

Caleb Baldwin: Prison Companion to Joseph Smith

Justin R. Bray

“He has shone himself appointed as a preacher of the gospil on all accatins [occasions]. He is a worthy brother.”¹ Such was the description of Caleb Baldwin by his missionary companion, Levi Jackman, in the mid-1830s. Although often overlooked in the annals of early Mormon history, Baldwin played an active role in some of its most significant events. And while as a scribe he possessed an able pen, he failed to keep a record of his involvement during the early years of the Restoration. However, from among some of those he knew and with whom he served, mention is made of his activities and service—enough to piece together a life-sketch of this faithful Latter-day Saint.

Early Life

Caleb Baldwin was born in Nobletown, New York, on September 2, 1791. The name *Baldwin* comes from Germanic elements: *bald* meaning bold, and *wine* meaning friend or protector. The name characterized Baldwin as he sojourned through life. Generally, he was quiet and low-key, but when he spoke he was known for having had a “fiery tongue” in defending his friends, especially the Prophet Joseph Smith.²

The Baldwin family originated in England, but sometime in the early 1600s his ancestors immigrated to North America. His grandfather fought in the American Revolution, and Caleb himself served as an ensign in the War of 1812 under Captain Charles Parker.³

After his military service, Caleb moved to Ohio where he and his brother, Rune, met and married two sisters, Nancy and Calista, on the same day—

JUSTIN R. BRAY (justinbray@byu.edu) is a history major at Brigham Young University, and is a research assistant for Richard O. Cowan, Professor of Church History and Doctrine at BYU.

December 9, 1814. The brides were the daughters of Judge James Kingsbury, an established founder of Cleveland. The dual wedding took place in their father's home where they were married by Horace Perry, Cleveland's justice of the peace. Soon after, Caleb and Nancy settled in Warrensville, Ohio, and started their family. Baldwin's early career is marked with public service. He was elected Warrensville's town treasurer, and later as a trustee of the township from 1815–1830.

Finding the Restored Gospel and Experiences in Ohio

Caleb was living in Warrensville, Ohio, when the first Mormon missionaries—Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Richard Ziba Peterson—passed through northeastern Ohio in late 1830 while en route to Indian Territory west of Missouri. The missionaries labored primarily in the Kirtland-Mentor region, but on November 14, 1830, they “held meeting in Warrensville.” After John Murdock, a recently baptized convert, “bore testimony to the truth,” a handful of listeners came forward to be baptized, including Caleb and his wife Nancy. Pratt performed their baptisms, Cowdery their confirmations.⁴

Before leaving the region, the Mormon elders commissioned John Murdock to preach and oversee the Church in the region. In December 1830, Murdock noted that “in order that I might the better leave my family, I left my own house [in Orange, Ohio, about four miles east of Warrensville], and moved my

John Murdock, date unknown. In December 1830, John Murdock and his wife Julia Clapp Murdock moved from Orange, Ohio, to Warrensville, Ohio, where they lived with the Baldwin family. On April 30, 1831, Julia Murdock died in the Baldwin home while giving birth to twins—Joseph and Julia—both of whom were adopted by Joseph and Emma Smith.



family to Brother C. Baldwin's." Here, the two men worked together to build up the Warrensville branch, Baldwin baptizing and Murdock confirming.⁵ In a period of eight months, several dozen people were baptized into the Church in the surrounding area.⁶

On April 30, 1831, while still living in the Baldwin home, Murdock's wife, Julia, passed away while giving birth to twins—a boy and a girl—leaving five children motherless. Murdock gave the newly born twins to Joseph and Emma Smith, who had lost their own children to pre-mature deaths. The Baldwins took care of the three oldest Murdock children until August 1832, when John Murdock was called to preach the gospel in the "eastern countries" and told to send his children to the "bishop of Zion" before he depart on his mission (D&C 99:1, 6). Murdock fulfilled this commandment "by the hand of Bro. Caleb Baldwin . . . [and] gave him 10 dollars a head for carrying up my three eldest children."⁷ Soon after this, Caleb and Nancy moved to Jackson County, Missouri, where they made their home among the Mormons living in the Blue River Settlement in Kaw Township west of Independence (see Figs. 1 and 2).⁸

Trials and Challenges in Missouri, 1833-1834

Between 1831–1833, some 1,200 Mormons flooded into Jackson County, causing strained relations between themselves and the county's early local settlers, who believed the Mormons would eventually control the economic and political activities of the county.⁹ After months of rising tension, on October 31, 1833, Jackson's citizens banded together to drive the Mormons from the county, beginning with the Whitmer settlement, in what became known as "the battle above the Blue." Although Caleb lived in the Blue River settlement, he played a major role in the skirmish. Philo Dibble, a participant of the battle, later recalled: "Our company was commanded by David Whitmer. Just before we discovered the mob, Calebe [*sic*] Baldwin's company went around the field; our company, numbering about forty men, traveled nearly half a mile in view of the mob and we got with seven or eight rods of them before they saw us. When they discovered Baldwin's company, the mobbers fired two guns and said 'Dam'em fire.'"¹⁰ Levi Jackman, apparently a member of Baldwin's company, similarly recounted: "They did not discover us till we were within pistol shot—when Campbell their leader yelled out 'Their [*sic*] come the Mormons—dam-em! Shoot um.'"¹¹

