in Caldwell County and that new immigrants were arriving daily. Prosperity was increasing throughout the county as well. He invited even more immigrants to come to Missouri to help build the House of the Lord.²⁶ In this letter, Phelps appeared to take too much credit for what had been achieved in Far West. Pride was forever a challenge to him.

On July 30, 1837, William and Sally Phelps witnessed their oldest daughter Sabrina marry Joseph Kilburn Bent. Both bride and groom were twenty years old. Joseph was born to Samuel and Mary Kilburn Bent, two faithful members of the church.²⁷ (Samuel Bent was a member of the Far West high council, would become a member of the Nauvoo Stake high council, and is mentioned in D&C 124:132. Bent and Phelps would also serve together as members of the Council of Fifty starting in March 1844.)

Meanwhile, Elders Marsh and Patten arrived in Kirtland about July 8. They discovered two circumstances that grieved them. First, a spirit of apostasy had crept into the church in Ohio, and some apostles were part of it. Second, they learned that two apostles—Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde—had gone to England to launch the church’s first “foreign” mission. (Upper Canada, where Mormon apostles and missionaries had frequently proselytized, was not considered “foreign” at the time.)

The year 1837 proved to be exceptionally difficult for the church in Kirtland. Joseph Smith and other leaders had striven to overcome church indebtedness and poverty among members by creating new businesses on credit and by establishing a bank. As these Kirtland businesses and the bank (Kirtland Safety Society) floundered and ultimately crumbled, more and more Latter-day Saints, several leaders among them, blamed Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and forsook the church, in some instances becoming enemies.²⁸

Elders Marsh and Patten were definitely annoyed after a few hours of being in Kirtland, especially having learned that Elders Kimball and Hyde had left a few weeks earlier to England without Marsh and Patten’s knowledge and consent. Brigham Young witnessed their attitude and took the pair to see Joseph Smith. Patten was indignant with the Prophet and lost his temper. Joseph was forced to send Patten out of his house.²⁹ Marsh, however, came around quickly. Marsh reported, “About this time a special meeting was appointed at Joseph’s house, by himself, to which several of the brethren who were disaffected were invited. I was chosen moderator, and called upon the aggrieved parties to speak first. A reconciliation was effected between all parties.”³⁰

Then on July 23, in company with Elder Marsh and other apostles, Joseph Smith dictated a revelation (D&C 112) that was specifically directed to Marsh. Before receiving assignments to lead the Twelve in future significant endeavors, Marsh was told, “Verily I say unto you, there have been some few things in thine heart and with thee with which I, the Lord, was not well pleased. Nevertheless, inasmuch as thou hast abased thyself thou shalt be exalted; therefore, all thy sins are forgiven thee.”³¹ Thomas Marsh became completely reconciled with Joseph Smith at this time. “During these months of widespread

apostasy when many Church leaders sought to criticize Joseph Smith, Thomas established a close, personal relationship with the Prophet.³² Other people in Kirtland recognized that Elder Marsh was a calming influence during troubled times.³³

Marsh considered himself “the staunchest supporter of Joseph Smith during the Kirtland revolt.”³⁴ Because of this relationship, he later felt justified in his actions against W. W. Phelps, John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, whom Marsh now considered less valiant than himself. Elders Marsh and Patten left Kirtland for Far West in September and arrived in early October. Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer had already migrated to Far West.

Thomas Marsh carried with him a letter from Joseph Smith to “the whole Church in Zion.” It gave an update on serious apostasy in Kirtland and included a warning to the Saints in Missouri to avoid similar problems. Joseph indicated that “Oliver Cowdery has been in transgression” but that he (Joseph) hoped that Cowdery would yet “humble himself & magnify his calling.” David Whitmer is also noted as having “been in transgression.” The letter also contained a “revelation” saying that “John Whitmer & William W Phelps have done those things which are not pleasing in my sight Therefore if they repent not they shall be removed out of their places.”³⁵ Joseph Smith’s attitude about Phelps and the two Whitmers had been influenced by many discussions with Marsh in Kirtland.

