

**The Last Days of Joseph & Hyrum Smith**  
(Friday, June 7, 1844 - Thursday, June 27, 1844)

compiled by  
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**June 1844:**

Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is 38 years old. He is also Mayor of Nauvoo and Commander of the Nauvoo Legion. His wife, Emma Hale, is 40. They have \_\_\_\_ children: They have lost three children.

Hyrum Smith, age 44, is serving as Patriarch of the Church because Joseph Smith, Sr. had died in 1840 at the age of 69. Hyrum is also a member of the Nauvoo City Council. Hyrum is married to his second wife, Mary Fielding (age 43) and they have \_\_\_\_ children. His first wife, Jerusha, died \_\_\_\_\_. Mary will die in 1852 at age 51. She is the mother and grandmother of two church presidents (Joseph F. Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith).

The First Presidency is: **Joseph Smith**, President; **Sidney Rigdon**, 1st Counselor; **Amasa Lyman**, 2d Counselor. Sidney Rigdon is in Pittsburgh, Pa. in a self-imposed exile from the church. See D&C 124:108-110. Amasa Lyman is in Cincinnati (He is on a "political" mission working for Joseph's campaign for the U.S. presidency). The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are: **Brigham Young** (senior member, president of the Quorum) **John Taylor**, **Willard Richards** (Clerk), **Orson Hyde**, **Wilford Woodruff**, **Heber C. Kimball**, **Lyman Wight**, **William Smith** (younger brother of Joseph and Hyrum. He became Patriarch after Hyrum and Joseph were killed. He leaves the church in 1845. Helps to found the RLDS church), **Orson Pratt**, **George A. Smith** (Joseph's cousin and son of John, Joseph Sr.'s brother), **John Page** (left the church in 1845), and **Parley P. Pratt**.

Nauvoo is in Hancock County. Carthage is the county seat. It is 17 miles east of Nauvoo. Warsaw is 17 miles south. The City of Nauvoo was founded in 1840. The saints had arrived there in the Spring of 1839 after being driven from Missouri.

**Historical Background**

**1831:** Mormons leave New York for Kirtland, Ohio.

**1831-33:** Some Mormons relocate to Jackson County, Missouri.

**1833:** In November, the Mormons are driven from Independence, Jackson County (due north) into Clay County around Liberty, Mo.

**1834:** Zion's Camp march from Kirtland to Richmond, Ray County, Mo. (just east of Independence, Jackson County). The church had begun buying large parcels of land around Far West in northern Ray County (1600 acres by July 1836).

**1836:** Northern Ray County was divided; creating two new counties: Caldwell and Daviess. Caldwell, where Far West is located, was to be exclusively for Mormons. Daviess was to be a non-Mormon county. However the Mormons soon violated this "gentlemen's agreement" and began to populate Daviess county (the site of Adam-Ondi-Ahman).

**1837:** A year of apostasy amongst the church, many people become disenchanted with Joseph because of the church's financial problems, the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society, land speculation in Kirtland and the Panic of 1837, but the church continues to grow. Fifty leading members are excommunicated. Between November 1837 and June 1838, 200-300 Kirtland members leave the church. This includes the Three Witnesses (David Whitmer, Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery), Frederick G. Williams of the 1st Presidency, 4 apostles, and several members of the 1st Quorum of the Seventy.

**1838:** To escape apostate former members who seek his life, Joseph Smith flees Kirtland in January and goes to Far West, Caldwell County, Mo. (due north of Ray County). By the summer of 1838, Caldwell County had over 5,000 residents (almost all Mormon); about half lived in Far West.

With this concentration of population (and with the apostasy crisis of 1837 behind them), the church began showing an intolerance for dissent from within. In June, 1838, at Far West, Mo., Sidney Rigdon delivered the famous "Salt Sermon" in which dissenters were likened unto salt which had lost its savor and was good for nothing else but to be cast out (cf. Matt. 5:13). The leading dissenters (Oliver Cowdery, David and John Whitmer, W.W. Phelps and Lyman E. Johnson) received a threatening letter signed by 84 other church members. It ordered the dissenters to leave or face serious consequences. They left.

That same summer, Sampson Avard organizes the Danites, a secret society which he claimed operated with the approval of the 1st Presidency and that they were authorized to avenge themselves against the church's enemies by robbery lying and murder. Danite depredations, both real and imagined, intensified hostilities and gave Missouri officials a reason to indict Joseph Smith.

On July 4th, 1838 Sidney Rigdon delivered another fiery speech in Far West. He declared the church's own independence from suffering any further mob violence. He warned potential mobs that the church would no longer meekly bear persecution but would defend itself to the death.

**See excerpt of Rigdon Speech.** "It shall be between us and them a war of extermination, for we will follow them, till the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us." This inflammatory speech was published and soon reached the hands of Missouri officials. By the end of September of 1838, the church members had left Kirtland for Far West, Mo. Interestingly, there was no real decision to abandon Kirtland, but the focal point of the church had shifted to Missouri. Note D&C 64:21 (received in 1831) "I, the Lord, will to retain a strong hold in the land of Kirtland, for the space of five years." Rigdon's July 4th speech provided the basis for charges of treason against the church and led to the Extermination Order. The Ext. Order was issued on October 27, 1838. Joseph, Hyrum and other church

leaders were arrested on November 1st. From Nov. 30 until they escaped at the end of March 1839 they were in the Liberty, Mo. jail.

**Winter of 1838-39:** The majority of the Mormons leave Missouri for southeastern Iowa and the region around Quincy, Ill. Some 8,000-10,000 relocated to the Quincy area.

**1839:** Joseph, now a fugitive from the law of Missouri, moves his family to Commerce and changes the name to Nauvoo.

**1840:** The population of Nauvoo is about 3,000 by December. Nauvoo Charter issued on 16 December 1840. Probably with the help of Bennett.

**1841:** John C. Bennett elected the first mayor of Nauvoo. He was a prominent Illinois politician who moved from Springfield to Nauvoo and was baptized in 1840. Mormon votes shift political power in western Illinois from Whig to Democrat. Joseph is arrested as a fugitive from Missouri. He is freed by Judge Stephen A. Douglas, a Democrat, on procedural grounds. This further outrages local Whig politicians. Douglas is the same man who debated with Lincoln.