The battle that ensued resulted in several wounded and the death of two Missourians and one Mormon—Andrew Barber. During the encounter the Missourians severely beat several Mormon men until there was "barely a breath of life in them."¹² Baldwin was among those whipped. John Gribble, a

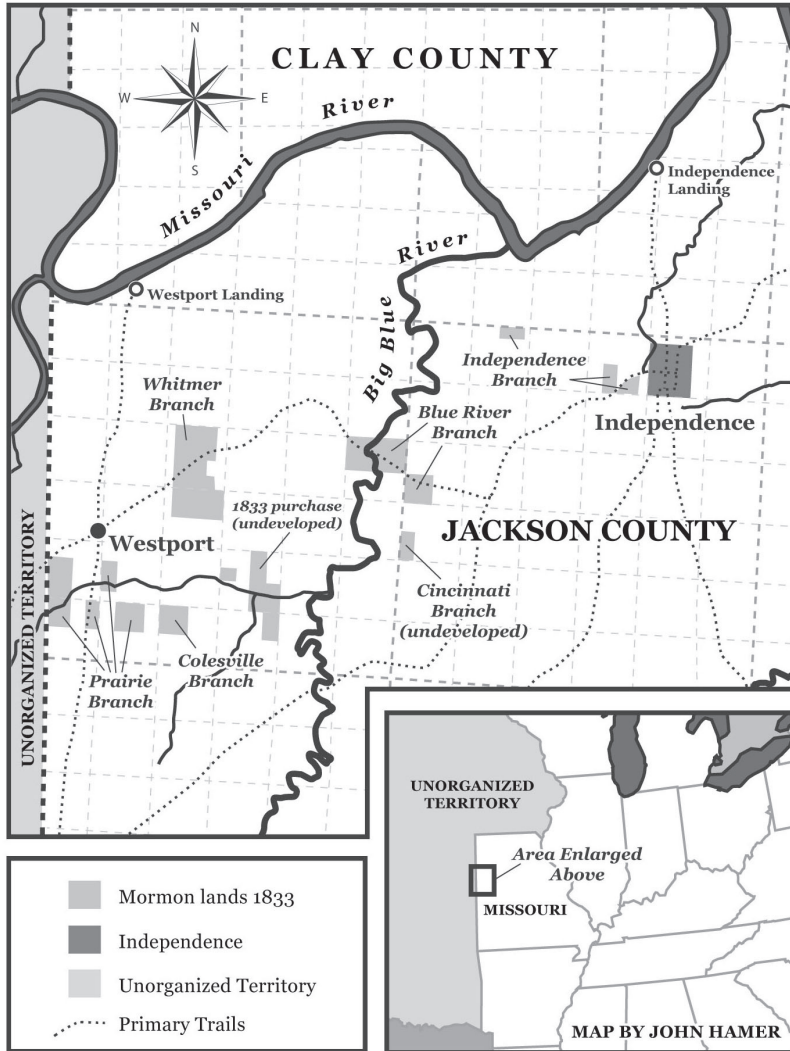


Fig. 1. Mormon settlements in Jackson County, Missouri, 1831-1833. Caleb and Nancy Baldwin and their family lived in the Blue River settlement. Maps courtesy John Hamer.

Baldwin Caleb	} in the Battle of New Blue river & in prison with Joseph	dot 15 ward G.S.C.
- " - Nancy		wife
- " - Nancy Maria	wife of Morgan S. Gardiner	Illinois
- " - Caleb Clark		Iowa
- " - Eunice Mary	wife of Russel Baldwin, son of Wheeler	Fillmore
- " - Mary Ann	- " - Robert Wilson	Washington C.
- " - James H.		15 ward G.S.C.
- " - Abigail S.	wife of Geo. W. Boyd	- " -
- " - Julia M.	- " -	dot

Fig. 2. Portion of a list compiled by George A. Smith and Thomas Bullock in 1864 giving the names of Church members who lived in Jackson County, Missouri, between 1831–1833. The list includes Caleb and Nancy Baldwin and seven of their children. The list also includes brief biographical information. Note that Caleb Baldwin was “in the battle of the . . . Blue river & in prison with Joseph.” It also indicates he died while living in the 15th ward in Salt Lake City. Image courtesy Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