EVENTS IN LATE 1837

As soon as Marsh and Patten arrived in Far West, they began to plot how to take over leadership of the church in Missouri. Two historians observed, “Their mission experiences had made the apostles accustomed to taking charge wherever they saw the need to put the church in order.”³⁶ Another added: “But on arriving in Far West, Thomas came into immediate conflict with Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, William W. Phelps, and John Whitmer. . . . Thomas sought to purge them from the flock. But his motives appear to not have been pure. Jealous to win greater recognition and influence, Thomas engaged in excessive behavior, all in the name of Joseph Smith. While evidence shows that Oliver and his cohorts were embittered, the means Thomas used did not justify the end.”³⁷

Marsh and Patten discussed their objections to Phelps, Cowdery, and the two Whitmers with other church members, especially with members of the high council. They appear to have won over several people to their cause. Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon learned from letters about some of the discord, so they took off in late September for Missouri to deal with the problems. Joseph and Sidney also intended to seek out more territory in Missouri for the expected in-migrations of thousands of Saints.³⁸ They arrived in Far West the first week in November. Joseph, Sidney, and Hyrum Smith (who was also present) set about resolving conflicts they had heard about.

On Monday, November 6, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith sponsored a meeting of church priesthood holders in Far West. Phelps played a key role in the service by keeping the minutes, offering the invocation, and later speaking. Several propositions were brought before the brethren and voted on:

1. That the proprietors of the "Corporation of Far West" (the presidency and bishopric) would lessen the width of the main streets to allow for each square block to contain four acres and that each block would contain four lots. (This seems to show that Joseph Smith agreed to have Phelps still involved with city planning.)
2. That there is sufficient space in this part of Missouri to locate new lands in the prospect of settling many new immigrants. (Phelps may have agreed with this, but he had been involved with the 1836 negotiations to restrict Mormon settlement to Caldwell County, and he probably was aware of some of the hazards in moving into neighboring counties.)
3. That the building of the House of the Lord was to be postponed until the will of the Lord was ascertained in the matter. (This was definitely a rebuke of Phelps's overenthusiasm to build a House of the Lord without involving the First Presidency in the matter.)
4. That the differences of opinion about how the city of Far West was laid out and the funds that were used for it were to be harmoniously worked out.³⁹ (This shows that Joseph Smith wanted harmony with the brethren and for Phelps and the two Whitmers to continue in their callings.)

The next day, November 7, Joseph Smith presided over a meeting of the Saints in which church authorities were nominated and sustained. Sidney Rigdon conducted most of the discussion and voting. He presented Joseph Smith Jr. as "the first President over the whole Church to preside over the same." This act was to make clear that Joseph Smith presided over the Missouri church presidency, because often in the previous three and one-half years there had been two church presidencies. The voting was unanimous for Joseph Smith, whereupon he made a few remarks thanking the members and asking for their prayers in his behalf. Sidney Rigdon and Hyrum Smith were sustained as Smith's counselors, Frederick G. Williams having been dropped from the First Presidency.

David Whitmer was then nominated to be "President of this branch of the church [Caldwell County]." Thomas Marsh spoke out immediately against David Whitmer. Other brethren took turns to speak either in favor or against this nomination. A vote was called and the motion "carried by almost a unanimous vote." Phelps and John Whitmer were nominated separately to be assistant presidents in Missouri. Again Elder Marsh spoke in opposition. But Phelps and Whitmer made confession before the Saints, and their nominations passed unanimously. The Missouri bishopric was sustained with Edward Partridge as bishop and Isaac Morley and a new member, Titus Billings, as counselors. John Corryll, the previous counselor in the bishopric, was sustained as "keeper of the Lord's Storehouse." Isaac Morley was ordained as a church patriarch for Missouri.⁴⁰ John Corryll wrote of this meeting: "A general meeting was called for the church to choose whether they would have the old presidency rule any longer over them or not. Their old difficulties were talked over, and so far reconciled, that they still choose to have Phelps and Whitmer their presidents."⁴¹

After conducting some more church business in Far West,⁴² Presidents Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith returned to Kirtland. Little did they realize that further power struggles would occur in Far West before they, the First Presidency, would be able to return to Missouri. When they arrived back in Kirtland on December 10, the presidency found that a faction of apostates led by Warren Parrish, Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and Joseph Coe had tried to take over the church.⁴³ Joseph and Sidney would be forced to flee for their safety on January 12, 1838.

On December 7, 1837, a council of Missouri church leaders convened in Far West. Of note, they referred to themselves and their members as a “stake in Zion,” thus accepting the new rule that Joseph Smith and his presidency presided over the whole church and that the presidency of David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer would be only a stake presidency. This council proposed that the Saints in Caldwell County give a freewill offering or tithe of 2 percent of their financial worth to care for the poor and sustain the church. They created a committee to go northward into Daviess County to scout out possible locations for further settlements for the Saints. Committee members were Cowdery, Patten, Lyman Wight, and Frederick G. Williams.⁴⁴ Settling the Saints in Daviess County, although obviously a constitutional right, ran contrary to the gentlemen’s agreement that the Mormons would restrict their settling to Caldwell County. Yet the Saints needed more land along rivers and streams to care for expected migrants from Ohio.

