

The arrest of Joseph Smith near Far West, Missouri, by C. C. A. Christensen.

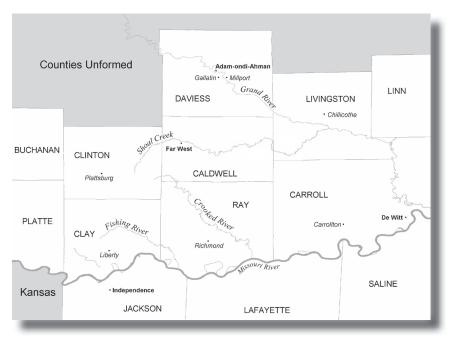
# "Silence, Ye Fiends of the Infernal Pit!": Joseph Smith's Incarceration in Richmond, Missouri, November 1838

## Alexander L. Baugh

On October 27, 1838, after nearly three months of hostilities between Mormon and Missouri settlers in Daviess, Carroll, Ray, and Caldwell Counties, Missouri, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs signed an executive order authorizing the state militia to subdue the Mormon populace and force their surrender, and ordered them to evacuate the state. The order was carried out by Samuel D. Lucas, a major general in the state militia and the commander of the troops from Jackson and Lafayette Counties. The day before issuing the "Extermination Order," Boggs relieved Major General David R. Atchison of his command of the state militia in the Northern District. Atchison's release probably stemmed from the fact that he had served as legal counsel to Joseph Smith and was at least partially sympathetic of the Mormons. Boggs replaced Atchison with John B. Clark of Howard County. However, since Clark was not on the scene to take charge, Lucas assumed command.

On October 31, General Lucas and his officers negotiated a peaceful, albeit unfair settlement with a five-man Mormon delegation led by George M. Hinkle, commander of the Caldwell County militia. The final conditions of surrender called for the Mormons to make an appropriation of property to cover any indemnities caused during the Missouri conflict, give up their arms,

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Northwest Missouri, 1838–1839. Map courtesy Alexander L. Baugh.

and agree to leave the state. A final stipulation required that their leaders be turned over to Missouri authorities.<sup>3</sup>

#### The First Mormon Arrests

General Lucas wasted no time in apprehending who he thought were the chief instigators behind the Mormon insurgence, namely Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, and George W. Robinson. On November 1, Hyrum Smith and Amasa M. Lyman were arrested. The reasons these seven men were apprehended appears evident. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith composed the Church's First Presidency. George W. Robinson was the Prophet's secretary. Lyman Wight was the highest ranking Mormon militia officer in Daviess County and had played a leading role in the Mormon retaliatory strikes in that county in October. Amasa Lyman was a leader of a Mormon spy company that reconnoitered throughout Southern Caldwell and Northern Ray counties during the days just preceding the Mormon surrender. Finally, Parley P. Pratt, a member of the Church's Quorum of the Twelve, had been a participant in the battle between Mormon and Missouri militia at Crooked River on October 25.



Samuel D. Lucas (1799–1868), date unknown. At the time of the 1838 Mormon–Missouri conflict, Lucas was a major general in the state militia and the commander of the troops from Jackson and Lafayette Counties. He conducted the surrender of the Mormons and the arrests of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, Amasa Lyman, and George W. Robinson. The painting is housed in the Jackson County Historical Society, Independence, Missouri. Image courtesy William J. (Bill) Curtis.

On the evening of November 1, Lucas made a rash and hasty decision to hold a military court at his encampment for the seven prisoners. He believed he had to act quickly—before Clark arrived and while he still had command of the operation, since the Howard County general, who was less familiar with the Mormon problem, might be disposed to render more lenient justice in behalf of the Church's leaders. With these considerations in mind, the Jackson County general decided to move ahead immediately with the court-martial. Details concerning the hearing are sketchy, but the evidence is clear that at the time of the hearing, Joseph Smith and his cohorts were in custody at Alexander W. Doniphan's camp and were not even allowed to be present to defend themselves.<sup>4</sup>

The deliberation did not last long. Upon hearing the evidence, Lucas called for a vote from officers of the court, who voted three to one in favor of conviction on the charge of treason—a capital offense.<sup>5</sup> Alexander W. Doniphan vehemently opposed the decision, telling his fellow officers that not one of them was familiar with military law; he then left the hearing in protest.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, with the verdict rendered, Lucas drafted the execution order and dispatched it to Doniphan, expecting his compliance. The order read: "Brigadier-General Doniphan.—Sir: You will take Joseph Smith and the other prisoners into the public square of Far West, and shoot them at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. [Signed] Samuel D. Lucas Major-General Commanding." However, Doniphan, not about to be an accessory to such an order, issued a brusque response. Not only did he inform Lucas that he considered the order illegal and that he would not obey it, but he threatened



Alexander William Doniphan (1808–1887), date unknown. Doniphan acted as legal counsel to the Mormons from 1833–1839, and was chief counsel during the Richmond Court of Inquiry. Image courtesy Library of Congress.

legal action if the execution was carried out. The illegality of the entire order centered in the fact that at least three of the prisoners, namely Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and Sidney Rigdon of the First Presidency, claimed exemption from state militia service, and therefore did not come under military authority.8 This fact was clearly recognized by Doniphan, who had previously acted as Joseph Smith's legal counsel and knew firsthand concerning his military exemption. One of Doniphan's own brigade members reported, "These men had never belonged to any lawful military organization, and could not, therefore, have violated military law. The law of the soldier could not apply to them, as they had not been soldiers in any legal sense." However, the same was not true for the other four prisoners—Lyman Wight, Parley P. Pratt, George W. Robinson, and Amasa Lyman—all of whom were commissioned or elected state militia officers. In spite of the fact that four of the seven could have come under military authority, Doniphan's dauntless refusal to carry out Lucas's order, in addition to his warning that he would pursue legal action if the executions were carried out, led Lucas to reconsider his decision, and to decide ultimately to keep all seven Mormon men in custody until they could be turned over to the appropriate civil authorities.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Mormon Leaders Taken to Independence**