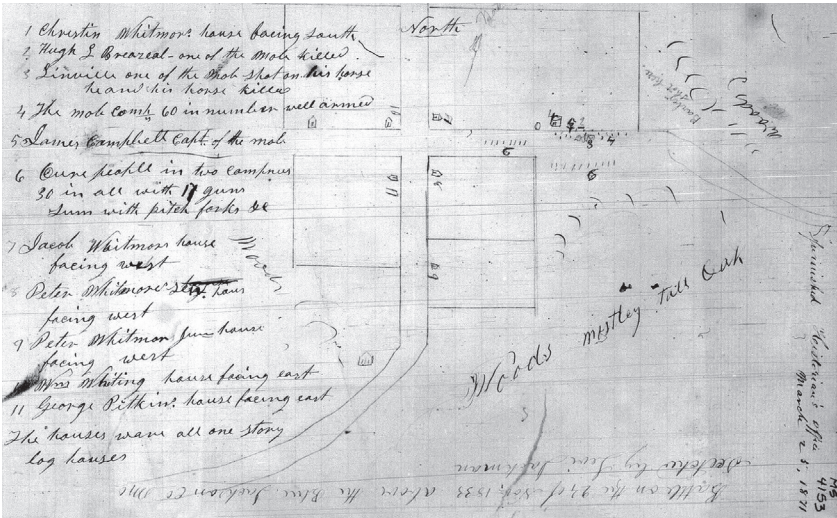


Fig. 3. Caleb Baldwin participated in the armed confrontation that broke out between the Mormons and about 40–50 Jackson County citizens at the Whitmer settlement on the evening of November 4, 1833, sometimes referred to as the “battle above the Blue.” The above drawing, sketched by Levi Jackman, shows the logistics of the conflict. Image courtesy Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

member of the Church, later testified that “Caleb Bal[d]win was beaten almost to death by Missourians with hickory sticks.”¹³ Baldwin family tradition holds that he carried scars from the battle for the rest of his life (see Fig. 3).¹⁴

Following the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County, the Baldwins, along with most of the Mormon families, found temporary exile in Clay County. During the summer of 1834, Baldwin’s brother, Rune, was stricken with cholera and died. Although Rune never joined the Church, when news of his death reached Missouri, it must have affected Caleb since Rune and he had married sisters and lived relatively close to each other in Ohio for over fifteen years before Caleb and Nancy had joined the Church and moved to Missouri.

Mission to Kirtland

In early 1835, Caleb and Levi Jackman were called to travel to Kirtland to help construct the temple and instructed “to preach by the way.” On May 4, 1835, the two men left their families and commenced their mission “on foot and without money.” En route, the two missionaries had their share of spirited encounters with those of other faiths, including a number of ministers. Less than two weeks into their mission, they confronted a Baptist priest by the name of Lemmon who refused to offer them a seat in his congregation. When Lemmon closed his sermon, Baldwin and Jackman proceeded to the front of the room and “set forth the Gospel in its plainness and the necessity of more revelation,” whereupon the minister erupted from his seat and cried, “Delusion! False Prophets!” About a week later, the two preached again, this time opposed by a Methodist priest, who “made out but little and sat down.” Jack-

Levi Jackman, date unknown. Caleb Baldwin and Levi Jackman served as missionary companions while on a short-term mission from Missouri to Ohio in 1835. The two men were successful in establishing a Mormon congregation in Edgar County, Illinois.



man concluded that he and Baldwin successfully “removed some prejudice from among the most part of the people.” Weather also posed problems. The rain often descended in torrents, causing them to wade through high water. At times, their umbrellas “were of but little use.” However, they rejoiced in finding members of the Church along the way in whose homes they found “rest and repose being rather worn down” by the storms.”¹⁵

The two Mormon elders found considerable success in Edgar County, Illinois, where they made a decision to preach and then “leave the effect with God.” After their initial sermon failed to motivate any of the attendees to be baptized, the two elders “informed the people that there was no use in our staying any longer,” and departed. However, they had not gone far when a small group came after them and insisted they return to preach more. They complied, returned, and held a meeting that same evening, only this time the people “payed good attention and many were cut to the heart and desired to be baptized.” Although many still disbelieved and would even “laugh and make fun out of what we said,” the work moved forward. On one occasion, “the spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us in an uncommon manner,” resulting in several baptisms. They also healed a woman who had been unable to work for fourteen years. Even when “the devil became angry, and some of his servants began to threaten us with violence. . . . we thought it best for us to do our duty, and run the risk of the results, which we endeavored to do and trust in God for his aid,” Jackman wrote. Before leaving, the two elders were once again confronted by Reverend Lemmon, who must have learned of their whereabouts and came to rescue the community from the preaching of the Mormons. During a personal confrontation with the minister, Caleb “warned him to repent and prophesied that he would be rejected by his flock and would finally die, a poor miserable being.” Years later, Jackman returned to visit the area and learned that Elder Baldwin’s prophecy had been fulfilled.¹⁶ After leaving Edgar County in early July, Baldwin and Jackman arrived in Kirtland a few weeks later, where they commenced work on the construction of the temple.

