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Haun's Mill Massacre

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Abstract: A historical essay on the Hawn's Mill Massacre, which took place in the eastern part of Caldwell County, Missouri. Taking place during the Mormon-Missouri War of 1838, it was perpetuated by members of the Livingston County militia on innocent Latter-day Saint settlers following the Battle of Crooked River.

that the prison walls are virtually four feet thick. Several loads of rock were also placed on top of the log ceiling in order to make escape through the roof impossible. The outside dimensions of the building are: twenty-two and one-half feet long, twenty-two feet wide and twelve feet high to the square. The door is on the east end, facing the street, and is five and one-half feet high and two and one-half feet wide, and opens to what was the upper apartment. The west gable and most of the west wall has tumbled down, and also part of the north wall, thus leaving the timber or inside structure partly exposed. The

east wall and gable are in a good state of preservation and only one corner of the south wall is torn down. The building stands on the west side of what is known as Main Street, one and a half blocks north of the northwest corner of the Liberty court house square. It stands back from the street about 20 feet, on an uncultivated acre lot, which the owner has offered to sell for \$2,500, but no one seems to care to purchase the property. To reach the building from the street we had to make a path through the thick growth of grass and weeds. Some of the latter, being more than six feet high, partly hid the building from view.

HAUN'S MILL MASSACRE

In the eastern part of Caldwell County, Missouri, at a point on the north bank of Shoal Creek, about 22 miles by road or 16 miles in a straight line due east of Far West, 12 miles northeast of Kingston, the county seat, eight and one-half miles southwest of Breckenridge, on the St. Joseph and Hannibal Railway, two miles north of the little village of Catawba, and four and one-half miles west of the boundary line between Caldwell and Livingston counties, on the northeast quarter of Section 17, Township 56 of Range 26, and in what is now called Fairview Township, stood the once famous Haun's Mill, where one of the most cruel and bloody tragedies ever recorded in the history of religious persecutions took place on the 30th day of October, 1838.

According to a recently published history of Caldwell County, Jacob Haun, who came from Green Bay, Wisconsin, built his mill on the north bank of Shoal Creek in 1835 or '36. It

was the second mill built in Caldwell County. In 1836-37 the Saints entered considerable land and made settlements up and down Shoal Creek. By October, 1838, there were as many as 75 families, all "Mormons," living in what is now known as Fairview Township. Some of these, however, were new-comers and were living in tents and wagons, and in the houses of their brethren who had come before them. The little settlement of the Saints at Haun's Mill, in October, 1838, consisted of the mill, a blacksmith shop and about half a dozen houses. All told there were perhaps thirty families of the Saints located around the mill, several of which had just recently arrived from the Eastern States, and were camped in their wagons and tents behind the blacksmith shop adjacent to the mill. The banks of the stream were lined with a growth of scattered timber and an undergrowth of hazel and other brush, while back from the banks was the rolling prairie, which

extended northward for several miles toward where Breckenridge now stands.

The little body of Saints had been threatened by mobs for some time and were therefore on their guard. The country, in fact, was full of marauding bands of mobbers who were engaged in burning the houses of the Saints and otherwise destroying life and property. On the 28th of October, 1838, however, Colonel William O. Jennings, of Livingston County, whose band of mobbers had been most menacing to the peace and safety of the Saints, sent one of his men to the little settlement to make a treaty of peace. This proposition of peace was gladly accepted by the Saints. There was to be mutual forbearance, and each party was to exert itself to the extent of its influence to prevent further hostilities. There were other mobs collecting in the vicinity, however, who were not affected by this agreement of peace entered into by the Saints and Colonel William O. Jennings, one particularly on Grand River, at William Mann's residence; hence the Saints remained under arms.

"The 30th of October," writes B. H. Roberts, "is said by some of the survivors to have been a most beautiful one—one of those days in mid-autumn, when smoky mists hang about the horizon—the sure sign of the Indian summer; when the sun shines with all the brightness, but without the scorching heat of August; when the gentle breeze rustles through the ripened corn and softly stirs the leaves of the forests that have been kissed by the early frosts and autumn sun to purple and gold, and all the shades and tints known to the practiced eye

of the artist; when the sinking sun paints the heavens with new glories; and when hill and plain, and stream and sky, forest and field all reflect the fulness of nature's beauties. Oh, is it not passing strange that one of God's fairest days should be made to look upon so foul a deed as that committed at Haun's Mill! The merry laughter of the children as they played upon the banks of Shoal Creek, mingled with snatches of songs the mothers sang as they went about their domestic employment, made sweet music to the fathers engaged in gathering the crops, or guarding the mills. In their neighborhood all apparently was peace, and no premonitory shuddering warned the Saints of their approaching fate. It burst upon them with all the suddenness of a clap of thunder from a cloudless sky. The sun had sunken more than halfway down the western sky, when some of those on guard saw a large body of armed and mounted men approaching the mill at full speed."