During the forenoon of November 2, a heavily guarded wagon containing the seven Mormon prisoners pulled into Far West. Lucas put

Brigadier General Moses Wilson in charge of three hundred men and assigned him to take the Mormon leaders to Independence while he finalized the surrender.<sup>11</sup> Lucas remained overnight, leaving Far West the next day in order to catch up with Wilson. Around three p.m. on Sunday, November 4, Lucas and Wilson arrived in Independence with the Mormon prisoners, who were immediately incarcerated in a vacant log house immediately north and across the street from Independence's public square.<sup>12</sup> A day or two after their arrival in Independence, the seven Mormon prisoners were moved from the log house a short distance east to the Noland House (hotel), situated on the northwest corner of Main and Maple. Here they waited for word regarding where their hearing would be held; they were treated hospitably and permitted to come and go as they pleased.<sup>13</sup>

# Additional Mormon Arrests at Far West—Defendants Transported to Richmond

On November 4, the same day that Lucas and Wilson arrived in Independence with Joseph Smith and the six other Mormon prisoners, Major General John B. Clark arrived at Far West, where he supervised the final activities of the Mormon surrender and conducted additional arrests. The following day, November 5, Clark interrogated George M. Hinkle, the Mormon colonel, and a number of other Church leaders who supplied him with information regarding which Mormons had played the most active role in the conflict. 14 Later that afternoon, the general's investigation was complete enough for him to issue his own arrests. The beating of a drum summoned all of the men in Far West to the public square, where they assembled in military order. Once assembled, Clark and his officers called out the names of forty-six men who were placed under arrest.<sup>15</sup> Those arrested were taken to a local tavern owned by John Burk, where Clark officially charged them with treason, murder, burglary, arson, robbery, and larceny. He informed them further that they would be confined that evening in the church's empty storehouse before being transported to Richmond the next morning, where they would stand trial. Each man was then dismissed and placed under guard and permitted to return to his home to bid farewell to his family, and to procure blankets, bedding, and clothing.16

On the afternoon of Tuesday, November 6, General Clark left Far West and marched to Richmond with the forty-six Mormon men he had taken prisoner. He and his company arrived at the Ray County seat on November 9, where he discharged the remainder of his division, with the exception of a small force that he retained to guard the Latter-day Saint prisoners who had been brought to Richmond for the court examination.<sup>17</sup> The Mormon prison-

ers were confined in the Ray County courthouse (which was unfinished and under construction), because it was the only building in Richmond that could accommodate a large body of men. Ebenezer Robinson provided a first-hand description of the building and the circumstances of his fellow inmates:

At Richmond we were taken into the courthouse, which was a new unfinished brick building, with no inside work done except a floor laid across one end, some sixteen or twenty feet wide. There were two large fire places built in the wall where the floor was laid. A railing was built across the room at the edge of the floor, and we were quartered inside the railing as our prison, with a strong guard inside and outside the building. Two 3 pail iron kettles for boiling our meat, and two or more iron bake kettles, or Dutch ovens, for baking our corn bread in, were furnished us, together with sacks of cornmeal and meat in the bulk. We did our own cooking. This arrangement suited us very well, and we enjoyed ourselves as well as men could under similar circumstances. We spread our blankets upon the floor at night for our beds, and before retiring, we sang an [sic] hymn and had prayers, and practiced the same each morning before breakfast. 18

#### Mormon Leaders Transferred from Independence to Richmond

Before he had left Far West, General John B. Clark dispatched Colonel Sterling G. Price of Chariton County, Missouri, and two companies of state militia to travel to Richmond to meet up with General Samuel Lucas and secure Joseph Smith and the six other Mormon prisoners. However, at the time, neither Clark nor Price was aware that Lucas had not gone to Richmond, but had proceeded to Independence. When Clark learned that Lucas had taken the seven Mormon leaders to Jackson County, he sent a small detachment to Independence with orders for Lucas to turn over the prisoners so they



Sterling Price (1809–1867), circa 1861–1865. During the preliminary hearing in Richmond in November 1838, Price was placed in charge of guarding the seven Mormon leaders incarcerated in the vacant log house and the additional Mormon prisoners housed in the unfinished Richmond courthouse. Price went on to serve in the Missouri legislature (1840-1844), as a U.S. congressman (1845–1846), as a brigadier general in the Mexican War (1846-1848), as governor of Missouri (1853-1857), and as a

major general in the Confederate Army.

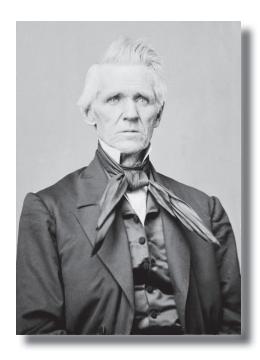
could be taken to Richmond for examination. 19 On November 7, Clark's men arrived in Independence and took charge of the prisoners. Accordingly, the next day, November 8, accompanied by a small military escort, they proceeded fifteen miles, crossed the Missouri River, and lodged that evening in an old frame house. The following day, November 9, while en route to Richmond, they were met by a strong guard commanded by Colonel Price, who conducted them the rest of the way. Upon their arrival that evening at the Ray County seat, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, George W. Robinson, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, and Amasa Lyman were put into a vacant log house situated twenty rods (330 feet), approximately one block north of the Richmond courthouse. Here they were placed under a guard and chained together in heavy irons.<sup>20</sup> For nearly three weeks (November 9–29), the log house served as the ad hoc jail for the seven Mormon leaders. Athalia R. Robinson, Rigdon's seventeen-year-old daughter and wife of George Robinson, also lodged with the prisoners for a time. Because of Rigdon's tenuous health problems, Athalia was permitted to take care of her ailing father and to be with her husband.<sup>21</sup>