Patriarchal Blessing

On August 27, 1835, about a month after his arrival in Kirtland, Caleb Baldwin received his patriarchal blessing under the hand of Joseph Smith Sr. The blessing reads:

Brother Baldwin, thou hast also seen afflictions in thy day, and thou hast borne them with patience. The Lord has looked upon thee and forgiven thy sins, and former trespasses; for thou hast done many things which were not expedient and Satan has

sought to destroy thee, that thy talent might be hid, and the blood of souls be required at thy hand. Therefore if thou wilt be accepted thou must from henceforth walk uprightly in all things and thou shalt be blessed from henceforth, and thy posterity, from generation to generation, with inheritances in Zion, and a right to the holy priesthood. Thy wife shall also be blessed in thy absence, and her heart shall rejoice when she reads this, and she shall shed tears of joy that the Lord remembered her companion and family, and that they are to receive inheritances with the Saints. Thou art a descendent of Joseph, and shall be numbered with his horns to push the people together. I seal upon thy head all the blessings of the spiritual kingdom. Be faithful, and thou shalt be delivered from the hands of thy enemies by the power of God; for when thou art surrounded by them, if expedient, and there be no other way for thy escape, thou shalt call upon the Lord and he will answer thee by sending down fire—Thou shalt be able to run through a hoop, and leap over a wall, to execute the commandments of thy God. Thou hast asked, at the hand of the Lord to see the end, and if thou art faithful, and desirest it with all thy heart, even more than to depart and be with the Lord, thou mayest; for thou hast asked of the Lord, for a witness unto thee, that I might tell thee this thing. In the name of Jesus Christ, I seal thee up unto him, both for time and eternity; even so. Amen.¹⁷

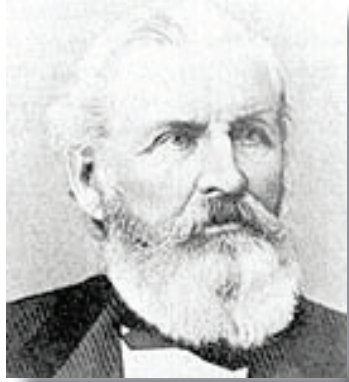
It is interesting to note that the blessing states that Baldwin had “done many things which were not expedient and Satan has sought to destroy thee, that thy talent might be hid, and the blood of souls be required at thy hand,” a suggestion that he had been involved in some type of serious impropriety. According to the Far West Record, a council meeting book, sometime before June 3, 1831, Baldwin had been cut off, but no specifics are given. However, on that date he was “rec[eive]d back & reordained a Priest.”¹⁸ Whatever the cause for his Church discipline, following his reinstatement it appears he tried to live the life of an exemplary Mormon. He was ordained an elder prior to his 1836 mission, and is listed as an elder in good standing in June 1837.

Return Mission to Missouri

Before the completion and dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Caleb was instructed to return to Missouri and preach en route. Jacob Gates accompanied him on the trip. They left Kirtland in January 1836, preaching in many different towns along the way. After reaching Edgar County, the two elders remained for some time to strengthen the Church in the area.¹⁹

With help from some of the Church members Baldwin had helped convert the previous summer, he and Gates labored to build up the Edgar Branch. According to Gates, the power of God not only accompanied their preaching, but also when singing hymns. On several occasions their hearers were induced to be baptized “while we ware [were] yet singing.” In one instance, Baldwin “rose and sang a hymn and three more came forth.” They also rebuked evil spirits, blessed a number of sick persons, and spoke in tongues. Baldwin and

Jacob Gates, date unknown. Gates and Caleb Baldwin served together as missionary companions for several months in 1836.



Gates even restored the sight of a woman who had been blinded by an accident. Upon arriving at her home for an appointment, they learned that the woman “had her eye scalt with hot fat that she could not open it. We praid for her and laid hands upon her and she immediately received her sight.”²⁰ The two elders served together in Edgar County until the fall of 1836, when they rejoined their families in Missouri.

Overt Acts of Treason in Daviess County

At the time Caleb returned to western Missouri, Church leaders had only recently purchased land for a new gathering place in the sparsely inhabited region of Ray County in the vicinity of Shoal Creek. As more land was acquired, most of the Mormons living in Clay relocated, including the Baldwins. Almost overnight, the settlement site of Far West became the new Mormon center, and in late December 1836, the state legislature approved the creation of Caldwell County for Mormon occupation. Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs signed the bill.