**1842:** John C. Bennett excommunicated on charges of adultery (note conflict with the polygamy issue "spiritual wifery" which was just now becoming known). He becomes an active opponent of the church. At this time, Robert Foster, Francis and Chauncey Higby were also reproved by Joseph Smith for immorality. These men would later publish the Nauvoo Expositor. Mormon votes help elect the Democrat candidate for Governor, Thomas L. Ford. In the same election campaign, William Smith (Joseph's brother and an apostle) runs for the state legislature as a Democrat and defeats the Whig candidate, Thomas Sharp. Sharp is a lawyer and the publisher/editor of the Warsaw Signal. Sharp will become a major church opponent. The church publishes the Wasp and designates William Smith as its editor. In May 1842 Lilburn W. Boggs, former Governor of Missouri, is wounded by an assassin. John C. Bennett claims that the assassin was Orrin Porter Rockwell acting under the direction of Joseph Smith. Boggs swears to an affidavit that Smith ordered Rockwell to kill him. Rockwell and Smith are charged with attempted murder. Missouri Governor Thomas Reynolds asks Gov. Thomas Carlin of Illinois to arrest and extradite the two. They are arrested but then temporarily freed by virtue of the unusual powers granted in the Nauvoo charter. During the summer, Joseph is forced into hiding to avoid death threats. Under the protection of Gov. Ford, Joseph comes out of hiding and travels to Springfield where these charges are ultimately dismissed in December, 1842.

**1843:** In June, Sheriff Joseph Reynolds from Jackson County, Mo. and Constable Harmon Wilson of Hancock County, Ill. go to Dixon, Ill. (200 miles north of Nauvoo where Joseph and his family are vacationing at the home of Emma's sister, Elizabeth Watson. Also the birthplace of Ronald Reagan). Cyrus Walker, the Whig candidate for Congress and a lawyer, was also in Dixon and promised to defend Joseph if Joseph would vote for Walker in the next election. Joseph agreed. Then two Nauvoo constables (Stephen Markham and William Clayton) who are accompanying Joseph and his family, arrest Reynolds and Wilson for false imprisonment and for threatening Joseph's life. (Note: This is the same Clayton who later authors "Come, Come Ye Saints") The entire party returns to Nauvoo where the Nauvoo Municipal Court releases Joseph. Although Joseph personally votes for Walker in the election, it is determined that the Democrats are more likely to help the Mormons so the other church leaders encouraged the

rest of the church to vote for Walker's opponent, Joseph P. Hoge, the Democrat candidate. This deception angers the Whigs. Hoge wins, but the Democrats now begin to fear that the Mormon vote could be used against them as well as for them.

**1844:** In January, Joseph declares himself a candidate for President of the US, a move which further alienates the church from both Whig and democrat party leaders and politicians, who feared the Mormon bloc vote. In April, Robert Foster, William and Wilson Law are excommunicated for unchristian conduct. Declaring Joseph a fallen prophet, they organize a reformed church with William Law as president. They have about 200 followers. When they are denounced in the church newspaper, Times and Seasons, they decide to publish a newspaper of their own, and thus is born the Nauvoo Expositor.

#### **Friday - June 7, 1844:**

The Nauvoo Expositor publishes its first (and only) edition. It is full of attacks against the Mormons, the Nauvoo City Council, the prophet, and Hyrum. In its pages Joseph is accused of practicing whoredoms, advocating spiritual wifery, grasping for political power, preaching that there were many gods, speaking blasphemously of god, and promoting an inquisition. The avowed purpose of the N.E. is the repeal of the Nauvoo City charter. It is to be published every Friday. **See Nauvoo Expositor Prospectus.**

The paper is to be published by several area residents. They are: William & Wilson Law, Charles Ivins, Francis & Chauncey Higbee, Robert & Charles Foster. All are former church members. Sylvester Emmons, the editor, is a member of the Nauvoo City Council. He is not a church member. William Law had been second counselor to Joseph Smith in Nauvoo (dates? ). Wilson Law lives in Nauvoo and is a former Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion and a former president of the City Council. Robert Foster had been an officer of the Nauvoo Legion. All of these men were well-known to the leaders of the church. They were all open in their antagonism towards the church and its leaders. Since early 1844, they had been leading an apostasy from the church and had built up a following of about 200 people. Their primary complaint was the issue of plural marriage. Shortly after openly opposing Joseph at the April 1844 general conference, all of these men were excommunicated. There were a number of lawsuits and countersuits involving these men and the leaders of the church.

#### **Saturday - June 8th:**

The City Council meets (10:00am-1:00pm and 3:00pm-6:30pm) to discuss the N.E. They suspend its Editor, Sylvester Emmons, from service on the Council. This action is based upon a charge that he had slandered the City Council. Emmons is to be suspended until his case can be investigated by the City Council. This was almost certainly an illegal act by the Council. They suspended him prior to proving that he had done anything wrong and set themselves up as the body to determine his guilt.

Joseph Smith suggested that the Council pass an ordinance to prevent misrepresentations, libelous publications, and conspiracies against the peace of the city. Joseph is quoted as saying that the Constitution does not authorize the press to publish libels and that: "The conduct of such

men and such papers are calculated to destroy the peace of the city, and it is not safe that such things should exist, on account of the mob spirit which they tend to produce." A noble intent but almost certainly an unconstitutional idea; the remedy for libel is an action for damages. However, the Minutes of the Council for June 10th include a comment attributed to Hyrum Smith to the effect that there would be little chance of collecting damages because the proprietors had little property and the press was heavily mortgaged. The Council adjourns without taking any other action.

**Sunday - June 9th:**

Joseph attended church. Hyrum preached. Mansion House meeting at 6:00pm.

**Monday - June 10th:**

City Council met from 10:00am-1:20pm and 2:20pm-6:30pm. The prospectus of the Nauvoo Expositor was read in the City Council meeting. There is considerable debate expressing outrage over the information published in the N.E. All but \_\_\_ Warrington (a nonmember) were in favor of destroying the press. He proposed a fine. His was the only dissenting voice. **See Comments of the Nauvoo Council members.**

The Council passed an ordinance (All but Warrington voted for it) declaring the Nauvoo Expositor a nuisance and issued an order to Joseph Smith, as Mayor, to abate the nuisance. Joseph ordered the city Marshal, John P. Greene, to destroy it. **See Text of the Expositor Nuisance Ordinance.**

Joseph also issued an order to Jonathan Dunham, acting Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion, to assist the Marshall with the Legion if called upon to do so. The Marshall reported that the printing press, type, paper and fixtures had been tossed into the street and destroyed at 8:00pm on the evening of June 10th.