The arrival of both groups of Mormon prisoners at Richmond on November 9 (Joseph Smith's party consisting of seven men, and the forty-six Mormon men arrested by Clark), brought the number of Mormon prisoners to fifty-three. However, while the Richmond hearing was in progress, Captain Samuel Bogart of the Ray County militia "continued to scour the country with a posse of men in search of arms, and certain men whom they wanted to imprison," wrote Warren Foote.<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, Bogart rounded up an additional eleven Mormon prisoners, bringing the total number of Mormon defendants to sixty-four, although a number of them were released during the course of the hearing due to insufficient evidence.<sup>23</sup>

### The Richmond Preliminary Hearing

The Richmond preliminary hearing began on November 12, 1838, and continued through November 29 (with the likely exception of November 18 and 25, which were Sundays). Fifth Circuit Court Judge Austin A. King presided. It is important to understand that the Richmond Court of Inquiry was not a trial per se, but only an investigation or preliminary hearing to determine if there was sufficient evidence or probable cause against the Mormon defendants to bind them over for trial. Thomas Burch and William Wood prosecuted in behalf of the state. The prisoners were represented by Alexander W. Doniphan and Amos Rees.<sup>24</sup>

Sometime during the opening day of the Richmond hearing (November 12, three days after their arrival), Joseph Smith penned a letter to Emma from



Austin A. King (1802–1870), circa 1862–1863. King presided over the Richmond Court of Inquiry in November 1838. King later served as governor of Missouri (1848–1853), and as a member of the U. S. House of Representatives (1862–1863). Photograph courtesy Library of Congress.

the log house where he and his six other prison companions were shackled. He begins the letter by declaring his innocence: "We are . . . prisoners in chains, and under strong guards, for Christ sake and for no other cause," he wrote. He further noted who was chained to whom. "Brother [George W.] Robison is chained next to me he . . . has a true heart and a firm mind. Brother Whight [Lyman Wight], is next, Br. Rigdon [Sidney Rigdon], next, Hyram [Hyrum Smith], next, Parely [Parley P. Pratt], next, Amasa [Lyman], next, and thus we are bound together in chains as well as the cords of everlasting love." Returning to his statement of innocence he wrote: "Although there has been things that were unbeknown to us, and altogether beyond our controal, that might seem, to the mob to be a pretext, for them to persacute us, but on examination, I think that the authorities, will discover our inocence, and set us free, but if this blessing cannot be . . . obtained, I have this consolation that I am an innocent man, let what will befall me." His words demonstrate the depth of his love and concern for his family: "Oh God grant that I may have the privalegge of seeing once more my lovely Family, in the injoyment, of the sweets of liberty, and sotiaial [social] life, to press them to my bosam and kissng their lovely cheeks would fill my heart with unspeakable . . . grattitude, tell the chilldren that I am alive and trust I shall come and see them before long, comfort their hearts all you can, and try to be comforted yourself, all you can." Continuing, he mentioned each of his children: "Tell little Joseph, he must be a good boy, Father loves him <with> a perfect . . . love, he is the Eldest [and] must not hurt those that <are> smaller then [than] him, but cumfor<t> them tell little Frederick, Father, loves him, with all his heart, he is a lovely boy. Julia is a lovely little girl, I love hir also She is a promising child, tell her Father wants her to remember him and be a good girl, tell all the rest that I think of them and pray for them all. . . little Elexander [Alexander] is on my mind continuly." He then concluded the letter with a personal expression of love for Emma: "Oh my affectionate Emma, I want you to remember that I am <a> true and faithful friend, to you and the chill-dren, forever, my heart is intwined around you[r]s forever and ever, oh may God bless you all amen . . . I am your husband and am in bands and tribulations." This is the only extant letter exchanged between Joseph Smith and Emma during the three weeks of his incarceration in Richmond.

Each day when the court convened, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, George Robinson, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, and Amasa Lyman were escorted by a small contingent of militia guards under the command of Sterling Price from the vacant log house, which served as their place of confinement, to the Ray County courthouse, where they joined the other Latter-day Saint prisoners to hear the evidence presented against them. When the hearing recessed at the end of each day, the Prophet and the six other Mormon leaders were conducted back to the log house for the night, while the remaining Latter-day Saint prisoners spent the evening confined in the unfinished courthouse.

Sometime during their three-week confinement in the vacant log house, Parley P. Pratt later reported that one evening Joseph Smith issued a scathing rebuke of the militia guards. Significantly, Pratt did not record the account of the reprimand at that time, or even soon after. It was not until 1853 that he wrote a letter to Willard Richards, Church historian, recounting the incident. The letter was subsequently published in the Deseret News on November 12 (ironically, fifteen years to the day that the Richmond hearing began).<sup>26</sup> Still later, the portion in the letter which included the Prophet's scathing reproof of the militiamen was included in Pratt's autobiography, published posthumously in 1874, becoming the main source for the narrative. In the most recent biographical treatise of Pratt, authors Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow note that the passage recounting Joseph Smith's rebuke "is the most famous in Pratt's autobiography, [and] has become a prime ingredient in the hagiographic tradition surrounding Joseph Smith."27 To this day, perhaps no other writer has captured the Prophet's personal valor and courage quite like Pratt, which account has been has been memorialized in LDS circles.

The following paragraph in Pratt's November 1853 letter, not included in the autobiography, provides an inside glimpse into the uncomfortable circumstances experienced by the Mormon prisoners in Richmond:

Col. Price placed us in a room without beds, chairs, or any other convenience, and chained seven of us all together, with a kind of trace chain, extending from one man's ankle to another, and fastened round one ankle of each with a padlock. In this situation we were guarded night and day by about ten men at a time, who stood over us with loaded pistols in hand. At night we were all stretched on the floor in a row upon our backs, and tried to sleep, but the hard floor, the cold, and the inability to change our position because of chains and the noise of the guards effectually prevented sleep.