Very little is known of Baldwin’s activities for the next two years, but it appears he settled in the vicinity of Far West. The only known record of Caleb during these years indicates he was present at a meeting held in Far West on November 7, 1837. Joseph Smith was present on the occasion to transact and conduct several important matters of Church business. During the course of the meeting, Hyrum Smith was sustained as the new counselor in the First Presidency, replacing Frederick G. Williams. When the names of the Missouri Presidency were presented—David Whitmer, William W. Phelps, and John Whitmer—a number of those present, including Baldwin, “spake against pres’t [David] Whitmer.” Nonetheless, Whitmer retained his position.²¹

Historical records reveal that Caleb Baldwin was an active participant in some of the hostilities during the 1838 Mormon War. Eyewitnesses testified that he was present when a contingent of Mormon men burned several homes and structures in Gallatin, Daviess County, on October 18.²² Because of his alleged participation, following the Mormon surrender to state authorities in November, Baldwin was subsequently arrested and charged with “crimes of high treason,” including “murder, burglary, arson, robbery, and larceny,” and taken to Richmond, where he and sixty-three other Mormons were arraigned in a preliminary hearing, held from November 12–29 before Fifth District Circuit Court Judge Austin A. King.²³

Before the actual proceedings began, Caleb pleaded with Judge King “to grant him a fair trial at law, saying that with the result of such a trial he would be satisfied.” He also asked what he should do about his family, who was being “driven out of [Missouri] in the Cold inclement Season to wander on the broad prairias [prairies] . . . without proper Means and Suffering much fear because of the Lawles[s] Mob[b]ers.”²⁴ King answered that if Baldwin would renounce his religion and forsake Joseph Smith he would be released and protected, but he rejected the offer. King and the prosecuting attorney then made the same offer to the other prisoners, all of whom “returned an answer similar to that of Mr. Baldwin.” Joseph later swore to an attorney that he and Baldwin were chained together at the time of the sentencing and that “no such offer was made to him it being understood as certain that he was to be shot.”²⁵

During the seventeen-day hearing the prosecution sought to present sufficient evidence to demonstrate “probable cause” against a total of sixty-four Mormon defendants, including Caleb Baldwin. During the hearing, Addison Price, a non-Mormon, testified that Baldwin and Alexander McRae had not only participated in the burning of homes, but had “taken prisoners” and, with the raise of their right arm, “warned [the prisoners] in the name of the Great God to leave the county.”²⁶ This and other testimonies against them served as sufficient evidence to charge Baldwin with overt acts of treason in Daviess County. Historian Alexander L. Baugh explains the nature of the charges against the Mormon prisoners, including Baldwin:

Following nearly three weeks of testimony, the court released twenty-nine of the sixty-four Mormon defendants. However, Judge King determined that sufficient evidence existed to bind thirty-five over for trial. Twenty-four Mormons were bound over for trial for crimes committed in Daviess County. These defendants were charged with arson, burglary, larceny, and robbery—allailable offenses—and ordered to appear at the circuit court in Daviess County on March 28. King ruled that there was sufficient evidence to charge five men—Parley P. Pratt, Norman Shearer, Darwin Chase, Luman Gibbs, and Morris Phelps in the death of Moses Rowland, which occurred during the attack at Crooked River. Since the charge of murder was non-ailable, these five men were ordered to remain confined in the Richmond jail until March 11, 1839, when

the circuit trial would convene there. Finally, probable cause was also found against Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Alexander McCrae, and Caleb Baldwin on the charge of treason, also a non-bailable offense. Their trial was set to begin on March 7, 1839, in Daviess County. However, because there was no jail in Daviess, King ordered they be taken to Liberty Jail in Clay County to await their court appearance. The six Mormon leaders were immediately transferred to Liberty where they arrived on December 1 to begin their confinement.²⁷

Liberty Jail

Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Alexander McCrae, and Caleb spent a total of 127 days in Liberty Jail, most of it during the dead of winter (December 1, 1838 to April 6, 1839). A hearing was held for Sidney Rigdon in late January 1839, where he successfully pled his case; the result was acquittal and his release ten days later.²⁸

Just before Christmas, Caleb received a visit from his wife Nancy and their two sons, accompanied by Emma Smith, who brought Joseph III.²⁹ The two women and their children remained with their husbands in the jail for two days before returning to Far West. No record exists of the exchange between Caleb and Nancy, but it doubtless provided an emotional lift for both—Caleb



Liberty Jail replica, LDS Visitors' Center, Liberty, Missouri, 2000. Caleb Baldwin was a prisoner in the jail with Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, and Alexander McCrae from December 1, 1838, to April 6, 1839. One of the figures in the photograph is meant to depict Baldwin. Sidney Rigdon, another prisoner, was released and left the jail on February 5, 1839, so his figure is not represented.

12. flatly also is a deadly poison ^{a frank and} ~~an open~~
 Rebuke provoketh a good man to Emulation
 And in the hour of trouble he will be gain
 best friend, but on the other hand it will
 draw out all the Corruption of a corrupt heart
 And lying and the poison of words shall be under
 their tongue and they do cause the pure
 heart to be cast in to prison because they
 shut them out of their way of peaceful
 and flowly and heated imagination
 be aware of be cause the things of God
 are of deep import and true and unpar
 amable and careful and ponderous and solemn
 though can only find them out, thy mind
 shall if thou wilt lead a soul in to sal
 vation must stretch as high as the utmost
 Heavens and sink in to and Contemplate
 the ^{lowest} ~~deepest~~ Consideration of the darkest Abyss and
 Expand upon the broad Consideration of ~~the~~
 Expansion, he must Communicate ~~God's~~
 much more dignified and noble are the
 thoughts of God, than the vain imagination
 of the human heart, now but fools, will
 trifely with the souls of men, have van
 and trifling, have bin our spirits, our
 Campments our Councils our private
 Meetings our private as well as public
 Conversation to low to mean to vulgar

Fig. 4. Joseph Smith to the Church at Quincy, Illinois, March 20, 1839, p. 12. This page is in the handwriting of Caleb Baldwin. Alexander McRae and Caleb Baldwin acted as scribes for the Prophet's dictation of the letter, excerpts of which comprise D&C 121–123. Although McRae wrote most of the letter, Baldwin wrote sixty lines (slightly over two pages) of the twenty-nine page document. His handwriting appears on pages 11–13.

