

Missouri Extermination Order

Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs' Order of Extermination, Missouri Executive Order Number 44, read as follows:

Headquarters of the Militia,
City of Jefferson, Oct. 27, 1838.

General John B. Clark:

Sir Since the order of this morning to you, directing you to cause four hundred mounted men to be raised within your division, I have received by Amos Reese, Esq., of Ray county, and Wiley C. Williams, Esq., one of my aids, information of the most appalling character, which entirely changes the face of things, and places the Mormons in the attitude of an open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this state. Your orders are, therefore, to hasten your operation with all possible speed. The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for the public peace--their outrages are beyond all description. If you can increase your force, you are authorized to do so to any extent you may consider necessary. I have just issued orders to Maj. Gen. Willock, of Marion county, to raise five hundred men, and to march them to the northern part of Daviess, and there unite with Gen. Doniphan, of Clay, who has been ordered with five hundred men to proceed to the same point for the purpose of intercepting the retreat of the Mormons to the north. They have been directed to communicate with you by express, you can also communicate with them if you find it necessary. Instead therefore of proceeding as at first directed to reinstate the citizens of Daviess in their homes, you will proceed immediately to Richmond and then operate against the Mormons. Brig. Gen. Parks of Ray, has been ordered to have four hundred of his brigade in readiness to join you at Richmond. The whole force will be placed under your command.

I am very respectfully,
your ob't serv't, L. W. Boggs,
Commander-in-Chief.

Pursuant to the order, hundreds of Mormon civilians were, as applicable, attacked, lynched, looted, tarred, raped, and murdered.

In 1976, Missouri Governor Christopher Bond rescinded Executive Order 44 as follows:

WHEREAS, on October 27, 1838, the Governor of the State of Missouri, Lilburn W. Boggs, signed an order calling for the extermination or expulsion of Mormons from the

State of Missouri; and

WHEREAS, Governor Boggs' order clearly contravened the rights to life, liberty, property and religious freedom as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, as well as the Constitution of the State of Missouri; and

WHEREAS, in this bicentennial year as we reflect on our nation's heritage, the exercise of religious freedom is without question one of the basic tenets of our free democratic republic;

Now, THEREFORE, I, CHRISTOPHER S. BOND, Governor of the State of Missouri, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Missouri, do hereby order as follows:

Expressing on behalf of all Missourians our deep regret for the injustice and undue suffering which was caused by the 1838 order, I hereby rescind Executive Order Number 44, dated October 27, 1838, issued by Governor W. Boggs.

In witness I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the great seal of the State of Missouri, in the city of Jefferson, on this 25 day of June, 1976.

(Signed) Christopher S. Bond, Governor.

The Mormons, having fled from Pennsylvania to Ohio to Missouri, subsequently moved to Illinois.

Despite more assertive subsequent efforts to maintain political autonomy and security, Mormons experienced a similar sequence of events in Nauvoo, Illinois. Illinois Governor Thomas Ford called out the state militia, imprisoned Mormon leaders, and allowed a mob to assassinate Mormon leaders during the Mormons' imprisonment. Governor Ford also sanctioned a campaign of violence, destruction, and expulsion.

In March 2004, Illinois expressed regret for the incidents in an official House Resolution HR0793 (LRB093 21726 KEF 49525 r), as set forth below.

WHEREAS, 138 years ago Brigham Young and more than 20,000 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were expelled from the State of Illinois after the Illinois General Assembly withdrew its charter for the city of Nauvoo, Illinois in Hancock County in 1844; and

WHEREAS, During a period of seven years of Illinois history, from 1839 to 1846, Latter-day Saints built and developed the city of Nauvoo into the largest city in the State of Illinois and the tenth largest city in the nation; and

WHEREAS, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was established by Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York on April 13 6, 1830; and

WHEREAS, The Mormon Prophet, Joseph Smith, led the community of Latter-day Saints from Fayette, New York to Kirtland, Ohio in 1831; and from Ohio to Independence, Missouri, in 1837; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Smith, a strong anti-slavery advocate, led his community of some 15,000 Latter-day Saints to the Mississippi River town of Nauvoo, in Illinois, following their expulsion from the slave State of Missouri in 1839; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints exercised enormous industry and effort in the development and growth of the town of Nauvoo, succeeding in creating a prosperous community in which they drained the local swamp lands and transformed them into productive agricultural and residential environments; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints were given an extraordinary charter for the powers of home-rule by the Illinois General Assembly to create and preside over their own court system and also to maintain their own military force, second in size only to the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Smith and the community of Latter-day Saints exercised extensive missionary activities which drew new Mormon settlers to the city Nauvoo, reaching a population of some 20,000 citizens by 1844; and

WHEREAS, The prevailing economic conditions of the nation in general, and Illinois in particular, faced a downturn in the early 1840s, with the result that the rapidly growing population of Nauvoo faced drastic levels of unemployment without success in attracting needed industry; and

WHEREAS, During the period of their residency in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith and his community of Latter-day Saints began as political Democrats, transferring their political allegiance to the Whig Party in both the elections of 1838 and 1840, before once again transferring their affiliations back to the Democratic Party in the election of 1842, until the establishment of the Reform Party by Smith in time for the election of 1844, when he began to seriously campaign for the office of President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The expression of political authority and power within the community of Latter-day Saints was seen by many citizens in Illinois as reason for caution and concern, seeing the control of local courts by Joseph Smith as autocratic, and interpreting the leverage and influence of the Mormon community's voting strength as an over influential and forceful voting bloc; and