DEVELOPING CONFLICT IN THE MISSOURI STAKE

On the surface the feud between the Marsh-Patten-Murdock faction and the Cowdery-Whitmer (David)-Phelps-Whitmer (John) foursome appeared to go away. But under the surface, there surely were rumblings. There can be little doubt that both factions schemed against each other.⁴⁵

Oliver Cowdery had left Kirtland the previous September under a cloud of suspicion emanating from the other presidents. Back in the summer of 1837, Cowdery came to disagree with Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon’s leadership of the bank, the Kirtland Safety Society.⁴⁶ Consequently, he no longer desired to follow Smith’s direction in any temporal affairs. He had long been close friends with David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer. Once he was again in Missouri, Cowdery conversed with Phelps and John Whitmer and clouded their minds, at least somewhat, about the quality of the temporal leadership of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon. David Whitmer was in total agreement with his brother-in-law Oliver.

In December 1837 and January 1838, Cowdery called leaders into his Far West home, including Lyman Johnson, Frederick G. Williams, David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer to discuss the problems of the church and Joseph Smith as he interpreted them. According to a report by Ebenezer Robinson many years later in 1889, these men spewed out “a general system of slander and abuse” against the First Presidency. Their wives and children voiced discontent also. Robinson claimed that the dissenters kept up

a correspondence with apostates in Kirtland led by Warren Parrish as if to be allied with them.⁴⁷

Oliver Cowdery wrote letters to two of his brothers, Lyman and Warren Cowdery, speaking of his disagreements with Joseph Smith. The friction between Cowdery and Smith, the two “first elders” of this dispensation, according to Cowdery, were based on two factors. First, Oliver was not satisfied with Joseph Smith’s explanation of a sexual relationship with Fanny Alger in Kirtland. Cowdery considered the relationship to be adultery, but Smith believed that this was an appropriate plural marriage. Second, Cowdery no longer felt that he could accept Joseph Smith’s leadership in temporal matters because of Joseph’s supposed failures economically.⁴⁸

Cowdery disclosed in letters to his brothers that in January 1838 he, along with Phelps and John Whitmer, had sold some of the lands in their names in Jackson County to cover some of the onerous Jackson County lawsuit costs. Cowdery defended this action as showing that he should not be forced to follow authority with which he did not agree.⁴⁹

On the other side of the feud, Marsh and Patten frequently spoke disparagingly, especially to members of the Missouri high council, about Cowdery, the Whitmers, and Phelps. Marsh seems to have successfully gained two key allies—John Murdock and George M. Hinkle—if not others, on the high council.

PHELPS RELEASED AND CUT OFF FROM THE CHURCH

The squabble openly erupted again on January 26, 1838. From this date onward, W. W. Phelps would no longer hold a presiding position in the church. Indeed, as the years would progress, he would be excommunicated a stunning three times, but he would be reinstated each time.

A week earlier, on January 20, Thomas B. Marsh invited Elder Patten and seven members of the Far West high council to his home for a “social meeting.” But the discussion turned out to be more than friendly chitchat. Rather, these men brought up the cases of the presidents living in Missouri—David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, John Whitmer, and Oliver Cowdery (in the order of their listing). The minutes stated, “We being grieved at their doings after various discussions appointed a committee and enquire into their feelings and determinations viz G. M. Hinkle Thos Grover and George Morey [of the high council].”⁵⁰ Two historians observed, “Despite being outside their jurisdiction, Marsh and Patten determined to do the very thing in Missouri that the dissidents had done in Kirtland and topple the leaders.”⁵¹

The high council “trial” took place under Marsh’s supervision on Friday, January 26, at the home of Thomas Anderson, who wasn’t even a high councilor. Two more brethren joined the seven high councilors from the meeting a week earlier. With Marsh and Patten, this made eleven who sat in judgment of Phelps and the Whitmers regarding their standing in their offices and their church membership. This procedure had never been done before, nor has it been done legally in the church ever since. Moreover, the three presidents were not invited to the “court” to defend themselves or to have witnesses to speak in

their behalf, as had been the case in previous high council proceedings in both Kirtland and Missouri since 1834.