Image courtesy Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

the hope of glory which is in us.
 Joseph Smith Sr
 Hyrum Smith
 Lyman Wight
 Caleb Baldwin
 Alexander McRae.

Fig. 5. Joseph Smith to the Church at Quincy, Illinois, March 20, 1839, showing the signatures on the letter of the Mormon prisoners in Liberty Jail—Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, and Alexander McRae. The letter was actually written in two parts. The signatures appear at the bottom of p. 17. Image courtesy Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

languishing in a cold, dark jail, and Nancy coping with their family situation without the comforting presence of her husband. The prisoners were regularly reassured of their families' well-being through letters, although no letters exchanged between Caleb and Nancy are known to exist.³⁰

Following Rigdon's release, the five remaining prisoners made two attempts to escape—the first in early February, and the second a month later in early March. After both attempts failed, Samuel Tillery, the jailor, was determined to chain the prisoners to the floor to prevent any further efforts to breakout. But Caleb would not be chained, and when Tillery came with the irons, Baldwin looked him in the eye and declared: "Tillery, if you put those chains on me I will kill you, so help me God!" The jailor left without chaining the prisoners.³¹ Caleb's fiery threat meant that his hands were free to scribe parts of one of Joseph Smith's most significant letters, dictated by him on March 20 (see Figs. 4 and 5). While Alexander McRae wrote most of the letter, including the passages that comprise Doctrine and Covenants Sections 121–123, Baldwin penned some of the Prophet's most profound thoughts, including the following:

The things of God are of deep import and time and experience and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, o man, if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and expand upon the broad considerations of eternal expanse. He must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God than the vain imaginations of the human heart.³²

Escape from Missouri

On April 6, 1839, the ninth anniversary of the Church, the Liberty Jail prisoners were transferred to Gallatin for what was expected to be their final hearing. The trial convened on April 9 before Judge Thomas C. Burch. However, two days into the hearing, the defense requisitioned Burch for a change of venue which was granted, and the judge ordered the prisoners to be taken to Columbia to stand trial. However, on April 16, two days after beginning their journey, the officers and the guard escorting the Mormon men allowed them to escape. Unfortunately for Baldwin, the day after making their getaway, he became separated from the other four. The other escapees looked for him, but gave up and moved on, thinking they would eventually cross paths as they made their way to the Illinois border. They found shelter for the night at the cabin of George Harris (or Harrison), a Latter-day Saint who had not left the state and was living near the Big Chariton River. Hyrum wrote that the next morning, “to our astonishment bro baldwin came in he had traveled all knight [*sic*] in the wilderness & providential[ly] came to us.”³³ Caleb evidently continued, at least part of the way, separated from the other escapees. He crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois first, perhaps as a decoy before Joseph and the others ferried the river. Once across, Joseph Smith’s youngest sister Lucy happened to see Caleb near the home where the Prophet’s parents were living. “There is Mr. Baldwin. My brothers—where are they?” young Lucy cried out. “He told us [Lucy and Lucy Mack Smith] that Joseph and Hyrum were then crossing the river and would soon be in Quincy.”³⁴

When Caleb arrived in Quincy, he discovered his wife and family were still in Missouri. Although he knew he could be apprehended if he went back to assist his family, he returned anyway. John Gribble, a Church member, helped him. Gribble later stated that he helped “Parley P. Pratt when [Pratt] broke jail in Missouri out of the state Missouri into the state of Illinois and also Caleb Baldwin and his wife.”³⁵

The Nauvoo Years

The Nauvoo years were relatively peaceful for Caleb and his family. We know, for example, that he assisted in the construction of the temple and participated in Church meetings and conferences.³⁶ At one meeting where Joseph Smith was present and preaching, the Mormon leader stood on a barrel to raise himself over the crowd so all could see. However, while delivering his sermon, he lost his balance and began to teeter. Baldwin quickly took notice and unselfishly stepped in front, allowing Joseph to put his hand on Caleb's shoulders, like a crutch, to physically support him while he delivered the remainder of his remarks.³⁷

Beginning in December 1845, nearly a year and a half after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young began introducing the temple endowment among the general adult membership of the Church. Caleb and Nancy were among the first to receive their temple blessings in the Nauvoo Temple. The couple received their endowment on December 18, 1845, and returned to the temple on January 20, 1846, to be sealed.³⁸