#### Next, Pratt details the rebuke:

In one of those tedious night we had lain as if in sleep, till the hour of midnight had passed, and our ears and hearts had been pained, while we had listened for hours to the obscene jests, the horrid oaths, the dreadful blasphemies, and filthy language of our guards, Col. Price at their head, as they recounted to each other their deeds of rapine, murder, robbery, etc., which they had committed among the "Mormons," while at Far West, and vicinity. They even boasted of defiling by force, wives, daughters, and virgins, and of shooting or dashing out the brains of men, women, and children.

I had listened till I became so disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice, that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards, but had said nothing to Joseph, or any one else, although I lay next to him and knew he was awake. On a sudden he arose to his feet and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

SILENCE—Ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute, and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS MINUTE.

He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty. Chained, and without a weapon,—calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked down upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.

I have seen the ministers of justice, clothed in magisterial robes, and criminals arraigned before them, while life was suspended upon a breath, in the courts of England; I have witnessed a Congress in solemn session to give laws to nations; I have tried to conceive of kings, of royal courts, of thrones, and crowns; and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms, but dignity and majesty have I seen but *once*, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon, in an obscure village of Missouri.

Your brother,

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Your brother, P. P. PRATT.

Portion of Parley P. Pratt's November 7, 1853, letter to Willard Richards, wherein he recounted the incident of Joseph Smith rebuking the guards during their incarceration in Richmond, Missouri. The entire letter was published in the *Deseret News*, November 12,



Joseph Smith rebuking the guards by Mormon artist Danquart Anthon Weggeland (1827–1928). Weggeland may have been the first person to visually depict the incident. The Mormon prisoners are shown to the right of Joseph Smith and the Richmond guards on the left. Parley P. Pratt is portrayed kneeling behind Joseph Smith. Sidney Rigdon is shown laying down (far right). Athalia R. Robinson, wife of George W. Robinson (and a daughter of Sidney Rigdon) is shown holding the baby.

It is significant to note that in a March 1839 letter to the Church in Quincy, Illinois, while imprisoned in Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith may have alluded to the event of his rebuking the guards when he wrote: "And altho<ugh> their influance shall cast the[e] into trouble and into barrs and walls thou shalt be had in honor *and but for a small moment and thy voice shall be more terible in the midst of thine enemies than the fierce Lion because of thy ritiousness* [righteousness] and thy God shall stand by the[e] forever" (italics added).<sup>29</sup> The passage was later canonized in LDS scripture as Doctrine and Covenants 122:4.

On November 29, 1838, following nearly three weeks of preliminary testimony, Circuit Court Judge Austin A. King issued his ruling in the case. Twenty-nine of the sixty-four Mormon defendants were released on lack of sufficient evidence (some had been released even before the conclusion of the hearing). King did determine that sufficient evidence existed to bind

thirty-five over for trial. Of these, twenty-four men were charged for crimes committed in Daviess County, which included arson, burglary, larceny, and robbery, and were ordered to appear at the circuit court in Daviess County on March 28. Yet within a short time, these men posted bail and were released, leaving only eleven Mormon prisoners to answer to additional charges.<sup>30</sup> Of the eleven, Judge King ruled that there was sufficient evidence to charge five of the defendants—Parley P. Pratt, Norman Shearer, Darwin Chase, Luman Gibbs, and Morris Phelps-in the death of Moses Rowland, which had occurred during the attack at Crooked River. Since the charge of murder was nonbailable, these five men were ordered to be confined in the Richmond Jail (which was under construction) until March 11, 1839, when the circuit trial would convene in Richmond.<sup>31</sup> Finally, probable cause was also found against the remaining six defendants, five of whom—Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Alexander McRae, and Caleb Baldwin-were charged with acts of treason (a nonbailable offense) committed in Daviess County, while Sidney Rigdon was charged with treason in Caldwell County. Their trial was set to begin on March 7, 1839, in Daviess County. But because there was no jail in Daviess, King ordered that the six men be taken immediately to Liberty Jail in Clay County to await their court appearance.<sup>32</sup> Within a day or two



Joseph Smith rebuking the guards by Gary E. Smith.



Joseph Smith rebuking the guards by Liz Lemon Swindle.

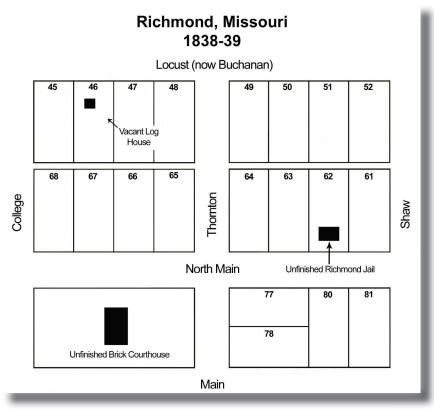
following the conclusion of the hearing, Joseph Smith and the five other men ordered to be incarcerated with him in Liberty left Richmond, marking an end of their Ray County incarceration. On December 1, they were committed to Liberty Jail to begin a confinement that would last over four months.