WHEREAS, Local religious customs among the Latter-day Saints began to be viewed with suspicion, bias and misunderstanding; and

WHEREAS, Following the destruction of a local anti-Mormon newspaper known as the Expositor, violence against the Latter-day Saint community increased; and

WHEREAS, The Governor of the State of Illinois, Thomas Ford, called out the Illinois

Militia to keep order; and

WHEREAS, Governor Ford had the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum Smith, jailed, on suspicion of complicity in the destruction of the Expositor, in the nearby town jail of Carthage, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, A violent mob stormed the Carthage jail on June 27, 1844, causing the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith; and

WHEREAS, Between 1844 and 1845, violent acts against the community of Latter-day Saints increased in volume and intensity, demonstrated in such acts as the burning of crops, the destruction of homes and the threatened extermination of the entire Mormon population; and

WHEREAS, Faced with the extremism against the community of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young, the new leader of the Nauvoo community made plans to take his people out of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Beginning on February 4, 1846, Brigham Young began sending the community of Latter-day Saints out of their homeland of Nauvoo, Illinois across the frozen waters of the Mississippi River, in the largest forced migration in American history; and

WHEREAS, Brigham Young made an exodus from the State of Illinois, leading tens of thousands of men, women and children, together with livestock and wagons that stretched across the expansive winter horizon for miles; and

WHEREAS, In this Mormon exodus, Brigham Young and the community of Latter-day Saints left behind their life in Illinois and the shining city that they had fashioned from both their faith and the hard work of their hands; and

WHEREAS, Brigham Young and the community of Latter-day Saints set off in the midst of winter for Utah, some 1300 miles to the west; and

WHEREAS, The severity of the winter placed on Brigham Young and the community of Latter-day Saints extreme hardships, trudging across the Iowa Plains to the far side of that state where they made a winter camp; and

WHEREAS, In the Spring of 1847, Brigham Young and the community of Latter-day Saints began again their journey to Utah, beyond the Rocky Mountain Range, to the valley of the Great Salt Lake; and

WHEREAS, On July 24, 1847, Brigham Young and the community of Latter-day Saints arrived in that valley following a trek of more than five months, journeying across the heart of the American continent, from the heartbreak of events in Nauvoo, Illinois to a place of far-western refuge; and

WHEREAS, Within 50 years of their arrival in the territory of Utah, the community of

Latter-day Saint became the 45th state in the Union on January 4, 1896; and

WHEREAS, The community of Latter-day Saints grew from a population of 250,000 at the end of the 19th century to a population of more than 11 million people in our present day; and

WHEREAS, The goodness, patriotism, high moral conduct, and generosity of the community of Latter-day Saints has enriched the landscape of the United States and the world; and

WHEREAS, The biases and prejudices of a less enlightened age in the history of the State of Illinois caused unmeasurable hardship and trauma for the community of Latter-day Saints by the distrust, violence, and inhospitable actions of a dark time in our past; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we acknowledge the disparity of those past actions and suspicions, regretting the expulsion of the community of Latter-day Saints, a people of faith and hard work.

Most Mormons subsequently moved from Illinois to Utah (which was part of Mexico at the time), where Mormons then lived in peaceful isolation. This changed with the end of the Mexican War (Mormon troops fought on the side of the United States), when Utah became a territory of the United States under the [Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#).

Political, military, and cultural hostilities erupted in 1857-58 when President James Buchanan fulfilled an 1855-56 campaign promise to suppress Mormons and sent the United States military to occupy Utah in what is now known as the "Utah War." Mormons regarded this as a violation of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and an attempt to renew the campaign of violence against Mormons that had occurred in Missouri and Illinois. Mormons felt that they no longer had anywhere new to migrate, and that they had to stand their ground. It was during this period, on September 11, 1857, that a controversial incident known as the "Mountain Meadow Massacre" occurred in which some resentful Mormons and Piute Indians killed a group of civilian settlers passing from Arkansas to California via Utah.

Once Utah was occupied by the United States military, an effort was made over several decades to disenfranchise Mormon voters, deny Mormons participation in local governance and juries, and seize Mormon-owned assets. Eventually tax-funded government schools were created with the express purpose of culturally cleansing Mormons. This system of schools was (and is) funded with government trust lands. Today Utah is, in some ways, a kind of Indian Reservation for Mormons. Approximately 90% of Utah is owned by governmental entities, most of which is federal or state school trust property.

This history helps explain why Mormons (and Utahns) have tended to show more political support for private school vouchers and home education than is exhibited by electorates in many other states. Mormons, like other American demographic minority groups such as Catholics, Jews, Native Americans, Mennonites, African-Americans, Japanese-Americans, are painfully aware that

compulsory government education exists on the basis of long-standing ethnic, racial, religious, and political animosities and a majoritarian desire to control minority groups through the guise of "helping" or "civilizing" them. There is a natural tendency for many people in these demographic segments to seek out private or home education settings, or other special educational settings, where they can feel empowered rather than exploited or embattled.

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