It was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when this company of mobbers, numbering 240 men, under the leadership of William O. Jennings and Nehemiah Comstock, advanced through the scattered trees that stood on the edge of the prairie, where they seemed to form themselves into a three-square position, forming a vanguard in front. Elder David Evans, who had command of the few brethren who had organized for self-defense, ran out to meet them, swinging his hat and crying, "Peace, peace." But this request was unheeded; no peace was granted. The mob continued to advance, and one of them fired a gun which was followed by a solemn pause of ten or twelve seconds, when all at once they dis-

charged about one hundred rifles aiming at a blacksmith shop, into which a number of the brethren had fled for safety. The leader of the mob, on approaching the hamlet, cried out to the brethren, "All who desire to save their lives and make peace, run into the blacksmith shop." But this was done treacherously, for the infuriated assailants immediately surrounded the shop and commenced firing between the logs, the cracks between which were sufficiently large to enable them to aim directly at the brethren who had fled there for refuge, there being no chinking between the logs. They also fired through a long opening made at one side of the shop by one of the logs being sawed out to admit light; and at the same time they fired through the door which was standing open. In the meantime several families, who lived in tents pitched in the rear of the shop, fled for their lives to the woods in different directions, amidst a shower of bullets.

The mob continued firing until they thought all inside had been killed or mortally wounded. They then entered, and among the dead and dying they found Sardius Smith, a lad 10 years old, who in his fear had crawled under the bellows for safety. He was dragged from his place of concealment by William Reynolds, a Livingston County man, who placed the muzzle of his gun near the boy's head and literally shot off the upper part of it, leaving the skull empty and dry, while the brains and hair of the murdered boy were scattered around and on the walls of the building. The inhuman murderer afterwards shamelessly boasted of his dastardly deed, and as a justification for his barbarous act said, "Nits will make lice,

and if he had lived he would have become a Mormon." A seven year old brother of the murdered boy (Alma L.) was shot through the hip. He had seen his father and brother shot down, and fearing, if he moved, that the heartless wretches would shoot him again, he remained quiet among the dead until he heard the voice of his mother quietly calling his name in the darkness. This boy was subsequently healed in a most miraculous manner. (See pages 84-86 and 118.) Another boy (Charles Merrick) was killed in the same manner as Sardius Smith. He begged piteously for his life, exclaiming beseechingly, "Oh! don't kill me, I am an American boy!" But this touching appeal to their patriotism was unheeded, and the innocent and noble boy, while thus appealing to the memory of his native country, had his brains dashed out.

Thomas McBride, an old grey-haired veteran of the American revolution, was met by a number of the mob in front of Brother Haun's house. The old man, trembling with age rather than from fear, surrendered his gun, saying, "Spare my life, I am a Revolutionary soldier." But the inhuman murderer, to whom he made this simple, pathetic appeal, shot the veteran down with his own gun, and then a Mr. Rogers, of Daviess County, fell upon him and hacked him to pieces with an old corn-cutter, leaving the veteran soldier of the Revolution covered with a score of unsightly wounds, either of which alone had been fatal—his brains oozing from his cracked skull, and his white hairs crimson with his gore. A Miss Rebecca Judd was an eye-witness to this terrible butchery. Mr. Rogers, who kept a ferry

on Grand River, repeatedly boasted of this act of savage barbarity afterwards, and on one occasion in Far West he and two other mobbers met Brother Nathan K. Knight, whom they threatened to kill without the least provocation. Mr. Rogers drew a butcher knife, and said that he had not got his corn-cutter with him with which he had cut down McBride, "but, by J—s," he continued, "I have got something that will do as well." By a great chance Brother Knight escaped from these ruffians.

Austin Hammer was mortally wounded; seven balls were shot into his body, breaking both thigh bones. After the firing had ceased he was found among the dead by the surviving brethren and carried into Haun's house, where he died about 12 o'clock the following night.

When the mob first opened their deadly fire on the village, the Saints were thrown into the wildest state of excitement. Women and children were so terrified that some of them would run in front of the mobbers' guns and cry "murder, murder." After firing a few shots, the brethren, seeing that the mob party were so numerous and bloodthirsty, concluded that it was useless to make any further defense. Their only safety was in every one making their escape the best way they could, which they did. Some of them sought shelter in the blacksmith shop, others, together with the women and children, made for the woods and brush, and others again crossed the creek on the mill-dam, seeking places of safety on the other side. Among the latter was Sister Amanda Smith, who seized her two little girls, and ran with them across the mill dam. The mob sent volley after volley to

kill them as they climbed the hill on the opposite side of the stream, and a number of bullets entered Sister Smith's clothing, but she was not wounded. A young sister, Mary Stedwell, who was with her, was shot through the hand just as she had reached the trunk of a fallen tree. Fainting, she fell behind the tree, where she was sheltered from the deadly fire of the mobbers, who, while she was lying there, sent upwards of twenty balls after her which lodged in the log. Sister Smith continued her flight to some bottom land not far away, and when the firing ceased, she returned to the scene of the massacre, where she found her husband, Warren Smith, and her son Sardius, killed and another son (Alma) badly wounded. Her eldest son, Willard, escaped unhurt.

Isaac Laney was wounded by five bullets, which passed through different parts of his body, but, strange to say, it never crippled him for life, although he suffered the most excruciating pain afterwards. During the first few days after he was wounded he lay entirely helpless and could neither open his eyes or mouth, nor move a limb. Upon examining his clothing, 23 bullet holes were found through his underwear. (See *Biographical Encyclopedia*, * * * Salt Lake Stake, page 52.)

Jacob Foutz, one of the brethren who ran into the blacksmith shop, was shot in the thigh. After he was wounded, he and another brother covered themselves up with some of the corpses of the men who had already expired, and pretended to be dead also; by this stratagem they saved their lives. While lying in this situation they heard the two little boys beg for

their lives and then saw them shot down in the cruel and barbarous manner previously mentioned. They also listened to the terrible language used by the murderers after the shooting was over.