Two issues were at the heart of this tribunal: the presidents had sold lands in their names in Jackson County, thus going contrary to the revealed will of the Lord; and the presidents were reportedly breaking the Word of Wisdom. The committee of three high councilors gave a verbal report on how the presidents responded to the inquiries. The minutes stated, "Respecting their selling their lands in Jackson County, they, the Presidents, declared they had not broken any revelation or Law of God in so doing and further if they were deprived of that privilege they would sell their possessions and move out of the place." The minutes continued, regarding Phelps specifically: "W. W. Phelps said he would move out of the accursed place." No doubt Phelps felt specifically insulted by these questions, since he had labored so diligently and with some sacrifice to help create this successful city. The minutes added, "Further they [the presidents] declared they would not be controlled by any ecclesiastical power or revelation whatever in their temporal concerns." Regarding the Word of Wisdom, the minutes reveal that Phelps denied ever breaking the Word of Wisdom; rather, he had faithfully kept it. Oliver Cowdery admitted drinking tea three times a day during the winter owing to his ill health. David and John Whitmer both admitted to drinking tea and coffee, but they did not "consider them to come under the head of hot drinks."⁵²

This court came to a conclusion quickly. Likely the Marsh-Patten-Murdock cabal had already determined what they would do before the twenty-sixth. Marsh and Murdock claimed they were acting explicitly under Joseph Smith's instructions.⁵³ The council determined that the presidents should no longer be upheld in their positions. They ruled that public meetings be scheduled throughout Caldwell County settlements to bring the cases of the presidents before the whole membership. Marsh said he would give written notice of these proceedings to the offending presidents.⁵⁴

The public meetings took place February 5–9, Monday through Friday. Monday was the largest assembly and took place in Far West. The other four meetings took place on successive days in Simeon Carter's settlement, at Edmund Durfee's house, at Nahum Curtis's house, and in Hawn's Mill. The only meeting with complete minutes was the first, held in Far West. Marsh conducted the meeting and explained the charges against David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer. Evidently, in his jealous feelings, Marsh was determined to get rid of these three as soon as possible and then wait for possible later proceedings against Oliver Cowdery.⁵⁵

Marsh read from the letter he had brought with him from Kirtland from Joseph Smith that was dated September 4, 1837 (even though Joseph Smith had settled the problems in his subsequent November visit). He read the portion stating that John Whitmer and Phelps were in transgression and that unless they repented they should be removed out of their places.⁵⁶ There is no indication in the letter that Marsh or anyone else below the First Presidency should remove Whitmer or Phelps out of his place. Yet Marsh claimed that he was acting under the authority of the Prophet. He then read from a clause found

in *The Evening and the Morning Star* stating that no lands in Jackson County should be sold and that doing so would be an act of denying the faith.⁵⁷

Other members of the high council and the bishopric were allowed to give their opinions. John Murdock explained to the congregation that this meeting would show that the high council should have a voice in governing the church in Missouri. George M. Hinkle said that he was one of the committee of three assigned to work with the presidency and that they had all labored diligently with them. He then read “in a plain and energetic manner” a document outlining the “iniquity” of the three presidents. The charges may not have been fully put forth in the minutes, because all that is mentioned for Phelps and John Whitmer was their “using the monies that were loaned to the Church.” For David Whitmer, his persistent use of tea, coffee, and tobacco was mentioned.⁵⁸

Bishop Edward Partridge then took the stand. He stated that this “tribunal” was improper and that if the three presidents were to be tried, it should be before a council of the bishopric and twelve high priests. He declared that he would not raise his hand against the presidency. Partridge then read a letter from Joseph Smith⁵⁹ containing a notice that Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and their families would soon be in Missouri after having fled the “wolves” in Kirtland.⁶⁰

George Morey and Thomas Grover of the high council then spoke. They explained that they had been on the committee to talk with the presidents and that they agreed that the behavior of the three was “iniquitous.” Elder David W. Patten, next senior apostle after Thomas Marsh, then stood and “spoke with much zeal against this Presidency and in favor of Br Joseph Smith jr. and the wolf alluded to in his letter was the dissenters in Kirtland.” Some members of the high council spoke. Lyman Wight, Elias Higbee, and John Murdock supported Marsh and Patten. However, Solomon Hancock pleaded in favor of the presidency and would not raise his hand against them. John Corrill arose and spoke fervently that this court was illegal and that he would not raise his hand against the presidency “at present” and would only do so if the charges were brought forward in a proper tribunal. Simeon Carter and Elisha Groves of the high council stated that the proceedings were being handled in too hasty a manner. Patten then jumped up and argued that the proceedings were indeed being handled correctly. Isaac Morley of the bishopric spoke against the presidency, but “at the same time pleading mercy.” Titus Billings, the new member of the bishopric, said he could not vote until the court was held under the direction of the bishopric. Elder Marsh arose and claimed “that the meeting was according to the directions of Br. Joseph, he, therefore considered it legal.” Moses Martin of the high council then argued “with great energy” that the presidency had led Zion astray with their “wickedness and mismanagement.” Marsh concluded the meeting by calling for a vote. The Whitmers and Phelps were nearly unanimously voted out of their positions as a presidency, with the exception of “eight or ten and this minority only wished them to continue in office a little longer, or until Joseph Smith jr. came up.” Similar public proceedings apparently went forward the next four days, with the presidency being “unanimously rejected” in all four of them.⁶¹ John Corrill wrote that “the excitement rose so high that they [Marsh,