Just as the police were arriving at the Expositor office, Francis Higbee, one of the owners is reported to have said: "If they lay their hands upon the press or break it, they may date their downfall from that very hour, and in ten days there will not be a Mormon left in Nauvoo. What they do, they may expect the same in return." His prophecy came true, but it took two years (until Sept. 1846).

In the previous two decades there had been twenty similar incidents of printing presses being destroyed in Illinois. However, the law then permitted only the destruction of the published issues. The destruction of the presses was a violation of law. See Dallin H. Oaks, "The Suppression of the Nauvoo Expositor," Utah Law Review, Winter 1965.

**Tuesday - June 11th:**

Joseph spent the morning in council with other leaders. In the afternoon, he issued a proclamation explaining that the press had been destroyed to preserve the peace. He directed the citizens of Nauvoo to be prepared to suppress the gathering of mobs. During the afternoon

he went to the Nauvoo courthouse. While there, he told the people he was ready to fight if compelled to do so, for he would not be in bondage. The City Council issued a summons to Sylvester Emmons which commanded him to appear and defend himself against the charge of slandering the City Council. Emmons is directed to appear on the second Saturday in July (7/12/44).

A warrant for the arrest of Joseph Smith and 17 others (essentially the entire Nauvoo City Council) is issued in Carthage. **See Arrest Warrant excerpts.**

### **Wednesday - June 12:**

Joseph spent the morning in his office. At 1:30pm, Joseph is arrested in Nauvoo by David Bettisworth, the constable of Hancock County. Bettisworth is from Carthage, which is the county seat of the county. Although Constable Bettisworth intended to take Smith to Carthage, Joseph pointed out that the warrant directed Bettisworth to take the prisoners to Justice Morrison in Carthage "or some other justice of the peace." Both Hyrum and Joseph offered themselves to go with Bettisworth to the nearest justice of the peace (this would, of course, be a Justice of the Peace in Nauvoo) and stand trial. Bettisworth demanded that they go with him to Carthage and Justice Morrison. The Smiths refused.

Joseph Smith then filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus with the Nauvoo municipal court. **See Petition.** Joseph's petition was granted by the court and the clerk of the court, Willard Richards (who was also an apostle and, coincidentally, clerk of the quorum of the Twelve Apostles) issued an order to Bettisworth which commanded him to safely deliver Joseph to the Nauvoo Municipal Court. The order also directed the Nauvoo city Marshall to arrest Bettisworth if he failed to obey, and to "...bring him...forthwith before the Municipal Court...to be dealt with according to law." This action brought an immediate and angry response from Joseph's enemies. **See excerpt from the Warsaw Signal editorial by Thomas C. Sharp. 5:00 PM.** A hearing on the Carthage arrest warrant is held before the Nauvoo Municipal Court. The Nuisance Resolution and the order to destroy the press were read. Testimony was heard from numerous witnesses; all of them favorable to Smith. Apparently no one representing the N.E. was present. The testimony given stated that the destruction of the press was accomplished in an orderly and quiet fashion (e.g., no riot). The balance of the testimony was focused upon the antagonism of the owners of the N.E. towards Joseph Smith and the Mormons. Several people testified that Francis Higbee and Charles Foster had threatened to kill Joseph and destroy the Mormons.

**Decision of the Nauvoo Municipal Court.** The Court decided that Joseph Smith had acted under proper authority in destroying the press; that his orders were executed in an orderly and judicious manner and that Joseph's arrest was a malicious prosecution on the part of Francis Higbee. The Court discharged Joseph Smith and ordered Higbee to pay the costs of the suit. This was not a trial, merely a hearing on the warrant. Joseph Smith was the chief judge of the Nauvoo Municipal Court. Because he was being charged, George W. Harris, another JP and a Nauvoo alderman (and a member of the Nauvoo city council?) served as chief judge. **See editorial from the Nauvoo Neighbor** (This was the official paper in Nauvoo)

**Thursday June 13:**

**9:00am.** As chief judge, Joseph Smith presided over the hearing for the others (only 14) who were named in the Carthage warrant. They were all honorably discharged and Higbee was again ordered to pay the costs of the action. Mass meetings are held in Carthage and Warsaw to protest the dismissal of the charges, and the destruction of the N.E. press. A leader in this effort was Thomas C. Sharp, editor of the Warsaw Signal. **See Warsaw Resolution.**

**Friday - June 14:**

In the morning Joseph writes to Governor Thomas L. Ford explaining the Expositor affair and seeking his intervention. Letter is on page 486-7. Joseph claims a legal right to destroy the press. Smith volunteers to come to meet with Ford if the Governor wants to hold legal proceedings at the state capitol in Springfield.

**Saturday - June 15th:**

Joseph spent the day at home. In his journal, he reports hearing rumors of armed men training in Carthage and boxes of arms being shipped to Warsaw. Apparently some area Mormons are driven from their homes on this day and seek refuge in Nauvoo; Joseph reports this as a fact in a proclamation issued on the 16th.

**Sunday - June 16th:**

Joseph preached a sermon in Nauvoo on the plurality of gods. In the afternoon he met several thousand of the brethren near the Temple. He instructed them to keep cool and to prepare their arms for the defense of the city. Joseph writes a second letter to Governor Ford (See p. 480) asking for his counsel and protection from the mobs reported to be gathering in Warsaw and Carthage. He asks Ford to come at once to Nauvoo to prevent bloodshed. Late in the afternoon Joseph (as Mayor of Nauvoo) issues a Proclamation (see page 484). It merely restates the Church position that the destruction of the press was legal. It does misrepresent the vote on the ordinance as unanimous.