One of the first balls fired by the enemy lodged in John Walker's right arm. He returned the shot, but finding it impossible to reload, he ran down the bank of the creek, and just before him one of the brethren, in ascending the opposite bank, was shot down. Elder Walker stopped under some lumber leaning against the bank, which, however, afforded him but little protection; but in answer to his earnest prayer, the eyes of the mobbers were blinded, and although they looked directly at him, they apparently did not see him. Passing on, they declared with an oath that not another "Mormon" was to be seen. He remained at his hiding place until all was silent, when he ventured forth to witness the dreadful scene of the massacre, and afterwards aided in dressing the wounds of those who were worse off than himself, and to bury the dead as best he could with his left hand. His own arm was not cared for, or scarcely thought of, in the midst of the terrible sufferings of others, until it was in danger of mortifying.

Joseph Young, who, together with a company of Saints had arrived at the mill two days previous, first discovered the mob advancing while he was sitting in a cabin on the south side of the creek with a babe in his arms, and his wife standing by his side. He stood and watched the bloody scene for a few minutes until he found himself and family in the greatest danger, the bullets already flying thick and fast around the house where they were. He

committed his family to the protection of heaven, left the house from the south side and took a path which led up the hill, following in the trail of three of his brethren who had fled from the shop. While ascending the hill they were discovered by the mob, who immediately opened fire on them and continued to shoot at them until they reached the summit. In descending the slope of the hill on the other side, Brother Young secreted himself in a thicket of bushes, where he lay until 8 o'clock in the evening, when one of the sisters called him, telling him in an undertone that the mob had gone and that there was no immediate danger. He then left the thicket and went to the house of Benjamin Lewis, where he found his family (who had fled there for safety) well and preserved; but two of the brethren were there, mortally wounded, one of whom died before morning. Here Elder Young and his friends passed the night in deep and awful reflections on the scenes of the preceding evening.

Nathan K. Knight, when he saw the mob approaching, caught his gun and hung his powder-horn over his neck, when the buckskin string was cut by a ball fired by one of the mob leaders, which also passed through his vest pocket, taking out his pocket knife. Seeing one of the mobbers running to cut Thomas McBride down, swearing as he went, Brother Knight fired his gun at him, hitting him in the hip, which made him a cripple ever afterwards. A few moments later Elder Knight was wounded in one of the fingers of his right hand; next he was hit by a ball in his left leg and subsequently by a third ball in his body, the latter entering just above the

small of his back and lodging below the pit of his stomach. This last shot brought him on his hands and knees. By exerting himself to the utmost he succeeded in getting three-quarters of a mile away through the timber and brush, and secreted himself in some fallen tree tops. There he remained about an hour, and a little after sunset he saw Sister Polly Wood at a distance. He motioned for her to come to him, as he by this time had become so weak with bleeding from his wounds that he could neither speak nor rise to his feet. The young lady came and tried to lead him back to the village, but he was too weak to walk. She then kneeled by his side, placed her hands on his wounds and prayed that God would strengthen and heal him. Elder Knight said afterwards: "I never heard a more powerful prayer. The Lord answered her petition, and I received sufficient strength to walk back to Haun's house by resting three or four times."

William Yokum was shot in the leg, which was subsequently amputated in consequence of the wounds received at the massacre. He was also shot through the head, the ball entering near the eye and coming out of the back part of the head. Another ball wounded him in the arm.

Altogether nineteen men and boys were killed outright or fatally wounded in this inhuman butchery, and about fifteen were wounded more or less severely. The names of the killed and mortally wounded are as follows: Thomas McBride, Levi N. Merrick, Elias Benner, Josiah Fuller, Benjamin Lewis, Alexander Campbell, Warren Smith, George S. Richards, William Napier, Austin Hammer, Simon

Cox, Hiram Abbott, John York, John Lee, John Byers, Sardius Smith (aged 10 years), Charles Merrick (a boy 8 or 9 years of age), and two others whose names are not known. Among the wounded who recovered were Isaac Laney, Nathan K. Knight, William Yokum, Jacob Myers, George Myers, Tarleton Lewis, Jacob Haun (founder and owner of the mill), Jacob Foutz, Jacob Potts, Charles Jimison, John Walker, Alma L. Smith, Miss Mary Stedwell and two others.

According to the statement of the leaders of the mob, they fired seven rounds each, making in all some sixteen hundred shots fired at a company in which there were not more than thirty men. The mobbers consisted of men from Daviess, Livingston, Ray, Carroll and Chariton counties, led by some of the principal men of that section of country. Besides Colonel Jennings and Mr. Comstock already mentioned, there were Daniel Ashley, of Chariton County, a member of the State legislature, Thomas O. Bryan, of Livingston County, Robert White, William Mann, Mr. Randall and many others.

Having killed all the brethren they could find, the mob next proceeded to pillage the village and rob the dead of their boots, clothing and valuables. Some of the dead were dragged out of the shop into the yard, in order to give the mobbers a better chance and more room to strip them of their clothing. All who had on good coats and boots were rifled of these articles. Brother Austin Hammer, who was mortally wounded, had on a new pair of boots that fitted him tightly, and in the efforts to get them off he was dragged and pulled out of the shop and about the yard in a barbarous

manner. In his mangled condition this cruel treatment must have caused him the most excruciating pain. Two men also stripped Warren Smith of his coat, hat and boots, and dragged him around before he was dead and kicked him. A son of Brother Smith, who escaped unhurt, saw the notorious mobocrat William Mann drag his father across the shop, in the act of pulling off his boots. "Oh! you hurt me!" groaned the dying man. But the murderer dragged him back again, pulling off the other boot. At that moment Brother Smith expired. Afterwards this William Mann showed the boots on his own feet, in Far West, saying, "Here is a pair of boots that I pulled off before the d—d Mormon was done kicking."