In October 1845, nearly sixteen months after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, state militia troops came to Nauvoo to investigate the deaths of two men who were reported to have been murdered in the city. The troops searched the Masonic Hall, the Nauvoo House, the Mansion House stables and even the temple. Caleb, growing "tired of [their] imprudence and ill manners," may have retaliated in some fashion. When one of the militia officers was discovered missing, Baldwin was taken into custody to account for the missing person; however, they "could get no pretext against him."³⁹ A short while later, he was arrested again and examined as a witness in connection with any knowledge he had about the secret burial of the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum, but he refused to disclose any information about their whereabouts.⁴⁰

Migration West

It is not known exactly when the Baldwins left Nauvoo. They, like thousands of others, made their way to one of the scattered Mormon settlements in Iowa before making the final trek to the Great Salt Lake Valley. One account suggests Caleb and Nancy lay over between 1846–1848 at the Mt. Pisgah settlement in Ringgold County, Iowa,⁴¹ then came west in June 1848 in a company led by Heber C. Kimball, where he was appointed captain over a division of ten families.⁴² He was also one of the oldest members traveling in the company, and although he was not a leading figure in the Church's hierarchy, his experience helped him gain the respect of those around him. During the journey, he was often referred to as "Father Baldwin" and was invited to leadership councils. On one occasion during the journey he felt prompted to

rise and make some remarks after hearing a powerful discourse by Elder Kimball. His remarks induced the company to bow down, and they gave “thanks to the Lord & prayed his mercies & Blessings on the people.”⁴³

When Caleb Baldwin arrived with his company in the Salt Lake Valley on September 24, 1848, he was fifty-seven years-old.⁴⁴ However, he did not enjoy a long life in his new mountain home. He died less than a year later on June 11, 1849 as a member of the Fifteenth Ward in Salt Lake City. President Brigham Young apparently thought highly of Baldwin, since he noted in his personal diary under that date that Caleb “died of chill fever, in Great Salt Lake City.”⁴⁵

Caleb Baldwin is one of hundreds of unsung early Mormons whose story is relatively unknown among the annals of Mormon history. Nonetheless, his contributions were significant, and he has long deserved acknowledgement for such. He was privileged to take part in many of the early remarkable events in the Restoration, and he helped quietly, in his own way, build the Kingdom of God.



Caleb Baldwin grave marker, Salt Lake City Cemetery, Salt Lake City, Utah, October 2010. Photograph by Justin R. Bray.

Notes

1. Levi Jackman to Angeline Jackman, July 27, 1835, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

2. See Richard L. Anderson, “Clarifications of Boggs’ ‘Order’ and Joseph Smith’s Constitutionalism,” in Arnold K. Garr and Clark V. Johnson, eds., *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Missouri* (Provo, UT: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1994), 58.

3. *Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives No. 40* (Washington, DC: National Genealogical Society, 1976), 23. See also, *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files: Volume I* (Waynesboro, TN: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1992), 87.

4. John Murdock, *Diary and Autobiography*, typescript, 8–9, L. Tom Perry Special

Collections Library, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

5. Elias Hutchings, *Elias Hutchings Autobiography*, manuscript, 1, ca. 1842, Perry, Special Collections.

6. Murdock, *Diary*, 9.

7. Murdock, *Diary*, 12.

8. George A. Smith and Thomas Bullock, *A list of persons driven from Jackson Co. Mo. by the Mob in 1833*, August 27, 1864, manuscript, 2, Church History Library.

9. See Warren Jennings, *Zion is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Inc., 1962), 119–64.

10. Philo Dibble, *Statement*, 1862, Church History Library.

11. Levi Jackman, *Autobiography of Levi Jackman*, typescript, 10, in vol. 13, *Mormon Diary Series*, Perry Special Collections. The autobiography is published in two parts in vols. 13 and 14 of the series.

12. Orson Hyde, “The Outrage in Jackson County,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2, no. 15 (December 1833):118.

13. John Gribble, *Statement*, 1864, Church History Library.

14. Ferm Madsen Woolley, “Caleb Baldwin History,” *Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Manila Camp, Utah*, n. d. Philo Dibble reported: “Brother Beebe carried the marks of this whipping to his grave, as the brethren who laid him out at the time of his death, in December, 1881, at Provo, Utah County, can testify.” Philo Dibble, “Philo Dibble’s Narrative,” *Early Scenes in Church History: Eighth Book of the Faith-Promoting Series* (Salt Lake City, UT: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882, 83; reprinted in *Four Faith Promoting Classics, Part 4* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1968), 83.

15. Jackman, *Autobiography*, typescript, 8, 10, vol. 14, *Mormon Diary Series*, Perry Special Collections.

16. Jackman, *Autobiography*, 11–12, 14–15, vol. 14, *Mormon Diary Series*. Baldwin and Jackman reported on their mission to the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*. See Levi Jackman and Caleb Baldwin, letter, July 7, 1835, in *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, 1, no. 12 (September 1835), 185–86.