Patten, and the high council] turned [Phelps and John Whitmer] out of their presidential office."⁶²

Marsh and Patten then called a meeting of the high council and the bishopric on Saturday, February 10, the day following the last public meeting in Caldwell County. They named themselves presidents pro tempore of the Saints in Missouri until Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon arrived in Zion.⁶³ From that point on, Marsh and Patten each insisted on being addressed as "President," and together they presided over high council meetings.⁶⁴

On February 15, Marsh directed a self-serving letter to Joseph Smith, then en route to Missouri, to report what had happened in the February 10–15 general assemblies, the minutes of which he included in the letter. Said Marsh:

You will see by the above, that quite a change has taken place among us of late, and we hope it is for the better; and we rejoice that we have a prospect of having things in a good degree straightened by the time you arrive here. We saw plainly from the movement of things that the church was about to go to pieces, in consequence of the wickedness of those men, we therefore have done what we have, which thing has given the church general satisfaction, they also appear to be well united, and determined to cleave to the first presidency, that is, the three first.

Had we not taken the above measures, we think that nothing could have prevented a rebellion against the whole high council and bishop; so great was the disaffection against the presidents, that the people began to be jealous, that the whole authorities were inclined to uphold these men in wickedness, and in a little time the church, undoubtedly, would have gone, every man to his own way, like sheep without a shepherd.⁶⁵

Marsh's intent clearly was to show how loyal he was to Joseph Smith, as he had demonstrated himself to be earlier in Kirtland. This time, in his own estimation, he took care of apostasy that had arisen in Far West.

Later in the month of February, Oliver Cowdery convened a meeting that included Phelps and the ousted presidency. Phelps was appointed along with John Whitmer and Lyman Johnson to locate a new residence for those attacked by Marsh, Patten, and the high council. Cowdery had already explored northward in Daviess County and thought they could move there and find peace. Cowdery noted that Phelps, the Far West postmaster, had been accused of withholding mail from its owners and that he had opened, read, and destroyed letters sent to Far West.⁶⁶

Presidents Marsh and Patten convened a high council meeting on February 24. A letter originally directed to Phelps from Joseph Smith, who was en route to Missouri, was read. It spoke of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon's plans for their families to settle in Far West. They were traveling in covered wagons. The council ruled that all necessary supplies be gathered and plans made to go out on the prairie to receive Joseph's and Sidney's families.⁶⁷

Realizing that Joseph Smith would soon be in Far West, Marsh called a high council meeting for Saturday, March 10, 1838. He wanted to have as much cleared up as possible.

We can ascertain from the minutes that the four previous presidents were informed of a hearing against them, yet they were not invited to attend the proceedings. As it turned out, charges were leveled only against Phelps and John Whitmer, who, because they were considered to be only part of a stake presidency at this point and thus not general “presidents,” could be tried without a court presided over by the bishopric.⁶⁸ Marsh decided to wait for Joseph Smith before courts for Presidents Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer would take place. Marsh despised Phelps and John Whitmer most because of their alleged misuse of the funds he had collected for the “Poor Bleeding Zion” cause.

In this new court, George Hinkle acted as the “plaintiff” against the defendants Phelps and John Whitmer. They were charged with “persisting in unchristian like conduct.” No doubt the pair had remained resolutely stubborn in their claim that Marsh and the high council had no jurisdiction over them to relieve them of their presidency. Phelps’s and Whitmer’s stubbornness could easily have brought about some unseemly behavior on their part. A letter to Marsh from Phelps and the Whitmers with a certification of its contents by Oliver Cowdery was read into the record. The letter stated, “It is contrary to the principles of the revelations of Jesus Christ and His gospel, and the laws of the land, to try a person for an offense by an illegal tribunal, or by men prejudiced against him, or by authority that has given an opinion or decision beforehand, or in his absence.”⁶⁹