At last, when the murderers left the scene of their bloody deeds, they took with them the horses, wagons, cows and property of nearly every description belonging to the settlement, leaving the widows and orphans destitute of the necessaries of life. They also carried off the property belonging to the brethren who were camped by the mill. Brother Nathan K. Knight states that they took everything that belonged to him, except a small trunk, the contents of which were carried off. All they left was a bottle of consecrated oil, which they had thrown on the ground.

Brother Haun's house escaped their ravages, but his horses were taken from the stable.

As the shadows of night enclosed the ghastly scene about Haun's Mill in its cheerless embrace, a number of those who had escaped to the woods returned to learn the fate of their friends. During the night the few surviving brethren kept up the search

as well as the darkness would permit, but were only able to find the wounded by their groans. All they were able to find in this manner were taken into Haun's house as soon as possible, so as to be protected from being torn or mangled by the hogs with which the woods at that place were filled.

It was a terrible night indeed for the survivors of the awful tragedy. The groans and shrieks of the wounded made the night hideous and horrible beyond description. The women were sobbing in their great anguish of spirit; the children were crying loudly with fear and grief at the loss of fathers and brothers; the dogs howled over their dead masters, and the cattle were terrified with the scent of the blood of the murdered.

Mrs. Haun and others of the sisters passed the night in dressing the wounds and making the wounded and dying as comfortable as possible. The women were in fact the only ones left to administer comfort during that night of desolation and suffering. Comparing their lonely fate with that of Moroni anciently, who was left to bewail his murdered people, the Nephites, some of the sisters sought a little relief in singing the lamentations of that Prophet of God, as rhymed in the Latter-day Saints' hymn book, commencing as follows:

I have no home, where shall I go?
 While I am left to weep below;
 My heart is pained, my friends are gone,
 And here I'm left on earth to mourn,
 I see my people lying round,
 All lifeless here upon the ground—
 Young men and maidens in their gore,
 Which does increase my sorrow more.

When daylight on the morning of the 31st of October had fully dawned on the land of Missouri, the brethren

who had been spared had to move with great caution, knowing that the mobbers were liable to fall upon them at any moment for the purpose of continuing their bloody work. They repaired as soon as possible to the mill to learn the condition of their friends whose fate they had but too truly anticipated. In the rear of Brother Haun's house they found the dead body of Levi N. Merrick lying prostrate on the ground, while in the front of the house they found the lifeless form of Thomas McBride literally mangled from head to foot, Brother York's body was found in the house. The brethren then proceeded to the blacksmith shop where they saw a sight that was truly appalling. Here nine of the brethren lay weltering in their gore, eight of whom were already dead; the other, Brother Simon Cox, who had recently come from Indiana, was struggling in the agonies of death and expired shortly afterwards. The earth constituting the floor in the blacksmith shop was covered with blood, and in places, where there were small hollows in the soil, the blood stood in pools from two to three inches deep.

"What shall be done with the dead?" was the important question asked in the morning after the massacre. There was no time to bury them, neither to dig the graves; for all the men, excepting the two or three who had narrowly escaped, were either dead or wounded. A little northwest of the mill was an old vault which had been dug for a well; into this the butchered brethren were thrown in haste, as those performing these rude, sad offices feared that the mob any moment would return to massacre the survivors of the tragedy of the day

before. Nineteen bodies were put in the well together, and the only burial clothes with which they could be dressed under the circumstances were what the murderers had left upon them. No funeral services could be performed. After all the bodies were thus disposed of, straw and earth were thrown into the rude vault, which, however, was only partly filled at that time.

Sister Margaret Foutz, a survivor of the massacre, who is yet alive and resides at Pleasant Grove, Utah County, Utah, says that when the firing commenced she was at her house, a short distance away, with her family of five little children. Soon a runner came to her house telling the women and children to hasten into the timber and secrete themselves. "This we did," said Sister Foutz, "without taking anything to keep us warm; and had we been fleeing from the scalping knife of the Indian we could not have made greater haste. And as we ran from house to house, gathering as we went, we finally numbered about forty or fifty women and children. We ran about three miles into the woods, and there huddled together, spreading what few blankets or shawls we chanced to have on the ground for the children; and here we remained until 2 o'clock the next morning, before we heard anything of the result of the firing at the mill. Who can imagine our feelings during this dreadful suspense? And when the news did come, oh! what terrible news! Fathers, brothers and sons, inhumanly butchered. We now took up the line of march for home. Alas! what a home! Who would we find there? And now, with our minds full of the most fearful forebodings,