#### Site Location of the Vacant Log House

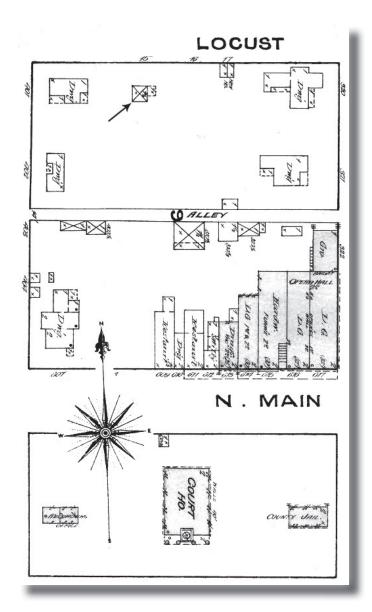
For many years, two main sources have been used to help identify the approximate location of the vacant log house where Joseph Smith and the six other Mormon prisoners were incarcerated during the Richmond preliminary hearing. In a journal entry by Lyman Wight, he indicated the structure was located twenty rods, or approximately 330 feet from the Richmond courthouse. A second source is that of Assistant LDS Church Historian Andrew Jenson and Edward Stevenson, who interviewed David Quesenbury, an early Ray County clerk in 1888. When asked about the log house where Joseph Smith and the other Mormon prisoners were kept, Quesenbury said: "There were a number of old log houses on the north side of the court-house square at that time, and it was no doubt into one of these that the Prophet and his brethren were ushered on that memorable occasion." Based on Wight's statement and measurement, as well as Quesenbury's report, LaMar C. Berrett and Max H. Parkin, two leading authorities on early Mormon site locations

in Missouri, approximated that the house was located on the block directly north of the courthouse on either lot 46 or lot 47.<sup>35</sup>

More recently, John Craig, an independent researcher, concluded that the location of the vacant log house was near the center of lot 46, or the lot's northeast corner.<sup>36</sup> Craig's conclusion is based on more extensive research than that done previously. His examination of two additional sources proved particularly helpful in determining a more precise location for the vacant log house: (1) original Richmond property records, and (2) an 1883 Sanborn



Map of Richmond, Missouri, showing the locations where the Mormon prisoners were incarcerated in 1838–1839. During the Richmond Court of Inquiry, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, Amasa Lyman, and George W. Robinson were housed in a vacant log house located approximately twenty rods, or 330 feet from the unfinished brick courthouse. An additional fifty-seven Mormon prisoners were confined in the courthouse, there being no building large enough to accommodate them. At the conclusion of the Richmond hearing, Parley P. Pratt, Morris Phelps, Norman Shearer, Darwin Chase, and Luman Gibbs were placed in the unfinished Richmond Jail. In March 1839, King Follett was added to this group. Map courtesy Alexander L. Baugh.



A portion of the 1883 Sanborn Insurance map showing Richmond's public square, including the site of the Ray County courthouse that was under construction in 1838. According to Lyman Wight, the seven Mormon leaders were incarcerated in a vacant house located twenty rods, or 330 feet from the courthouse. A small building located on lot 46 on Locust Street (now Buchanan Street) is in the proximity of the distance estimated by Wight, suggesting it may be the structure where the Mormon leaders were incarcerated (see arrow).

Insurance map of Richmond, Missouri, showing existing structures. The land deed records show that at the time of the November 1838 Richmond hearing. George Woodward was the owner of lot 46.37 Woodward served as Ray County clerk and as a circuit court clerk from 1826 to 1836; and in 1828, the first session of the county court to be held in Richmond was held at his residence. Craig surmises that because of Woodward's connections to the courts, he may have even offered his vacant building on lot 46 for use as a temporary place of confinement for the Mormon leaders, particularly if he received payment in exchange for the use of the structure. Thus Craig concludes: "It is not therefore unreasonable to assume that George Woodward would have . . . volunteered [the] old . . . vacant log house he had on Lot 46 for use as a temporary holding cell for the Mormon leaders in November 1838."38 Additionally, the 1883 Sanborn Insurance map shows a building on lot 46, which is in the proximity of twenty rods, or 330 feet north from the location where the courthouse stood in 1838, thereby suggesting the possibility that the structure may have been where the Mormon prisoners were incarcerated.39

#### **Historical Marker**

Confident that the vacant log house was located on lot 46, John Craig and his brother Kipp purchased a portion of the lot in October 2007 with the hope of preserving the site for historical purposes. Significantly, the property had no existing structures, thus allowing for future site development. Following the acquisition, the Craigs installed white fencing to section off the property, creating a park-like setting and ambiance. Following several years of planning and deliberation, and working with members and officers of the Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation and Richmond City officials, an interpretive historical marker was developed and installed on the north side of the property adjacent to the Buchanan Street.

The unveiling of the historical marker took place on November 19, 2011. Organizers, participants, and distinguished guests of the ceremony included John and Kipp Craig and their families; officers and members of the Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation; Kim R. Wilson, chair of the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation; Richard E. Turley Jr., Assistant Church Historian of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; President Jeremiah J. Morgan, president of the LDS Liberty Missouri Stake; Rodney A. Ames, second counselor in the Liberty Missouri stake presidency; Alexander L. Baugh, professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University; and several descendants of the seven Mormon leaders who were incarcerated in the vacant house, including Michael Kennedy Jr., a direct descendant of Joseph Smith. 41



View of lot 46, Richmond, Missouri, November 19, 2011. The site is the probable location where Joseph Smith Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, Amasa Lyman, and George W. Robinson were incarcerated in November 1838, and where Joseph Smith rebuked the guards. Photograph by Alexander L. Baugh.







West side

Historical marker erected by the Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation to memorialize the incarceration of Joseph Smith Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, Amasa Lyman, and George W. Robinson in November 1838, in Richmond, Missouri, November 19, 2011. Photographs by Alexander L. Baugh.



Elevated view of lot 46, probable location where Joseph Smith was incarcerated in November 1838, and where he rebuked the guards, November 19, 2011. Photograph by Kenneth R. Mays.



Part of the crowd assembled for the dedication of the historical marker, November 19, 2011. Photograph by Kenneth R. Mays.