The court’s minutes then revealed: “All the effect the above letter had upon the Council, was to convince them still more of the wickedness of those men, by endeavoring to palm themselves off upon the Church, as her Presidents, after the Church had by a united voice, removed them from their presidential office, for their ungodly conduct; and the letter was considered no more nor less than a direct insult or contempt cast upon the authorities of God, and the Church of Jesus Christ; therefore the Council proceeded to business.” Their “business” was to rehearse the old charges against Phelps and John Whitmer of misuse and mismanagement of funds given them by Marsh and Elisha Groves. The council under “President Marsh” and “President Patten” declared that Phelps and Whitmer were no longer members of the church and that they “be given over to the buffetings of Satan, until they learn to blaspheme no more against the authorities of God, nor fleece the flock of Christ.”⁷⁰ Historians have commented that “while it would be presumptuous to assume that Thomas Marsh single-handedly expelled these authorities from the Church, he was, however, a major instigator”⁷¹ and that Marsh’s excommunication of Phelps and Whitmer made “the takeover complete.”⁷²

Joseph Smith’s party reached a point 120 miles from Far West on March 13 where they were greeted with open arms by “escorts” led by Marsh, who would lead them in safety “to their little Zion.”

On March 15, Joseph Smith called a meeting of the high council. Ironically, the opening hymn sung was “Adam-ondi-Ahman,” the lyrics of which had been written by Phelps, who had just been cut off from the church and was no longer welcome in this council. Joseph Smith listened to minutes of previous high council proceedings dating back to February 24. Minutes recorded, “President J. Smith jr. approved of the proceedings of the High Council, after hearing the minutes of the former Councils.”⁷³ In

his letter of March 29, 1838, to the Kirtland Saints, Joseph Smith noted that Phelps and John Whitmer were cut off from the church under the direction of pro tempore Presidents Marsh and Patten and a “Judicious High Council.”⁷⁴ When Willard Richards compiled this portion of Joseph Smith’s official history, he chose to leave out any reference to Joseph’s acceptance of the expulsion of Phelps and Whitmer. For that matter, the official history did not contain a report of high council trials led by Marsh and Patten in April 1837 and January 1838. Perhaps Elder Richards felt that Joseph Smith had come to realize that Marsh and Patten’s activities had been too hasty. As Richards’s assistant in the writing of the official history, Phelps likely influenced the omission of those developments. However, the March 10, 1838, trial that cut off Phelps and John Whitmer was placed into the official history of the church.

In any event, this was a terrible time for Phelps and for Sally and the children. The bottom had indeed fallen out for Phelps, who was now forty-six. For the last seven years he had consecrated heart, soul, and means to building up Zion. Now he was considered an outcast and a dissident. Probably what hurt the most was being on the other side of the fence from his prophet-hero, Joseph Smith. Even though Joseph had sometimes chastened William, the two heretofore had held strong affection for each other.

What would the Phelps do now? As we shall see, they decided to stay in Far West. But it would be a truly bumpy ride throughout the rest of 1838. War would break out, and William would be caught in the middle.

NOTES

1. By this time, John Smith, uncle to Joseph Smith Jr. and brother to Joseph Smith Sr., had been added to the list of church “presidents.”
2. Reed Peck manuscript, 1839, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 13–14.
3. Historians William Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt also believe, as do I, that Marsh and Patten “had exacted their own coup.” See William Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt, *Lost Apostles: Forgotten Members of Mormonism’s Original Quorum of Twelve* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014), 119.
4. “Acton Births, Deaths, Marriages, 1738–1844,” in *Massachusetts Vital and Town Records*, ed. Jay Holbrook and Delene Holbrook (Provo, UT: Holbrook Research Institute, 1999), 129; available online at www.ancestry.com. See also Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 85, 85n17. See also Lyndon W. Cook, “‘I Have Sinned against Heaven, and Am Unworthy of Your Confidence, but I Cannot Live without a Reconciliation’: Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 389n1.
5. Less has been written about David W. Patten than about Thomas B. Marsh. The most complete biography of Patten is Lycurgus Arnold Wilson, *Life of David W. Patten: The First Apostolic Martyr* (1900; repr., Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1904). The book is hagiographic in nature. It does not address the issues in Missouri that led to the downfall of Phelps and John Whitmer.
6. See the list of high council members in MB2, 68.
7. Over the period of two years from September 1835 to September 1837, the following apostles sat on the Kirtland high council one or more times (listed in chronological order of