To indicate how seriously the church misunderstood the issues and their opponents, consider this. A meeting was held Sunday evening for the purpose of designating Mormon leaders to go to the surrounding towns to explain their side of the story. **See Minutes of June 16th Meeting.**

**Monday - June 17th:**

Hyrum Smith writes a letter to Brigham Young (in Boston) instructing him to come to Nauvoo and to bring with him other members of the Twelve who are travelling. The letter carries this instruction: "A word to the wise is sufficient; and a little powder, lead and a good rifle can be packed in your luggage very easy and without creating any suspicion." The letter concludes with this: "Large bodies of armed men, cannon and munitions of war are coming on from Missouri in steamboats....you will readily see that we have to prepare for the onset." This letter is apparently not sent. Joseph records in his journal that he asked Hyrum not to mail it.

In the morning, Joseph and others are arrested in Nauvoo for causing a riot (destruction of the N.E. press). They were arrested by a Nauvoo constable, Joel S. Miles, on a writ issued by a Nauvoo Judge, Daniel H. Wells, on a complaint by W.G.Ware. All except Wells are Mormons. This is a legal maneuver designed to show that there could be a fair trial held in Nauvoo. Wells is chosen as judge because he is not a Mormon. The trial was held at 2:00pm that afternoon in Nauvoo. Both sides presented testimony. All are acquitted.

As Mayor, Joseph issues orders to Marshal Greene to preserve the peace of the city and to prepare to defend it. As Commander of the Nauvoo Legion, Joseph issues orders to the Legion to assist the Marshal in the defense of the city as he may require. He also orders his personal guard to arrive at headquarters armed and equipped for military duty. Joseph retires at midnight.

### **Tuesday - June 18th:**

The Nauvoo Legion (about 3,000 men) was assembled at 8:00am. By 9:00am they were organized for the defense of the city and for peacekeeping purposes within it. **At 1:45pm Joseph issued a proclamation declaring martial law in Nauvoo.** According to the proclamation, no one will be allowed in or out of the city with permission. See Declaration of Martial Law (p497). Beginning at 2:00pm, Joseph spoke to the Legion for about an hour and a half. This was a fiery speech which urged the Legion to stand by Joseph to the death and to defend Nauvoo with their blood. **See J.S. speech to the Nauvoo Legion** (pp 498-500). After the speech, the Legion paraded down Main Street. After which its members were dispatched to their various commands.

### **Wednesday - June 19th:**

Joseph listened to reports about mobs and groups of armed men assembling throughout the area and angry citizens gathering in Carthage and Warsaw as well as in Missouri. All of the guns, powder and lead in the city were put under the command of the Legion. There was another parade of the Nauvoo Legion and guards were posted at all entrances into the city as well as on all the streets and alleys and along the riverbank.

### **Thursday - June 20:**

At dawn, Joseph went with his staff to inspect the defense of the city. To acquire provisions, Joseph instructed his agent to pledge his farms as collateral. Several people came into the city reporting that they had been recruited to join mobs for the purpose of exterminating the Mormons. There were more reports of cannon, armed men accumulating, etc. See page 520. Joseph writes to the ten members of the Twelve (plus Amasa Lyman) who are campaigning for Smith's presidential bid and directs them to return to Nauvoo. Late in the evening, Joseph gives instructions that the Mormons should commence the manufacture of artillery. He also states (prophecies?) that there would not be a gun fired by the Mormons in this "fuss." Joseph asks Hyrum to take his (Hyrum's) family and escape to Cincinnati so that Hyrum would live to avenge Joseph's blood. Hyrum refuses to leave.

### **Friday - June 21:**



Thomas Ford arrives in Carthage in the morning. He sends a letter to Nauvoo requesting that Joseph send a representative to Carthage to give Ford the Mormon version of what has happened. He promises a safe passage for the messengers and a fair hearing. At 4:00 PM Joseph convenes the City Council which selects J.M. Bernhisel, John Taylor to go meet with Gov.. Ford. They carried numerous affidavits of people who had heard death threats made against Joseph Smith.

### **Saturday - June 22:**

At noon, JS sends another letter to Gov.. Ford with many affidavits about attacks on and threats against JS and the Mormons. He repeats his belief that any Mormon leader who comes to Carthage would be killed. He asks Ford to come to Nauvoo. **10:00 PM** JS receives a response from Gov.. Ford. **See Excerpts from Ford Letter dated June 22, 1844.** The lengthy letter goes on to list several violations of the law by the Nauvoo city council. Ford insists that those charged in the original warrant submit to arrest and trial by an impartial court. He promises to guarantee their safety. Joseph's representatives report that Ford treated them rudely and that Ford appeared to have accepted the views of the church's enemies at Carthage as fact. **See Reaction of the Smith's to Ford's Letter.** Joseph then gave instructions to have his family and Hyrum's taken by the Maid of Iowa down the Mississippi to the Ohio and then North to Portsmouth.

The letter from Ford apparently effects a change of heart in the Mormon leadership. At midnight JS sends a long letter to Ford defending his actions but promising to right any wrongs done by the Mormons. Joseph denies that he insisted on being tried only by a Nauvoo court and claims that he was willing to be tried in any court other than one in Carthage. The hearing was held in Nauvoo only because the Carthage constable refused to take them anywhere else. He cites law to support the right of the city council to destroy the press. He also points out that it would be a violation of the U.S. Constitution for him to be tried a second time for the destruction of the press. However, if the Governor assures a fair trial he is willing to submit to it. Sometime about midnight, Joseph, Hyrum, Willard Richards and Porter Rockwell cross the river into Iowa.

JS makes no further entries in his Journal. From here on the history is compiled by George A. Smith. He is a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and Joseph's cousin. He served as Church historian from 1854-1875.

### **Sunday - June 23:**

At daybreak, Rockwell is sent back to get horses and supplies so that Joseph and Hyrum can go to the Rocky Mountains to seek a new home for the church. A posse arrives in Nauvoo to arrest Joseph. When he is not found, they threaten to occupy the city until he is found. At **1:00 PM** Emma sends Porter Rockwell to ask Joseph to come back. Others accompanied Rockwell. These people urged Joseph to return and give himself up or their property would be destroyed. They accused him of cowardice. Joseph replied: "If my life is of no value to my friends it is of none to myself."