The east side of the historical marker includes the text from Parley P. Pratt's autobiographical account of Joseph Smith's rebuking of the Richmond guards. The west side contains the following text:

#### Joseph Smith Rebuking the Guards

In early November 1838, Joseph Smith, Jr., with George W. Robinson, Lyman Wight, Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, Amasa Lyman and Parley P. Pratt, Latter-day Saint church leaders, were kept chained together from ankle to ankle with trace chains and closely guarded by nearly a dozen guards in a temporary prison in a log house located on this site. They, along with over 40 other church men, had been arrested in Far West, Missouri and were awaiting a hearing in Richmond. One evening the abusive guards began inflicting especially vile, indecent, and inflammatory language on the prisoners. Unable to stand the abuse any longer, and although shackled and chained, Joseph stood and powerfully rebuked the guards. As Parley P. Pratt later recorded the event, Joseph majestically rose to his feet and spoke in a thunderous voice these memorable words: "Silence, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die this instant." The astonished guards, both speechless and trembling, were silent the remainder of the night.

## Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation 2011

Those familiar with the history of the Latter-day Saints in Missouri recognize the significance of Richmond (and surrounding Ray County) in connection with many important pivotal episodes and events in the lives of the early Church members who lived in the region. The addition of a historical marker identifying the approximate location of Joseph Smith's November 1838 incarceration offers visitors yet another site location to help them better understand and appreciate the Mormon past.

#### Notes

- 1. Lilburn W. Boggs to John B. Clark, October 27, 1838, in *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &C. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons; And the Evidence Given Before the Hon. Austin A. King, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit of the State of Missouri, at the Court-House in Richmond, in a Criminal Court of Inquiry, Begun November 12, 1838, on the Trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., and Others, for High Treason and Other Crimes Against the State* (Fayette, Mo.: Boon's Lick Democrat, 1841), 61 (hereafter cited as *Document*).
- 2. Lilburn W. Boggs to John B. Clark, October 26, 1838, in *Document*, 62–63. Although the order was signed by B. M. Lisle, an adjutant general in the state militia, Lisle wrote by order of Boggs.
  - 3. Samuel D. Lucas to Lilburn W. Boggs, November 5, 1838, in *Document*, 70.
  - 4. Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book

- Company, 1985), 160; and Sidney Rigdon, An Appeal to the American People: Being an Account of the Persecutions of the Church of Latter Day Saints; and of the Barbarities Inflicted on Them by the Inhabitants of the State of Missouri (Cincinnati: Glesen and Shepard, Stereotypers and Printers, 1840), 51.
- 5. See History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri, Written and Compiled From the Most Authentic Official and Private Sources, Including a History of Their Townships, Towns and Villages, Together With a Condensed History of Missouri; a Reliable and Detailed History of Clay and Platte Counties—Their Pioneer Record, Resources, Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens; General and Local Statistics of Great Value; Incidents and Reminiscences (St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1885), 134 n1.
- 6. Rigdon, An Appeal to the American People, 51; Rigdon petition in Clark S. Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 675–76; also in History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1971), 3: 460 (hereafter cited as History of the Church); and Parley P. Pratt, History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri Upon the Mormons, in which Ten Thousand American Citizens Were Robbed, Plundered, and Driven From the State, and Many Others Imprisoned, Martyred, &C. for Their Religion, and All This by Military Force, by Order of the Executive (Detroit: Dawson and Bates, Printers, 1839), 40 (hereafter cited as History of the Late Persecution).
- 7. History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri, Written and Compiled From the Most Authentic Official and Private Sources, Including a History of Their Townships and Villages, Together With a Condensed History of Missouri; a Reliable and Detailed History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties—Their Pioneer Record, Resources, Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens; General and Local Statistics of Great Value; Incidents and Reminiscences (St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1886), 137.
- 8. For statements concerning Joseph Smith's exemption from state militia duty, see Alanson Ripley, Heber C. Kimball, William Huntington, Joseph B. Noble, and Joseph Smith Jr. petition in John P. Greene, Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons or Latter Day Saints from the State of Missouri, under the "Exterminating Order" (Cincinnati: R. P. Brooks, 1839), 32; and Lyman Wight petition in Johnson, Missouri Redress Petitions, 656; also in History of the Church, 3:441. Hyrum Smith claimed the entire First Presidency was exempt because of their ministerial status, while Sidney Rigdon stated he was excluded because he was overage. See Smith and Rigdon petitions in Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions, 632, 634; also in History of the Church, 3:417, 459.
- 9. Peter H. Burnett, An Old California Pioneer by Peter H. Burnett, First Governor of the State (Oakland: Biobooks, 1946), 37–38.
- 10. The significance of Doniphan's intervention in behalf of the Mormon leaders cannot be overstated. Had he not blocked Lucas, Joseph Smith and the other prisoners would most assuredly have lost their lives. Missourian Peter H. Burnett wrote: "Had it not been for the efforts of Doniphan and others from Clay, I think it most probable that the prisoners would have been summarily tried, condemned, and executed." Burnett, *An Old California Pioneer*, 38.
- 11. See Samuel D. Lucas to Lilburn W. Boggs, November 2, 1838, in *Document*, 75; also Samuel D. Lucas to Lilburn W. Boggs, November 5, 1838, in *Document*, 71. See also Lyman Wight, Journal, in Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 8 vols. (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1967), 2:295; also in Rollin J. Britton, "Early Days on the Grand River and the Mormon War," *Missouri Historical Review* 14, no. 2 (January 1920): 234. See also Wight petition in Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*, 662; also in *History of the Church*,

3:447.