- their appearances): Thomas B. Marsh, Orson Pratt, William Smith, Luke Johnson, David W. Patten, John F. Boynton, Parley P. Pratt, William E. McLellin, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Lyman Johnson. See MB1, 119, 126, 127, 131, 135, 212, 219, 245–46.
8. MB1, 187. See also Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 85–86.
 9. MB2, 70.
 10. “For the Messenger and Advocate,” *M&A* 2, no. 11 (August 1836): 366–67; “Mission in the South,” *M&A* 3, no. 2 (November 1836): 404–6; “Dear Brother,” *M&A* 3, no. 3 (December 1836): 431–32; “History of Thomas Baldwin Marsh [by himself],” *The Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* 26 (1864); Cook, “Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church,” 391–92.
 11. Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, “Mary Lightner Autobiography,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (1926): 195; Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 81.
 12. MB2, 72; *FWR*, 108, 108n3.
 13. John Murdock journal, MS 1194, CHL, April 5, 1837.
 14. Corrill, *Brief History*, in *JSP*, H2:162.
 15. MB2, 73; *FWR*, 109–10.
 16. MB2, 72; *FWR*, 108. The questions are not direct quotations from the minutes but reflect the exact nature of the questions.
 17. MB2, 73; *FWR*, 109–10. See also John Murdock journal, April 5, 1837. In a subsequent letter to Wilford Woodruff, Thomas Marsh asserted: “You undoubtedly remember the visit, which I, in company with Elder Groves, made to the churches in Kentucky and Tennessee, in the summer of 1836. You may also recollect, the nature and result of our visit. We came to solicit assistance, for *poor bleeding Zion*: And we obtained, through the goodness of the children of God, in those regions, the sum of fourteen hundred and fifty dollars, which we delivered unto Wm. W. Phelps and John Whitmer, on our arrival at this place. But these men, instead of laying out the money for the benefit of *poor bleeding Zion*, purchased land for their own emolument. They generally did their business, independently of the aid, or counsel of either the Bishop, or High Council. This gave some uneasiness to the two authorities of Zion: not only because they purchased land with church funds, in their own name, for their own aggrandizement, but because they selected the place for the city Far West, and appointed the spot for the house of the Lord to be built on, drew the plan of said house, and appointed and ordained a committee to build the same, without asking or seeking counsel, at the hand of either Bishop, High Council, or first Presidency; when it was well understood that these authorities were appointed for the purpose of counseling on all important matters pertaining to the Saints of God. These two presidents also managed to get the town plot into their own hands, that they might reap the avails arising from the sales of the lots.” *Elders’ Journal* 1 (July 1838): 37. Marsh’s original letter in his own hand to Woodruff along with historical commentary is published in *JSP*, D6:154–62.
 18. MB2, 73; *FWR*, 109–10.
 19. Corrill, *Brief History*, in *JSP*, H2:162. See also “John Murdock Journal,” April 5, 1837.
 20. MHC, vol. B-1, 758; *HC*, 2:481. John Whitmer wrote that difficulties were settled to the satisfaction of all parties. “The Book of John Whitmer,” in *JSP*, H2:94.
 21. Cook, “Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church,” 392, 392n14.
 22. *JSP*, D6:110n532. The mortgage and bonds signed on May 7, 1837, by W. W. Phelps, John Whitmer, Edward Partridge, and Lydia Partridge are located in the John Whitmer Family Papers, MS 6378, CHL.
 23. MB2, 74–80.
 24. Cook, “Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church,” 392–93; Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 111–12, 112n49.
 25. MB2, 77; MHC, vol. B-1, 762; *HC*, 2:491.