**2:00 PM** JS sends a letter to Gov. Ford agreeing to come to Carthage on Monday and recrosses the river at about **5:30**. As they walk to the river, Joseph and Porter Rockwell fall

behind the group. When someone urged them to catch up, Joseph responds: "It is of no use to hurry, for we are going back to be slaughtered."

**9:00pm:** Ford receives the letter from JS. He rescinds a promise (when made?) of an escort and orders JS to be in Carthage by 10:00am on Monday (6/24).

### **Monday - June 24:**

**4:00am** Messengers arrive in Nauvoo with Gov. Ford's orders for JS.

**6:30am** JS, Hyrum and the others named in the original Nauvoo Expositor arrest warrant, depart Nauvoo for Carthage. As the party passed by the Temple site, Joseph said: "This is the loveliest place and the best people under the heavens; little do they know the trials that await them."

**9:00 am** As he passed the home of Daniel H. Wells (the Nauvoo municipal court judge who had acquitted him on the charges), he said: Squire Wells, I wish you to cherish my memory, and not think me the worst man in the world either."

**10:00am** As they met a company of the state militia some four miles west of Carthage, Joseph reassured his companions: **See Joseph's Comments on June 24.**

**Noon.** JS returns to Nauvoo with the state militia to oversee the surrender of the Nauvoo Legion's "state arms." pursuant to an order from Gov.. Ford. He visits his family twice during this time.

**6:30pm** JS again departs for Carthage.

**9:00pm** (or midnight) JS arrives in Carthage and checks into the Hamilton Hotel.

### **Tuesday - June 25:**

**8:00am** JS and Hyrum surrender to the Carthage constable, David Bettisworth, and are charged under the original, once discharged, writ; upon which they had been tried by Wells in Nauvoo. Later that morning, Joseph and Hyrum are rearrested and charged with treason for calling out the Nauvoo Legion and declaring martial law on June 19th.

**8:30 am:** Ford assembles the troops in the Carthage town square and delivers an inflammatory speech indicating that the Mormons were guilty of the charged crimes but that they were in the hands of the law which must run its course.

**10:00am:** Ford and the indicted Mormons march before the assembled troops from the courthouse to the Hotel (about one block). As they pass the Carthage Greys, the men draw their swords in a threatening manner. Ford delivers a short speech and promises them "full satisfaction."

In the afternoon, Joseph hears reports that armed men are heading to Nauvoo to loot the city. He asks Ford to send troops there to help keep the peace. Ford agrees to do so. At **3:00pm** Joseph writes to Emma (p565). He expresses faith in Ford's ability to keep the peace and relays Ford's promise to go to Nauvoo with his troops to protect the city. He expresses a belief that Ford intends to take Joseph with him to Nauvoo.

At **4:30** the defendants were taken before JP Robert F. Smith for a preliminary hearing on the original warrant. Robert Smith is a Carthage citizen and an officer in the Carthage Greys. Note that he is not the same justice as the one (Thomas Morrison) issuing the original writ. This was a requirement which was insisted upon by Bettieworth in Nauvoo. The defendants admit that

the press was destroyed by order of the Mayor after it was declared a nuisance by the city council. The treason charge and arrest warrant are not presented to the court. They are bound over for trial at the next term of the Hancock County Circuit Court. The JP sets the bail for all defendants at \$7500. To the court's surprise, the defendants are able to pledge property sufficient to cover that sum. All defendants are released on their own recognizance.

**7:30pm.** Most of the defendants leave Carthage for Nauvoo. Joseph and Hyrum hold a private meeting with Gov.. Ford at the Hotel. They then go to supper at the Hotel.

**8:00pm.** Bettisworth appears to arrest Joseph and Hyrum. He carries an Order from JP Robert F. Smith which is based upon the treason charge. It is dated June 25th and directs that the Smiths are to be held in jail pending a trial on the treason charge. In effect, it states that there was a hearing on the treason charge and that the JP found that there was enough evidence to put the Smiths in jail to await trial. This is now known as the "false mittimus." An appeal was made to Gov.. Ford who refused to intervene. JP Smith, in a subsequent statement, acknowledged that the order committing the Smiths to jail was illegal (p574).

**9:00pm** The Smiths, accompanied by a few friends, were then taken to the Carthage jail.

### **Wednesday - June 26:**

**8:00am.** Joseph sends a letter to Ford seeking an interview.

**9:30am.** Gov.. Ford comes to the jail to meet with Joseph. They have a lengthy meeting in which Ford promises protection to the Smiths.

**10:15am** After leaving the jail, Ford tells an officer of the Carthage Greys that if the non-mormons attack the mormons, he will not interfere until they are through. **See Affidavit Excerpts.** During the day, JP Smith and Constable Bettisworth make several attempts to remove the Smiths from the jail. These are resisted by the jailer and the Smiths' lawyer on legal grounds, i.e., a JP loses jurisdiction over the prisoner once he is bound over for trial. Bettisworth returns in the late afternoon with a company of the Carthage Greys and forces the jailer to admit him. The Smiths are then taken to the courthouse where a hearing on the treason charges is held. Thus overcoming the legal difficulty of the false mittimus. The Smiths have no witnesses available and they ask for a continuance so that their witnesses may be obtained. The continuance is granted and the Smiths are returned to the jail about 5:30pm. Bail is not allowed for those charged with treason (see page 601).

### **Thursday - June 27:**

**5:30am:** The prisoners awake. Frank Worrell, the officer of the guards, tells Dan Jones that he had better leave the jail because any man who is with Joseph in the jail will die before sunset. Jones reports this threat to Joseph. Joseph tells Jones to go to Gov.. Ford and report the threat. On the way to the Hotel Jones hears another officer speaking to his soldiers. The officer tells his men that they will be discharged and are to leave town, but as soon as the Gov.. and his troops depart for Nauvoo, "we will return and kill those men, if we have to tear the jail down." Jones reported all this to Ford, who dismissed Jones' fears.

**7:00am:** The prisoners eat breakfast.

**8:20am:** Joseph writes a short note to Emma.

**10:30am** Ford leaves Carthage for Nauvoo leaving the Carthage Greys behind.

**3:15pm** John Taylor sings "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief" (two times).

**5:00pm** Jailer is Mr. Stigall. They move to the upper room - Ford gives a speech in Nauvoo. He berates the saints and has his troops brandish their swords.