- 12. Wight, Journal, 295–96; also in Britton, "Early Days on the Grand River and the Mormon War," 234. See also Pratt, *Autobiography*, 164; and *History of the Church*, 3:201. In his journal, Wight incorrectly indicated the prisoners arrived in Independence on November 3, whereas the History of the Church and Pratt's chronology place the date as November 4. November 4 was a Sunday (as noted by Pratt) and is the correct date. It was on this same day that both Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt penned letters to their wives, Emma and Mary Ann respectively. See Parley P. Pratt to Mary Ann Frost Pratt, November 4, 1838, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; and Joseph Smith Jr. to Emma Smith, November 4, 1838, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; also published in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2002), 399.
- 13. Lyman Wight indicated that their move from the log house to the Noland Hotel occurred on November 6. See Wight, Journal, 296; also in Britton, "Early Days on the Grand River and the Mormon War," 234. Parley P. Pratt recorded: "[After our arrival in Independence] the troops were then disbanded. In the meantime we were kept under a small guard, and were treated with some degree of humanity, while hundreds flocked to see us day after day. We spent most of our time in preaching and conversation, explanatory of our doctrines and practice. Much prejudice was removed, and the feelings of the populace began to be in our favor. . . . In a day or two we were at liberty to walk the streets without a guard. We were finally removed from our house of confinement to a hotel, where we boarded at the public table, and lodged on the floor, with a block of wood for a pillow. We no longer had any guard; we went out and came in when we pleased—a certain keeper being appointed merely to watch over us, and look to our wants." Pratt, *Autobiography*, 166.
- 14. In addition to Hinckle, John Corrill, William W. Phelps, and Reed Peck also probably supplied Clark with the names of Mormon men who had played an active role in the Mormon-Missouri conflict.
- 15. Clark stated in two separate documents that the number of Mormon prisoners taken was forty-six. See John B. Clark to Lilburn W. Boggs, November 10 and November 29, 1838, in *Document*, 66, 90. The number of men arrested by General Clark is given differently in Mormon sources, ranging from fifty to seventy-five. For example, see *History of the Church*, 3:202; and Albert Perry Rockwood, Journal, in Dean C. Jessee and David J. Whittaker, eds., "The Last Months of Mormonism in Missouri: The Albert Perry Rockwood Journal," *BYU Studies* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 27.
- 16. Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," *The Return* 2, no. 2 (February 1890): 212.
  - 17. John B. Clark to Lilburn W. Boggs, November 10, 1838, in *Document*, 66–67.
- 18. Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," 234. Edward Partridge described his confinement in the Richmond courthouse as follows: "We were confined in a large open room, where the cold northern blast penetrated freely. Our fires were small and our allowance for wood and food was scanty; they gave us not even a blanket to lie upon; our beds were the cold floors. . . . The vilest of the vile did guard us and treat us like dogs; yet we bore our oppressions without murmuring; but our souls were vexed night and day with their filthy conversation, for they constantly blasphemed God's holy name." Edward Partridge, Statement, in Andrew Jenson, *L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 1:221.
- 19. John B. Clark to Lilburn W. Boggs, November 10 and November 29, 1838, in *Document*, 66, 90.
  - 20. Parley P. Pratt indicated that immediately upon their arrival in Richmond they

were confined in chains. See Pratt, *Autobiography*, 168. Lyman Wight noted that they were not put into chains until the following day, November 10. See Wight, Journal, 297; also in Britton, "Early Days on the Grand River and the Mormon War," 235. See also *History of the Church*, 3:205–06.

- 21. Pratt, Autobiography, 179; Pratt, History of the Late Persecution, 52–53.
- 22. Warren Foote, Autobiography, typescript, 27, Perry Special Collections.
- 23. Independent historians William (Bill) J. and Annette W. Curtis have compiled a list names of sixty-eight Mormon men who were arrested and incarcerated in Richmond. See Annette W. Curtis and William J. Curtis, Richmond, Missouri: Some Historic Sites in Mormon History and Mormon Prisoners in Richmond, Missouri 1838 (Independence, MO: Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation, 2006), 24-27. However, extracting the names of those who were officially charged as recorded in the published court record, brings the total to sixty-four. The following is an alphabetical listing of the fifty-three Mormon men who were initially charged at the beginning of the Richmond hearing. Martin C. Allred, William Allred, Caleb Baldwin, Thomas Beck, John Buchanan, Daniel Carn, Darwin Chase, Moses Clawson, Benjamin Covey, Sheffield Daniels, John T. Earl, Elisha Edwards, David Frampton, Jacob Gates, Luman Gibbs, George Grant, George Washington Harris, Anthony Head, James M. Henderson, Francis Higbee, John S. Higbee, Chandler Holbrook, Jesse D. Hunter, Benjamin Jones, George Kimball, Amasa Lyman, Alexander McRae, Silas Maynard, Isaac Morley, Elijah Newman, Zedekiah Owens, Ebenezer Page, Edward Partridge, David Pettigrew, Parley P. Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, Alanson Ripley, Ebenezer Robinson, George W. Robinson, Daniel Shearer, Norman Shearer, Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith Jr., Allen J. Stout, Daniel S. Thomas, Alvin G. Tippetts, John J. Turner, Sidney Turner, Washington Vorhees, Andrew Whitlock, Lyman Wight, Joseph W. Younger, Henry Zabriski. See Document, 97. The following is an alphabetical listing of the eleven men who were added to the original fifty-three defendants: Lemuel Bent, Jonathan Dunham, King Follett, Clark Hallett, Joseph Hunter, Joel S. Miles, George W. Morris, Morris Phelps, Thomas Rich, James Henry Rollins, and William Whitman. These last names were obtained by comparing the list of the original fifty-three defendants who were in custody at the beginning of the hearing with that of the defendants cited in Judge Austin King's final ruling. See *Document*, 97, 149–51.
- 24. Ibid., 97; and *History of the Church*, 3:209, 212. 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; and 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. The hearing is also discussed in general terms in Susan Easton Black, "The Evils of Rumor: Richmond, Missouri, 1836–1838," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Missouri*, 125–30.
- 25. Joseph Smith Jr. to Emma Hale Smith, November 12, 1838, Community of Christ Library-Archives, also published in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 399.
- 26. Parley P. Pratt to Willard Richards, November 7, 1853, published in the *Deseret News*, November 12, 1853, 3 (hereafter cited as PPP to WR).
- 27. Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 144.
- 28. PPP to WR, 3. Versions of the narrative published later in the numerous editions of Pratt's autobiography vary only slightly in punctuation. For example, see Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 179–80. Givens and Grow provide the following assessment of the narrative: "Written years after Smith's death, the account describes a hero of inspiring proportions; if Pratt did not express such veneration during Smith's lifetime, distance and the aura of martyrdom made it easier for

Pratt, as his disciple, to describe such a moment of mythic splendor. With his tendency toward Victorian grandiloquence, his Manichean worldview, and the sense of poetic license, Pratt perhaps embellished the scene. . . . However, there is no reason to doubt the essentials of the account." Givens and Grow, *Parley P. Pratt*, 144. The fact that Pratt did not even mention the rebuking incident in his *History of the Late Persecutions* (most of which he wrote between December 1838 to mid-March 1839), supports Givens and Grows conclusion that over time, the incident became even more impressive in his mind.