we retraced those three long, dreary miles. As we were returning I saw a brother, Myers, who had been shot through his body. In that dreadful state he crawled on his hands and knees, about two miles, to his home. After I arrived at my house with my children, I hastily made a fire to warm them, and then started for the mill, about one mile distant. My children would not remain at home, saying, 'If father and mother are going to be killed, we want to be with them.' It was about 7 o'clock in the morning when we arrived at the mill. In the first house I came to there were three dead men. One, a Brother McBride, was a terrible sight to behold, having been cut and chopped, and horribly mangled, with a corn-cutter. I hurried on, looking for my husband, and I found him in an old house, covered with some rubbish. (The mob had taken the bedding and clothing from all the houses near the mill.) My husband had been shot in the thigh. I rendered him all the assistance I could, but it was evening before I could get him home. I saw 13 more dead bodies at the shop, and witnessed the beginning of the burial, which consisted in throwing the bodies into an old, dry well. Oh! what a change one short day had brought! Here were my friends, dead and dying; one in particular asked me to give him relief by taking a hammer and knock his brains out, so great was his agony. And we knew not what moment our enemies would be upon us again. And all this, not because we had broken any law—on the contrary, it was a part of our religion to keep the laws of the land. In the evening Brother Evans got a team and conveyed my husband to

his house, carried him in and placed him on a bed. I then had to attend him alone, without any doctor or any one to tell me what to do. Six days afterwards I, with my husband's assistance, extracted the bullet, it being buried in the thick part of the thigh, and flattened like a knife. During the first ten days, mobbers, with blackened faces, came every day, cursing and swearing like demons from the pit, and declaring that they would 'kill that d—d old Mormon preacher.'"

A few days after the massacre the mob returned to the mill and threatened the few remaining Saints with instant death if they did not leave the State forthwith. They remained around about a month, living on the grain which they robbed from the brethren and had ground in the mill. They also engaged in killing hogs, robbing bee stands and chicken houses, and lived "fat," as they themselves acknowledged, while the poor Saints, whom they had robbed, were nearly reduced to a point of starvation. As soon as the weather the following spring would permit, the last of the Saints, who were unable to get away before, left the scene of the awful tragedy, and journeyed to Illinois.

The following account of the massacre is copied from the History of Caldwell County, published in 1886 by the National Historical Company of St. Louis, Missouri, and, although it contains some errors, it is perhaps as good and fair an account as could be expected from any non-Mormon source:

"In the afternoon of October 30, 1838, the day the militia arrived at Far West, occurred what has since been generally known as the

"Haun's Mill Massacre." Following is perhaps the first complete and correct account of this affair ever published.

"At Jacob Haun's mill, on the north bank of Shoal Creek, in the eastern part of the county, in what is now Fairview Township, were, besides the mill, a blacksmith shop and half a dozen or more houses, and perhaps 20 (30) Mormon families. Some of these families were living in tents and covered wagons, having recently come into the county, or having lived elsewhere in the county had become alarmed at the aspect of affairs, and had come to the mill for safety. News that the militia of the State had been ordered to expel them had reached the Mormons, and following these tidings word was brought that a considerable number of men living in Livingston County, together with some from Daviess, had organized near Spring Hill, in Livingston County, and were preparing to attack them. A company of about thirty men, indifferently armed with shot guns and squirrel rifles, was organized, and David Evans was chosen captain.
* * *

"Learning that the force organizing against them numbered some hundreds, some of the older men among the Mormons urged that no resistance should be made, but that all should retreat to Far West.* It seems that the Prophet had advised this, but nevertheless had given them permission to remain if they thought they could protect themselves.

"Others opposed retreating and the abandonment of their property to the 'mob of Gentiles,' and when an old man named Myers reminded them how few they were, and how many the Gentiles numbered, they declared that the Lord would send his angels to help them when the day of battle should come. Some of the women, too, urged the men to stand firm, and offered to mould bullets and prepare patching for the rifles if necessary.

"North of Haun's Mill, a short distance, was a body of timber and brush, and north of this,

*John D. Lee says that the morning after the fight on Crooked River, Haun himself came to Far West to consult with the Prophet concerning the removal of the Mormons on Lower Shoal Creek to Far West. The Prophet said, 'Move in, by all means, if you wish to save your lives.' Haun replied that if the settlers left their homes all of their property would be lost and the Gentiles would burn their houses and other buildings. Joseph Smith said, 'You had better lose your property than your lives, but there is no danger of losing either if you will do as you are commanded.' Haun thought he and his neighbors could protect and defend themselves, and Smith finally gave them permission to remain, saying they would consider him a tyrant if he forced them to leave and abandon their property and come to Far West.

towards where Breckenridge now stands, was a street of prairie for miles. For a day or two Captain Evans kept a picket post in the northern edge of the timber, but having entered into a truce with Captain Nehemiah Comstock, commanding one of the Livingston County companies, and no other enemy appearing, this post was withdrawn.

"This truce was effected by means of a messenger who rode between Comstock and Evans, and its terms were that the Gentiles were to let the Mormons alone as long as they were peaceable, and *vice versa*. The Mormons agreed also to disband their military organization if the Gentiles would disband theirs, and this it is claimed was agreed to. But the Mormons heard that over in Livingston, directly east of them, another company of Gentiles, under Captain William Mann, was menacing them; and so they did not disband, for while they confided in Comstock's company, they had no confidence in Mann's, which for some time had been operating at and near Whitney's mill, on Shoal Creek (where Dawn now is), stopping Mormons on their way to Caldwell from the East, turning them back in some instances, taking their arms from them in others, etc.

"The Gentile force in Livingston County numbered about two hundred men, and was under the command of Colonel Wm. O. Jennings, then the sheriff of that county. Three companies composed it, led by Captain Nehemiah Comstock, Thos. R. Bryan and William Mann. It took the field in earnest about the 25th of October, and for a few days prior to the 30th was encamped about three miles northeast of Breckenridge; at least Comstock's company was. Perhaps Mann's was employed in the southern portion of the county until the 29th.