**5:15pm:** (See p281 BYU book, HC 6:602-18) A mob of about 100 men arrive at the jail. Some of them rush up the stairs and begin shooting into the room. The prisoners push the door shut while John Taylor and Willard Richards deflect the gun barrels with their canes. Hyrum fires his pistol several times into the doorway. A bullet fired through the door strikes Hyrum in the face and he falls to the ground saying "I am a dead man!" Three more bullets hit him after he falls. Joseph steps to the doorway and fires his pistol into the hall. Three of the six chambers misfire. As more men push into the room, John Taylor abandons the door and tries to escape through the window. He is struck in the leg from behind and then in the chest from outside. His pocketwatch is struck by the bullet and stops at 5:16pm. The second ball knocks him back into the room. He is struck twice more as he crawls under a bed. He is hit a fifth time while under the bed. Joseph while also at the window is struck twice from behind and once in the chest from outside. He fell through the window and dropped about 15 to 20 feet to the ground. Willard Richards was unharmed. When Joseph fell, the mob on the stairs (apparently thinking he had jumped to escape) ran down the stairs. While they were gone, Richards moved the severely wounded John Taylor to another room and covered him with old mattresses. As this was being done, the mob returned to look for survivors, but they only found the dead body of Hyrum. A cry was heard that the Mormons were coming and all of the mob escaped into the nearby woods.

**6:30pm** Ford and his troops leave Nauvoo to return to Carthage.

Samuel Smith (Joseph's brother) died one month later, apparently from injuries received while fleeing a mob between Carthage and Nauvoo.

**June 28th: Friday: 8:00am:** The bodies of Joseph and Hyrum are brought to Nauvoo and prepared for burial.

**June 29th: Saturday.** A viewing was held at the Prophet's home from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. About 10,000 people came. At 5:00pm, the viewing was ended so that the families could have a private farewell. A mock public funeral with bags of sand in the coffins was held at the cemetery. At midnight, the bodies were buried in the basement of the Nauvoo House (then under construction). Several months later they were reburied near the Mansion House.

### **Subsequent Events**

**Location of the Twelve on June 27th:** At the time of the murders, seven of the Twelve were in or near Boston. These were: Brigham Young, Orson Hyde, Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball, Lyman Wight, William Smith (brother of JS), Orson Pratt. These attended a conference in Boston on June 29th.

Parley P. Pratt was on a canal boat between Utica and Buffalo, New York.

George A. Smith (JS's cousin; not G. Albert Smith) was staying with members of the church near Jacksonburg, Michigan. He did not learn of the murders until July 13th and arrived in Nauvoo on July 27th.

John E. Page was probably in the Pittsburgh area.

John Taylor and Willard Richards were with Joseph in the Jail.

Aug. 3rd: Sidney Rigdon, JS's 1st Counselor, arrives in Nauvoo

Aug 4th: In a speech to the saints in Nauvoo, Rigdon claims the right to lead the church as "Guardian."

Aug. 6th: Most of the Twelve arrive with Brigham Young.

Aug 7th The members of the Twelve in Nauvoo hold an early morning meeting at John Taylor's home. Another meeting is set for 4:00pm to discuss Rigdon's claim. See BYU Manual for Rel 341-343, pp 290-1 for Rigdon's and Young's comments.

Aug 8th: At a morning (10:00am) prayer meeting, Brigham Young is transfigured before the congregation (BYU Manual p291). A solemn assembly is held at 2pm at which the congregation votes to follow the Twelve under the direction of BY.

Late August, James J. Strang arrives with a letter from Joseph Smith appointing him Joseph's successor. It is exposed as a forgery.

September: Sidney Rigdon excommunicated. Persecution by Warsaw and Carthage citizens intensifies, but it is stopped by troops acting under orders from Gov.. Ford.

Jan 1845: Nauvoo charter revoked, but Nauvoo continues to grow, reaching 11,000 by Dec 1845.

Feb 1846: Mormon exodus begins.

May 1, 1846 Nauvoo temple dedicated.

July 1846: Mormon Battalion leaves Iowa for California.

September 1846: Nauvoo evacuated. The city is looted and the Temple burned.

(Note in 1846, the population of Lee County, Iowa is 12,860, many of them Mormons.)

## APPENDIX

### **Excerpt of July 4, 1838 Rigdon Speech.**

Referring to the enemies of the Church: "It shall be between us and them a war of extermination, for we will follow them, till the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us."

This inflammatory speech was published and soon reached the hands of Missouri officials. Rigdon's July 4th speech provided the basis for charges of treason against the church and led to the Extermination Order; which was issued on October 27, 1838. Joseph, Hyrum and other church leaders were arrested on November 1st. From Nov 30, until they escaped at the end of March 1839, they were in the Liberty, Mo. jail.

### **Nauvoo Expositor Prospectus**

(Excerpts)

"The Expositor will be devoted to a general diffusion of useful knowledge, and its columns open for the admission of all courteous communications of a religious, moral, social, literary, or political character without taking a decided stand in favor of either of the great political parties in the country. A part of its columns will be devoted to a few primary objects, which the publishers deem of vital importance to the public welfare. Their particular locality gives them a knowledge of the many gross abuses exercised under the "pretended" authorities of the Charter of the City of Nauvoo, the legislative authorities of said city and the insupportable oppression of the Ministerial powers in carrying out the unjust, illegal and unconstitutional ordinances of the same. The publishers therefore deem it a sacred duty they owe to their country and their fellow-citizens to advocate through the columns of the Expositor THE UNCONDITIONAL REPEAL OF THE NAUVOO CITY CHARTER, to restrain and correct the abuse of the UNIT POWER, to ward off the iron rod which is held over the devoted heads of the citizens of Nauvoo and the surrounding country, to advocate unmitigated DISOBEDIENCE TO POLITICAL REVELATIONS, and to censure and decry gross moral imperfections wherever found, either in the plebian, patrician or SELF-CONSTITUTED MONARCH-- to advocate the pure principles of morality, the pure principles of truth, designed not to destroy, but to strengthen the mainspring of God's moral Government -- to advocate and exercise the freedom of speech in Nauvoo, independent of the ordinances abridging the same -- to give free toleration to every man's religious sentiment, and sustain ALL in worshipping their God according to the monitions of their consciences, as guaranteed by the Constitution of our country, and to oppose with uncompromising hostility any UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE, or any preliminary step tending to the same -- to sustain ALL however humble, in their equal and consitutional rights, and oppose the sacrifice of the liberty, the property and the happiness of the MANY, to the pride and ambition of the FEW; in a word, to give a full, candid and succinct statement of FACTS AS THEY REALLY EXIST IN THE CITY OF NAUVOO fearless of whose particular case the facts may apply..."