- 29. Joseph Smith Jr. to the Church at Quincy, March 20, 1839, 3–4, Church History Library; also in Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 441.
- 30. Document, 150. Ebenezer Robinson reported that immediately after the Richmond hearing, eighteen Mormon defendants were transferred from the unfinished Ray County Courthouse (which had been their place of confinement) to the Richmond Jail. See Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," The Return 2, no. 3 (March 1890): 236. Although the jail was unfinished and still under construction, it was far enough along that prisoners could be housed there. Robinson's figure of eighteen men included the five who were charged with death of Moses Rowland in the Crooked River battle (Parley P. Pratt, Norman Shearer, Darwin Chase, Luman Gibbs, and Morris Phelps) and thirteen of the twenty-four Daviess County Mormon defendants charged by King. Thus it appears that at the conclusion of the hearing, eleven of the Daviess defendants were allowed to post bail and were released, leaving thirteen who remained incarcerated. However, after only a few days, the remaining thirteen secured bail and were released, leaving only the five who had participated in the Crooked River battle. By the time the trial was to begin for the Daviess defendants (March 29, 1839), most (if not all) had left the state; thus they did not appear, and the case was dismissed.
- 31. Document, 150. The jail was located approximately three-quarters of a block east of the courthouse on lot 62 on North Main Street. See LaMar C. Berrett and Max H. Parkin, Sacred Places, Missouri: A Comprehensive Guide to Early LDS Historical Sites, Vol. 4 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2004), 250. For an examination of the events associated with the Mormon defendants incarcerated in Richmond, see 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; and Alexander L. Baugh, "Tis Not for Crimes That I Have Done': Parley P. Pratt's Missouri Imprisonment, 1838–1839," in Gregory Armstrong, Matthew J. Grow, and Dennis J. Siler, eds., Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2011), 137–67.
- 32. Document, 150; see also History of the Church, 3:212. For an examination of the Mormon leaders Liberty Jail experience, see Dean C. Jessee, "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. The hearing, which was scheduled to convene on March 7, 1839, did not convene until April 9 and was held in Gallatin, Daviess County. Following three days of testimony (April 9–11), the defense requisitioned a change of venue, and the court ruled they be taken to Columbia, Missouri, for the final hearing. While being transported to Columbia, the Mormon defendants were allowed to escape. 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, 1939," Mormon Historical Studies 2, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 59–82.
- 33. Wight, Journal, 297; also in Britton, "Early Days on the Grand River and the Mormon War," 235.

- 34. Andrew Jenson and Edward Stevenson, *Infancy of the Church* (Salt Lake City: n. p., 1889), 11.
  - 35. See map in Berrett and Parkin, Sacred Places, Missouri, 238.
- 36. See John Craig, "Richmond, Missouri Update on Location of 'Old Vacant Log House," *Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation Newsletter*, nos. 41–42 (July 2007–May 2008), 1–7.
- 37. Ownership of lot 46 was transferred to George Woodward on May 9, 1833. See Ray County Land Deed Record Book B, 223, Ray County Courthouse, Richmond, Ray County, Missouri. Woodward maintained ownership of the property until January 21, 1845. See Ray County Land Deed Record Book J, 154.
- 38. Craig, "Richmond, Missouri Update on Location of 'Old Vacant Log House," 6. George Woodward's signature, along with thirteen other Ray County citizens, appears on a letter addressed to Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs under the date of October 23, 1838. In the letter the signatories expressed their concern regarding the escalating activities of the Mormons in Daviess County. See *Document*, 51.
- 39. If the building shown on the 1883 Sanborn Insurance map was the vacant log house used to hold Joseph Smith and the six other Mormon prisoners, the structure would have been at least forty-five years old. It was not uncommon for homes and other buildings constructed during the 1830s to remain intact well into the twentieth century.
- 40. The property purchased included a tract measuring a total of 33.0 ft. x 78.5 ft. in the north half of the northeast section of lot 46 (including a six-foot-wide strip immediately adjoining the property to the north adjacent to the street). The tract comprises slightly less than one-quarter of the lot. The Craigs also purchased the north half of lots 47 and 48 measuring a total of 158.0 ft. x 78.75 ft. (including a six-foot-wide strip immediately adjoining the property to the north adjacent to the street, but not including eighteen inches on the south side of the two lots). Surveyor's record, M & M Land Surveying Services, Inc., project #07–9853, October 3, 2007, copy of the survey in possession of the author.
- 41. A brief write-up of the historical marker unveiling appeared in the LDS *Church News* the following week. See R. Scott Lloyd, "A heroic incident," *Church News*, November 26, 2011, 10. Two additional dedicatory services took place that same day—a centennial "rededication" of the Three Witnesses Monument (also in Richmond), and the dedication of the newly erected Eight Witnesses Monument located south of Liberty, Missouri. See R. Scott Lloyd, "100-year-old marker is 'witness to the witnesses," *Church News*, November 26, 2011, 7–9; and R. Scott Lloyd, "Eight Witnesses memorialized by new monument," *Church News*, November 26, 2011, 9–10.
- 42. As noted previously in the article, court records indicate that a total of sixty-four Mormon men were arrested and charged.