"Learning that the Mormons at Haun's Mill had not disbanded, and yielding to the almost universal desire of his men, who were eager to seize upon any pretext for a fight, Colonel Jennings set out from his camp last mentioned, after noon of the 30th of October, intending to attack and capture Haun's Mill and encamp there that night. The route lay *via* where Mooresville now stands, or between Mooresville and Breckenridge, and on across the prairie, and the march was made swiftly and without interruption.

"Within two miles of the mill Colonel Jennings left his wagons and two Mormon prisoners, captured some days before, in charge of a squad of men, of whom James Trosper, now of Breckenridge, was one, and pressed rapidly

on. Entering the timber north of the town, Jennings' men passed through it unobserved right up to the borders of the hamlet. Captain Nehemiah Comstock's company had the advance.

"The Mormon leader, David Evans, had become apprehensive of an attack, and was about sending out scouts and pickets. It was arranged to use the blacksmith shop as a fort or block-house. This structure was of logs, with wide cracks between them, and had a large door. The greater portion of the Mormons were unsuspecting of imminent danger, and the women and children were scattered about. Nearly every house contained two or more families. There were two or three small houses on the south bank of the creek thus occupied. It was now about four o'clock in the afternoon of a warm and beautiful Indian summer day.

"Suddenly from out of the timber north of the mill the Livingston militia burst upon the hamlet. In a few seconds the air was filled with wild shouts and shots, and the fight was on. It can scarcely be called a fight. The Mormons were thrown into confusion, and many of them ran wildly and aimlessly about. The women and children cried and screamed in excitement and terror, and the great number, directed by the men, ran across the mill-dam to the south bank and sought shelter in the woods south of the creek. Perhaps half of the men, Evans among them, ran with their guns to the blacksmith shop and began to return the fire. Some were shot down in an effort to reach the shop, or as they were trying to escape.

"The fire of the Mormons was for the most part wild and ineffective; that of the militia was accurate and deadly. The cracks between the logs of the shop were so large that it was easy to shoot through them, and so thickly were the Mormons huddled together on the inside that nearly every bullet that entered the shop killed or wounded a man. Firing was kept up all the while on the fleeing fugitives, many of whom were shot down.†

"Seeing that he was placed at a decided disadvantage, Captain Evans gave orders to retreat, ordering every man to take care of himself. The door of the shop was thrown open, and all the able-bodied survivors ran out, en-

deavoring to reach the wood. Some were shot before they got to shelter. Captain Evans was somewhat excited, and, as he afterwards related, ran all the way to Mud Creek with his gun loaded, not having fired it during the fight. The militia fired at the fugitives until they were out of range, but did not pursue them, as the few who escaped scattered in almost every direction.

"After the engagement was over, and all the able-bodied male Mormons had been killed, wounded or driven away, some of the militiamen began to 'loot' the houses and stables at the mill. A great deal of property was taken, much of it consisting of household articles and personal effects, but just how much can not now be stated. The Mormons claim there was a general pillage, and that in two or three instances the bodies of the slain were robbed. Some of the militia or their friends say only two or three wagons were taken, one to haul off the three wounded, and sufficient bedding to make their ride comfortable; but on the other hand two of those who were in a position to know say that the Mormon hamlet was pretty thoroughly rifled. One man carried away an empty 10-gallon keg, which he carried before him on his saddle and beat as a drum. Another had a woman's bonnet, which he said was for his sweetheart. Perhaps a dozen horses were taken.

"Colonel Jennings did not remain at Haun's Mill, in all, more than an hour, or an hour and a half. Twilight approaching, he set out on his return to his former camp, for one reason fearing a rally and return of the Mormons with a large re-enforcement, and doubtless desiring to reflect leisurely on his course of future operations.

"Reaching his camp near Woolsey's, northeast of Brekenridge, Colonel Jennings halted his battalion and prepared to pass the night. But a few hours later he imagined he heard cannon and a great tumult in the direction of Haun's Mill, betokening the presence of a large Mormon force, and rousing up his men he broke camp and, moving rapidly eastward, never halted until he had put the west fork of Grand River between him and his imaginary pursuers!

"From the records of the Mormon Church it seems that 17 men of the Mormons were either killed outright or mortally wounded. Their names, as kindly furnished for this history by Reverend F. D. Richards, assistant historian and custodian of the Church records at Salt Lake, are: * * * (See page 676.)

"Esq. Thos. McBride was an old soldier of

†Some years after the fight Mr. Chas. R. Ross tore down the old blacksmith shop, and cut a number of trees in the grove to the west from which direction the militia advanced to the attack. He says that the logs of the shop contained many bullets, as did the trees which he felled. The most of the balls found in the latter were at a distance of 30 or 40 feet from the ground, showing how far above their enemies' heads the Mormons uniformly fired.

the Revolution. He was lying wounded and helpless, his gun by his side. A militia-man named Rogers† came up to him and demanded it. 'Take it,' said McBride. Rogers picked up the weapon, and finding that it was loaded, deliberately discharged it into the old man's breast. He then cut and hacked the old veteran's body with a rude sword, or 'corn-knife,' until it was frightfully mangled. Wm. Reynolds, a Livingston County man,* killed the little boy Sardius Smith, 10 years of age. The lad had run into the blacksmith shop and crawled under the bellows for safety. Upon entering the shop the cruel militiaman discovered the cowering, trembling little fellow, and without even demanding his surrender fired upon and killed him, and afterwards boasted of the atrocious deed to Chas. R. Ross and others. He described, with fiendish glee, how the poor boy struggled in his dying agony, and justified his savage and inhuman conduct in killing a mere child by saying, 'Nits will make lice, and if he had lived he would have become a Mormon.'