**Comments of the Nauvoo Council members about the Nauvoo Expositor.**

The proprietors were out of reach of the law; we should put an end to the press at once. If the City Council did not do it, others would. Alderman Elias Smith.

Don't give them time to trumpet a thousand lies. Their property could not pay for it. If we pass only a fine or imprisonment have we any confidence that they will desist? None at all. These men are covenant breakers with God. Have we any hope of their doing better? Shall they be suffered to go on, and bring a mob upon us, and murder our women and children and burn our beautiful city! No! I had rather my blood would be spilled at once, and would like to have the press removed as soon as the ordinance would allow. Put the matter in the hands of the Mayor. Everybody stand by him in the execution of his duties and hush every murmur. Alderman Orson Spencer.

Private interest is nothing in comparison with the public good. Councilor Levi Richards.

The destruction of the press was justified by comparison to the Boston Tea Party, according to Councilor Phelps. (The BTP occurred on 12/16/1773, only 71 years earlier).

I have not forgotten Haun's Mill and cannot sit still when I see the same spirit raging in this place. The Expositor is as much murderous at heart as David was before the death of Uriah. Stand by the Mayor and whatever he proposes. The quicker it is stopped, the better. Councilor Phineas Richards (whose son was killed at Haun's Mill.).

### **Text of the Expositor "Nuisance" Ordinance**

Resolved, by the City Council of the city of Nauvoo, that the printing-office from whence issues the Nauvoo Expositor is a public nuisance and also all of said Nauvoo Expositors which may be or exist in said establishment; and the Mayor is instructed to cause said printing establishment and papers to be removed without delay, in such manner as he shall direct.

### **Excerpt from the Arrest Warrant**

The warrant was issued by Thomas Morrison, a justice of the peace for Hancock County. His court was located in Carthage. It is dated June 11, 1844. Based upon a complaint from Francis M. Higbee, it charges that Joseph Smith, John Taylor, W.W.Phelps, Hyrum Smith, Porter Rockwell, Levi Richards and others **"did on the 10th day of June ...commit a riot ... wherein they, with force and violence broke into the office of the Nauvoo Expositor, and unlawfully and with force burned and destroyed the printing press, type and fixtures of the same..."** It directs any constable to apprehend them **"and bring them before me or to some other justice of the peace, to answer the premises, and further to be dealt with according to law."**

### **The Petition for a writ of Habeus Corpus**

To the Honorable Municipal Court in and for the said City of Nauvoo:

Your petitioner, Joseph Smith, respectfully represents that he is now under arrest in the said city of Nauvoo.

That he is in the custody of one David Bettisworth, a constable ... who holds your petitioner...by virtue of a warrant...issued upon the affidavits of one Francis M. Higbee, charging your petitioner with being guilty of a riot...

Your petitioner further represents that the warrant of arrest, by virtue of which the said David Bettisworth has made this arrest, does not disclose sufficiently clear and explicit the charge they have preferred.

Your petitioner further avers that this proceeding against him has been instituted through malice, private pique and corruption.

Your petitioner further avers that the design and intention of the said F.M.Higbee in commencing this prosecution is to commit and carry out more easily a conspiracy against the life of your petitioner; and that the said Higbee has publicly declared that it was his determination to do everything in his power to throw your petitioner into the hands of his enemies: and that there is a determination upon the part of said Higbee and his unhallowed coadjutors to commit an unlawful act, and to set the rights and privileges of your petitioner at defiance, and bring down upon his head this corrupt and unhallowed prosecution.

Your petitioner further avers that he is not guilty of the charge preferred against him; that he seeks an investigation before an impartial tribunal and fears not the result.

Your petitioner would therefore ask your honorable body to grant him the benefit of the writ of habeus corpus, that this matter may be investigated upon legal principles, and that the legal and constitutional rights of your petitioner may be determined by your honorable body.

**Excerpt from Warsaw Signal editorial of June 12, 1844**

"War and extermination is inevitable! *Citizens* ARISE, ONE and ALL!!! --- Can you *stand* by and suffer such INFERNAL DEVILS! to ROB men of their property and RIGHTS, without avenging them. We have no time for comment, every man will make his own. LET IT BE MADE WITH POWDER AND BALL!!!" Written by Thomas C. Sharp

**Excerpt from the Nauvoo Neighbor, June 12, 1844**

**RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE**

A knot of base men, to further their wicked and malicious designs towards the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to bolster up the intents of blacklegs and bogus-makers...established a press in this city last week, and issued a paper entitled the *NauvooExpositor*. The prospectus showed an intention to destroy the charter, and the paper was filled with libels and slanderous articles upon the citizens and City COuncil from one end to the other.

"A burnt child dreads the fire." The (church) as a body and individually has suffered till "forebearance has ceased to be a virtue." The cries and pleadings of men women and children, with the authorities were, "Will you suffer that servile, murderous paper to go on and vilify and slander the innocent inhabitants of this city, and raise another mob to drive and plunder us again as they did in Missouri?"...We beseech all men who have the spirit of honor in them to cease from persecuting us, collectively or individually. Let us enjoy our religion, rights and peace like the rest of mankind. Why start presses to destroy rights and privileges, and bring upon us mobs to plunder and murder? We ask no more than that what belongs to us--the rights of Americans.

**Warsaw/Carthage Resolutions  
(Excerpts from Warsaw Signal)**

At a mass meeting of the citizens of Hancock County, convened at Carthage on the 13th day of June 1844, the following resolutions were passed and sent to Warsaw for adoption by the citizens of that city.