26. "Communications," *M&A* 3 (July 1837): 529; *JSP*, D5:401–4; MHC, vol. B-1, 763–64; *HC*, 2:496.
27. Information gathered from www.ancestry.com.
28. Mark Lyman Staker discussed the Kirtland economic conditions and failures along with the apostasies in his *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 435–548. See also Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2005), 328–31. Apostle William E. McLellin's anger over the economic problems is discussed in William Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt, *Lost Apostles: Forgotten members of Mormonism's Original Quorum of Twelve* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014), 110–11.
29. Cook, "Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church," 393, 393n17; Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 113.
30. "History of Thomas Baldwin Marsh."
31. D&C 112:3–4. The revelation was recorded by Marsh himself and copied by others. It finally was more officially recorded in Joseph Smith's journal and is now published in *JSP*, J1:306–9; MHC, vol. B-1, 765; *HC*, 2:499–500. See also *JSP*, J1:306n247; Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 114–15; "History of Thomas Baldwin Marsh"; Cook, "Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church," 393, 393n19.
32. Cook, "Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church," 393.
33. Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 111–14.
34. Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 115.
35. *JSP*, J1:240–45; *JSP*, D5:426–33; MHC, vol. B-1, 770–72; *HC*, 2:508–11.
36. Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 116.
37. Cook, "Thomas B. Marsh Returns to the Church," 393–94. I contest Cook's implication that Phelps was also embittered in early October 1837, although evidence definitely exists that Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer had become embittered with Joseph Smith in Kirtland.
38. At a conference in Kirtland on September 17, 1837, Joseph announced that it was now time to locate "more stakes of Zion or places of gathering that the poor might have a place to gather to." *JSP*, D5:444–46; MB1, 243; MHC, vol. B-1, 772–73; *HC*, 2:514, 516, 518.
39. *JSP*, D5:464–68; MB2, 81–82; MHC, vol. B-1, 775; *HC*, 2:521; *JSP*, D6:15.
40. *JSP*, D5:468–72; MB2, 82–85; MHC, vol. B-1, 776–77; *HC*, 2:522–24; *JSP*, D6:15.
41. Corrill, *Brief History*, in *JSP*, H2:162.
42. *JSP*, D5:472–76.
43. MHC, vol. B-1, 779; *HC*, 2:528; *JSP*, D5:495–96.
44. MB2, 89–92.
45. *JSP*, D6:4, 15.
46. See Mark L. Staker's thorough discussion of Oliver Cowdery's experiences with the Kirtland Safety Society and other bank-related issues in Staker's "Raising Money in Righteousness: Oliver Cowdery as Banker," in *Days Never to Be Forgotten: Oliver Cowdery*, ed. Alexander L. Baugh (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 143–253. See pp. 189–93 for specifics on Cowdery's pulling away from Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon over Kirtland Safety Society issues.
47. Robinson's reminiscences in his Whitmerite newspaper *The Return* are cited in Leland H. Gentry and Todd M. Compton, *Fire and Sword: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri, 1836–39* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 78, 115n35. *The Return* 2, no. 2 (February 1890): 212.
48. Gentry and Compton lay out these issues and Cowdery's letters in *Fire and Sword*, 78–80, 108, 115nn36–49. See also *JSP*, D6:15, 25–26.

49. Gentry cited documents pertaining to Cowdery, Phelps, and Whitmer's selling in *Fire and Sword*, 80–82, 116nn50–54.
50. MB2, 94; *FWR*, 135; *JSP*, D6:15–16.
51. Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 117.
52. MB2, 95; *FWR*, 135–36.
53. *JSP*, D6:15–16.
54. MB2, 95–96; *FWR*, 136.
55. *JSP*, D6:16–17.
56. See *JSP*, J1:240–45; *JSP*, D5:426–33; MHC, vol. B-1, 770–72; *HC*, 2:508–11.
57. *JSP*, D6:18–19; MB2, 96–97; *FWR*, 136–37; MHC, vol. B-1, 781; *HC*, 3:3.
58. *JSP*, D6:19–20; MB2, 97; *FWR*, 137; MHC, vol. B-1, 781; *HC*, 3:3–4.
59. This letter was published in *JSP*, D5:494.
60. *JSP*, D6:20; MB2, 97; *FWR*, 137–38; MHC, vol. B-1, 781; *HC*, 3:4.
61. *JSP*, D6:21–22; MB2, 97–99; *FWR*, 138–41; MHC, vol. B-1, 781–82; *HC*, 3:4–5.
62. Corrill, *Brief History*, in *JSP*, H2:162.
63. *JSP*, D6:23; MB2, 99; *FWR*, 141; MHC, vol. B-1, 782; *HC*, 3:6.
64. MB2, 100–104; *FWR*, 141–48; MHC, vol. B-1, 782–83; *HC*, 3:6–8.
65. “Minutes of the Proceedings of the Committee of the Whole Church in Zion,” *Elders’ Journal* 1 (July 1838): 44–46. The quotation is on p. 45. The letter is also published in *JSP*, D6:23–26.
66. Gentry wrote about these developments based on a letter written February 24, 1838, by Oliver Cowdery to two of his brothers. See Gentry and Compton, *Fire and Sword*, 83–84, 117nn59–62 and 66.
67. MB2, 100; *FWR*, 142.
68. *HC*, 3:5n3.
69. MB2, 105; MHC, vol. B-1, 782–83; *FWR*, 144; *HC*, 3:6–7.
70. MB2, 105–7; *FWR*, 145–48; MHC, vol. B-1, 783; *HC* 3:7–8. See also John Whitmer's sad realization that he and Phelps had been expelled in “Book of John Whitmer,” 94–95, 95n291.
71. Cook, “Thomas Baldwin Marsh Returns to the Church,” 394.
72. Shepard and Marquardt, *Lost Apostles*, 118.
73. *JSP*, D6:39–43; MB2, 108; *FWR*, 151.
74. *JSP*, J1:246; *JSP*, D6:59.