"Charlie Merrick, another little Mormon boy, was mortally wounded by another militiaman. He, too, was hiding under the bellows. * * *

"The Mormons wounded, according to the Mormon records, numbered 12, (15). * * * (See page 776.)

"A young Mormon woman, Miss Mary Stedwell, was shot through the hand, as she was running to the woods. * * *

"The militia, or Jennings's men, had but three men wounded, and none killed. John Renfrow, now living in Ray County, had a thumb shot off. Allen England, a Daviess County man, was severely wounded in the thigh, and the other wounded man was named Hart.

"*Dies irae!* What a woeful day this had been to Haun's Mill! What a pitiful scene was there when the militia rode away upon the conclusion of their bloody work! The wounded men had been given no attention, and the bodies of the slain were left to fester and putrify in the Indian summer temperature, warm and mellowing. The widows and orphans of the dead came timidly and warily forth from their hiding places as soon as the troops left, and as they recognized one a husband, another a father, another a son, another a brother among the bloody corpses, the wailings of grief and terror that went up were pitiful and agonizing.

†Either a brother of a man who kept a ferry across Grand River, near Gallatin, or else the ferryman himself.

*Joseph Young states that it was a Carroll County man named Glaze, but this is a mistake. Reynolds was undoubtedly the man.

All that night they were alone with their dead. A return visit of Jennings' men to complete the work of 'extermination' had been threatened and was expected. Verily, the experience of the poor survivors of the Haun's Mill affair was terrible; no wonder that they long remembered it.

"The next morning the bodies had changed, and were changing fast. They must be buried. There was not enough men in the place to dig graves, and it could not be determined when relief would come. There was a large unfinished well at the place, and the bodies were gathered up, the women assisting, and borne, one at a time, all gory and ghastly, to this well and slid in from a large plank. All of the corpses were disposed of in this way; then some hay or straw was strewn over the ghastly pile and then a thin layer of dirt thrown on the hay.

"Soon after the burial was over, the same day, Comstock's company was sent back to give the dead a decent sepulchre. Seeing what had been done already, they rode away, glad to be relieved from the job. The next February Mr. Charles R. Ross moved into the house and occupied the property to which the well belonged. Soon after his arrival some warm days came, and an offensive smell arose from the well. Mr. Ross at once set to work and filled up the loathsome sepulchre, even making a good sized mound over it. In time this mound was leveled, and now it is almost impossible to fix the exact location of the pit.

"Whatever of merit there was in the attack on Haun's Mill, and whatever of glory attaches to the famous victory, must be given to Colonel Wm. O. Jennings mainly. He made the attack on his own responsibility, without orders from Governor Boggs, or any other superior authority, although the governor afterwards approved what was done. True, Jennings' subordinates must be given their share, in proportion to the part they bore, but Colonel Jennings stands among them all as a Saul among his fellows, the Ajax Telamon of the contest, the Hector of the fight! * * *

"John D. Lee states that many of the wounded Mormons were thrown into the well, and that some who were taken out afterwards recovered; but this is wholly untrue, although Lee says that his information was obtained from David Lewis, Tarleton Lewis, Isaac Laney and William Laney; they were all Kentuckians, and were in the fight. Isaac Laney was shot seven times and had 13 ball holes in his person; five shots were in his chest. After being thus frightfully wounded he ran 300 yards to a cabin, where

a woman gave him shelter. She raised a loose plank or puncheon in the cabin floor and he crawled beneath the floor and then she replaced the plank. In two hours the militia had left, and Laney was taken out, anointed with oil and prayed over. He said the pain left him, and for two weeks he did not suffer at all. He then took cold and his wounded hip pained him, but another application of prayer relieved him. Lee says: 'I heard Laney declare this to be a fact. I saw him four weeks after the massacre and examined his person.'

"Mr. Charles R. Ross says a Mormon named Huntsman was one of the killed, but the Mormon records do not contain his name, and Mr. G. Huntsman, of Fillmore City, Utah, says that although three of the Huntsmans, his ancestors, were at the mill the day of the massacre, none of them were hurt.

"Two or three days after the Haun's Mill affair, Colonel Jennings started with his battalion to join the State forces at Far West. His route lay through the northern part of Caldwell County. He had not proceeded far when he met a messenger who informed him that the Mormons there had surrendered, and giving him orders to move to Daviess County and join the forces under General Wilson, operating against the Mormons at Diamon (Adam-ondi-Ahman). The battalion was present at the surrender at Diamon, and in a day or so Captain Comstock's company was ordered to Haun's Mill, where it remained in camp some weeks, watching the widows and orphans of those slain in the massacre, and taking care that no outbreak should occur.

"While in camp at the mill, according to the statements to the writer of two members of the company (Robert White and James Trosper), the militia lived off the country, and 'lived fat, too.' The Mormon cattle and hogs had been turned into the fields and were fat and fine, the mill furnished plenty of bread-stuffs, and there were other articles of provisions to be had for the taking. The company remained at the mill until peace was entirely restored."