"Whereas information has reached us...that the authorities of Nauvoo did recently pass an ordinance declaring a printing press and newspaper published by the opponents of the Prophet a nuisance, and ... did direct the Marshal of the city ... to enter by force...and violently to take possession of the press and printing materials, and thereafter to burn and destroy the same; and whereas, in pursuance of said ordinance, the Marshal ... together with a mob of Mormons, did, after sunset on the evening of the 10th...violently enter said building in a tumultuous manner, burn and destroy the press....

And whereas Hyrum Smith did, in the presence of the City Council and the citizens of Nauvoo, offer a reward for the destruction of the printing press and materials of the Warsaw Signal, a newspaper also opposed to his interests;



And whereas the liberty of the press is one of the cardinal principles of our Government, firmly guaranteed by the several constitutions of the states as well as the United States;

And whereas, Hyrum Smith has within the last week publicly threatened the life of one of our valued citizens, Thomas C. Sharp, the editor of the Signal;

Therefore, be it solemnly

Resolved ... that we view the recent ordinance of the city of Nauvoo, and the proceedings thereunder as an outrage of an alarming character, revolutionary and tyrannical in tendency, and being under color of law as calculated to subvert and destroy in the minds of the community all reliance on the law.

Resolved, that as a community we feel anxious, when possible, to redress our grievances by legal remedies; but the time has now arrived when the law has ceased to be a protection to our lives and property. A mob at Nauvoo, under a city ordinance, has violated the highest privilege in Government; and to seek redress in the ordinary mode would be utterly ineffectual.

Resolved, that the public threat made in the Council of the city, not only to destroy our printing press, but to take the life of its editor, is sufficient, in connection with the recent outrage, to command the efforts and the services of every good citizen to put an immediate stop to the career of the mad prophet and his demoniac coadjutors. We must not only defend ourselves from danger, but we must resolutely carry the war into the enemy's camp. We do therefore declare ... that we hold ourselves (ready)...to cooperate with our fellow-citizens in ... Missouri and Iowa, to exterminate, utterly exterminate the wicked and abominable Mormon leaders, the authors of our troubles.

The balance of the resolution called for the "tools of the prophet" (local Mormons) to be driven out of Carthage and Warsaw, that all Mormons be forced to relocate into Nauvoo, that the prophet be arrested and that a war of extermination be waged against the saints.

#### **Excerpt from the Minutes of June 16th Meeting**

Resolved, that inasmuch as many false reports are being circulated through this county by designing characters for the purpose of bringing persecution upon the peaceable citizens of this city we will use our endeavors to disabuse the public mind, and present a true statement of facts before them as speedily as possible...for the more speedy accomplishment of this object, this meeting appoint delegates to go to the different precincts throughout the county to lay a true statement of facts before the public."

#### **Excerpts from Joseph Smith Speech to Nauvoo Legion (6/18/44)**

It is thought by some that our enemies would be satisfied with my destruction; but I tell you that as soon as they have shed my blood they will thirst for the blood of every man in whose heart dwells a single spark of the...Gospel. The opposition of these men is moved by the spirit of the adversary of all righteousness. It is not only to destroy me, but every man and woman who dares to believe the doctrines God hath inspired me to teach...(There followed a lengthy exposition of the church's view of the facts, a defense of its actions and a condemnation of its opponents as liars, lawbreakers, thieves, apostates and adulterers.)...Will you all stand by me to the death, and sustain at the peril of your lives, the laws of our country, and the liberties and privileges which our fathers have transmitted unto us, sealed with their sacred blood? (Aye!

shouted thousands) It is well. If you had not done it, I would have gone out there (pointing to the west) and would have raised up a mightier people....(Drawing his sword and presenting it to heaven) I call God and angels to witness that I have unsheathed my sword with a firm and unalterable determination that this people shall have their legal rights, and be protected from mob violence, or my blood shall be spilt upon the ground like water...May the thunders of the Almighty and the forked lightnings of heaven and pestilence, and war and bloodshed come down on those ungodly men who seek to destroy my life..."

#### **Excerpts from Ford Letter dated June 22, 1844.**

"I now express to you my opinion that your conduct in the destruction of the press was a very gross outrage upon the laws and the liberties of the people. It may have been full of libels, but this did not authorize you to destroy it. There are many newspapers in this state which have been wrongfully abusing me for more than a year, and yet such is my regard for the liberty of the press and the rights of a free people in a republican Government that I would shed the last drop of my blood to protect those presses from any illegal violence."

#### **Smith Response to Ford Letter**

After reading Ford's letter the following occurred:

Joseph: "There is no mercy -- no mercy here."

Hyrum: "No, just as sure as we fall into their hands we are dead men."

Joseph: "Yes, what shall we do, Brother Hyrum?"

Hyrum: "I don't know."

Joseph: (After a moment's thought)"The way is open. It is clear to my mind what to do. All they want is Hyrum and myself; then tell everybody to go about their business, not to collect in groups, but to scatter about. There is no doubt they will come here and search for us. Let them search; they will not harm you in person or property, and not even a hair of your head. We will cross the river tonight, and go away to the West."

#### **See Joseph's Comments on June 24.**

"Do not be alarmed, brethren, for they cannot do more to you than the enemies of truth did to the ancient Saints--they can only kill the body." After surrendering to the militia Joseph said to his companions: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am as calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward all men. If they take my life I shall die an innocent man, and my blood shall cry from the ground for vengeance, and it shall be said of me 'He was murdered in cold blood!'"

#### **Excerpts from Affidavits Regarding Premeditation of the Murders**

1. At about 3:00 o'clock on June 27th, O.P. Rockwell entered the upper room of Joseph Smith's Mansion House in Nauvoo. In the room were several members of Gov.. Ford's troops. As he came in, one man said: "the deed is done before this time." Upon seeing Rockwell the men all fell silent.

2. At about 5:30pm on June 27th Wm Sterrett was at the temple site when Gov.. Ford and several of his party arrived there. Sterrett followed them as they examined the baptismal font. "After they had passed round the font, one of them remarked, 'This temple is a curious piece of workmanship, and it was a damned shame that they did not let Joe Smith finish it, so that we could have seen what sort of a finish he would have put on it...' Another said, 'But he is dead by this time, and he will never see this temple again.' I (Sterrett) replied, 'They cannot kill him until he has finished his work.' (A person with the Gov.ernor said) 'Whether he has finished his work or not by God he will not see this place again, for he's finished before this time.'"