17. Caleb Baldwin, *Patriarchal Blessing*, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

18. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1983), 7.

19. Jacob Gates, *Journal*, 2, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

20. Gates, *Journal*, 23–24, 34. For more about Baldwin’s mission with Jacob Gates, see “From Our Elders Abroad,” *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 7 (April 1836): 303.

21. See *Far West Record*, 121–23.

22. See *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, Etc., in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons* (Fayette, MO: Office of Boon’s Lick Democrat, 1841), 97, 112, 115, 118, 127, 156 (hereafter cited as *Document*). For a historical analysis of the October 1838 Mormon hostilities in Daviess County, see Alexander L. Baugh, “The Mormon Defense of Daviess County, October 1838,” Chapter 7, in *A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri* (Provo, UT: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, 2000), 83–98.

23. *Document*, 97. For an examination of the Richmond hearing see Stephen C. LeSueur, ““High Treason and Murder”: The Examination of Mormon Prisoners at Richmond, Missouri, in November 1838,” *BYU Studies* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 3–30; H. Michael

Marquardt, "Judge Austin A. King's Preliminary Hearing: Joseph Smith and the Mormons on Trial," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 24 (2004): 41–55; and Alexander L. Baugh, "The Final Episode of Mormonism in Missouri in the 1830s: The Incarceration of the Mormon Prisoners in Richmond and Columbia Jails, 1838–1839," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 28 (2008): 1–34.

24. Caleb Baldwin, Petition, in Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1992), 131

25. See Caleb Baldwin, Alanson Ripley, and Joseph Smith Jr., Petition, in Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*, 685–86.

26. Addison Price, Testimony, in *Document*, 137–38.

27. Baugh, "The Final Episode of Mormonism in Missouri in the 1830s," 15–16.

28. For an examination of the Liberty Jail experience see Dean C. Jesse, "'Walls, Grates, and Screeking Iron Doors': The Prison Experience of Mormon Leaders in Missouri, 1838–1839," in Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, eds., *New Views in Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 19–42.

29. Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, ed., *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration* (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1952), 13–14.

30. See Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 5 vols. (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1951), 2:323.

31. Obituary of Caleb Baldwin, Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, June 11, 1849, Church History Library. See also Elden J. Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850* (Salt Lake City, UT: J. Watson, 1971), 211.

32. Joseph Smith to the Church at Quincy, Illinois, March 20, 1839, in Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed., (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 2002), 436. See also Dean C. Jessee and John W. Welch, "Revelations in Context: Joseph Smith's Letter from Liberty Jail, March 20, 1839," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 3 (2000): 125–45.

33. Hyrum Smith, Diary, manuscript, 31–33, April 1839, Church History Library. See also Smith and Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 2:330.

34. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2001), 698.

35. John Gribble, Statement, 1864, Church History Library. For an examination especially of the escape of the Liberty Jail prisoners from Missouri see Alexander L. Baugh, "'We Took Our Change of Venue to the State of Illinois': The Gallatin Hearing and the Escape of Joseph Smith and the Mormon Prisoners from Missouri, April 1839," *Mormon Historical Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 59–82.

36. Joseph Smith's published history states: "Tuesday morning, April 7—The throne of grace was addressed by Elder Caleb Baldwin." Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1971), 4:106 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

37. Kate B. Carter, ed., "Journal of Mary Ann Weston Maughan" in *Our Pioneer Heritage*, 20 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1959), 2:363.

38. Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2005), 80, 438. Baldwin also performed the marriage of Philemon Merrill. See, "Hymenial,"

Times and Seasons 1, no. 12 (October 1840): 191.

39. Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1964), 79.

40. *History of the Church*, 7:448.

41. Baldwin is mentioned briefly in William Huntington's diary at Mt. Pisgah: "Visited last evening by Brother Caleb Balding [Baldwin] from the main camp on his way to Nauvoo to get his family." Baldwin is mentioned again later: "August Sunday 2d this day held a meeting in the grove were adressed by Elder Caleb Balding [Baldwin] followed by C C Rich and myself-this day two aged sisters died at Mount Pisga much sickness in this place." See "William Huntington" in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1997), 147, 157.

42. William Burton, Diary, Church History Library.

43. See Daniel Davis, Diary, vol. 1, 90–101, Church History Library. See also, Heber C. Kimball, Journal, June–September 1848, in Heber C. Kimball, Papers, 1847–1866, Church History Library.

44. Heber C. Kimball's company left Winter Quarters, Nebraska, on June 7, 1848, and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on September 24, 1848. See *Mormon Pioneer Overland Trail, 1847–1868*, Church History Library.

45. Obituary of Caleb Baldwin, *Journal History*, June 11, 1849; see also Watson, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young*, 211. Baldwin was the thirteenth person buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery. See "Record of the Dead," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 2, no. 2 (April 1911): 86; also Utah State History Cemeteries and Burials database.