When the Saints were expelled from Caldwell County, Jacob Haun sold his mill to the Fryer Brothers, who placed their brother-in-law, Charles R. Ross, in charge. This man conducted it from 1839 to 1845, when the mill was torn down. There is no longer any trace remaining of the old

"Mormontown," a name by which the Missourians distinguished the little Haun's Mill settlement of Saints.

Elders Edward Stevenson, Joseph S. Black and Andrew Jenson give the following account of a visit made by them to the old site a few months ago:

"Early in the morning of September 16, 1888, we set out on foot from the little village of Catawba, where we had stopped over night, and walked north toward Shoal Creek. Having traveled a mile and a half we turned aside to the house of Mr. James G. Mackey, who proved to be a good-hearted old Kentuckian, for as soon as we had asked him to direct us to the old Haun's Mill site, he took in the situation at once and kindly volunteered to accompany us to the spot. Says he: 'Gentlemen, I believe in equal rights, I have been oppressed and imposed upon myself, and I know how it is, and I never did approve of the way your people were treated in this country.' He took us through the woods and fields direct to the old mill-site, and where 'Mormontown,' as the Missourians called the now extinct town, was situated on the left bank or north side of Shoal Creek. This stream is the largest in Caldwell County, and is about three rods wide where the mill stood. At present there is but a very little water in it, but judging from the high water marks everywhere visible on its banks, and the narrow strips of low-lands on the north side, we should judge it capable of rising at least twenty feet during the rainy season. As a remnant of the old mill-dam there are still five large pieces of timber left in the middle of the creek. On the south bank the mill-dam originally rested upon a solid ledge of rock, which, of course, is still there. The mill stood on the opposite bank. We had no difficulty in crossing the creek dry-shod, and after doing so we began to search for the old well into which the bodies of our brethren were thrown after being cruelly murdered by the mob on the day of the massacre, October 30, 1838. By the assistance of a neighbor we soon found the place, which is designated by an old mill-stone, formerly belonging to Jacob Haun's mill. This was placed there last fall by a Mr. Fuller, of Adair County, Missouri, a son of Josiah Fuller, one of the brethren killed at the massacre. This Mr. Fuller came to hunt his father's resting place, being accompanied by a Mr. Charles R. Ross, of Cowgill, Caldwell County, who assisted in burying the bodies, or at least in filling up the well, some time after the massacre took

place. Mr. Ross knew where the place was, but in order to be sure he and Mr. Fuller dug down a few feet until they became satisfied that it was the right spot. They then moved the old mill-stone, which had been lying for more than forty years near the old mill-site, and placed it edgeways on the memorable grave. We made a thorough survey of the premises and found the well to be just ninety-four yards northwest of the old mill-dam, and in the shade of four young elm trees, overgrown with wild grapevines. We also took particular notice of a high bank of yellow clay on the south side of the creek, immediately below the mill-site. Hence, if the few remaining timbers of the old dam in course of time should entirely disappear, this landmark could easily determine the exact location.

"Mr. Mackey also showed us the spot where at the time of the massacre the old blacksmith shop stood, in which so many of our brethren were butchered in the most merciless manner, and the place where Mr. Rogers literally cut to pieces Thomas McBride, the old revolutionary soldier, with a corn-cutter. Our guides also pointed out the direction from which the mob came, where they first opened fire as they approached the little settlement from the north, and where the defenseless women and children fled up the opposite bank of the stream. 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth.'

"The grounds on the north side of Shoal Creek, where the settlement stood, is now owned by a Mr. John B. Lallen, who lives about a quarter of a mile northwest from the mill-site. The only building standing on or near the old town-site is a small frame house, once owned by the above named Charles R. Ross, of Cowgill.

"The region around Shoal Creek, where Haun's Mill stood, is more heavily timbered than it was fifty years ago, and a fine grove of locust trees now covers the site of old 'Mormontown.' A resident of Kingston, who yesterday pointed out to us a number of farms once owned by the Saints, said, that in going

through Caldwell County, he could always distinguish the old 'Mormon' homesteads from all others. We asked him to describe to us the difference between 'Mormon' farmers and others. 'Well,' said he, 'nearly every one of the Mormons planted locust trees around their buildings, which was something the Missourians never thought of doing, and these have now grown and spread, until there are locust groves on nearly every farm where the Mormons resided.'

"Nearly all who participated in the massacre are now dead, or have moved away, so that their whereabouts, if alive, are not known. Some of the murderers have died in disgrace and shame, haunted by their consciences until their last hours. Others have boasted of their dastardly deeds, until they have been smitten with sickness and misery, in the midst of which they would curse God and die.

"The notorious Colonel Wm. O. Jennings, who commanded the mob at the massacre, was assassinated in Chilicothe, Livingston County, Missouri, in the evening of January 30, 1862, by an unknown person, who shot him in the street with a revolver or musket as the colonel was going home after dark. He died the next day in great agony. The shooting occurred on Calhoun Street, a little northwest of the present county jail in Chilicothe. Nehemiah Comstock, another leader of the mob who committed the murders, expired years ago in Livingston County as a good-for-nothing drunkard. His mother was also a drunkard and died a pauper and in the midst of misery in a Kentucky poor-house."

Since the organization of the Church a large number of Saints have suffered martyrdom for the truth's sake, but on no other occasion has so many of the faithful at one time been called to lay down their lives as at the Haun's Mill massacre, on the 30th of October, 1838.

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