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Gallatin

Author(s): Andrew Jenson

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Abstract: A short historical essay around the town of Gallatin, Missouri, which was the county seat of Daviss County in that state. There, in August 1838, an anti-Mormon mob prevented a number of Latter-day Saints from voting in the election.

GALLATIN

Gallatin, the county seat of Daviess County, Missouri, located on Grand River about 50 miles east of St. Joseph and now a town of 2,000 inhabitants, is famous in Church history as the place where the difficulties commenced which finally resulted in the Saints being banished from the State of Missouri.

Some time during the month of July, 1838, a friendly judge by the name of Morin, who lived at Millport, Daviess County, informed John D. Lee and Levi Stewart, two members of the Church, that a mob had determined to prevent the "Mormons" from voting at the election to be held in Gallatin on the following August 8th, and thereby elect Colonel Wm. P. Peniston, who previously had led the mob against the Saints in Clay County. Judge Morin also advised the brethren to go to the election prepared for an attack, to stand their ground and have their rights; but the brethren "hoping for better things" gave but little heed to this warning, as they repaired to the polls at Gallatin without weapons to defend themselves.

About 11 o'clock on August 6th, 1838, Wm. P. Peniston ascended the head of a barrel and harangued the electors for the purpose of exciting them against the Saints, saying that the "Mormon" leaders were a set of horse-thieves, liars and counterfeiters; that the members of the Church were dupes, and not too good to take false oath on any common occasion; that they would steal and he did not conceive property safe where they were; that he was opposed to their settling in Daviess County, and if the "Mormons" were suffered to vote, the people would soon lose their suffrage, etc. "And," said he, "you know they profess to heal the sick, cast out devils, etc.; and you know that is a damned lie." Turning to the brethren who were present, he continued: "I headed a mob to drive you out of Clay County, and I would not prevent your being mobbed here." Richard Welding (called Dick), the mob bully, who was just drunk enough for the occasion, then began a discussion with Brother Samuel Brown by saying that the "Mormons" were not allowed to vote in Clay County any more than the damned negroes, and attempted to strike Brown, who gradually retreated, parrying the blows with his umbrella, while Welding continued to press upon him, calling him a damned

liar and other hard names, and attempting to repeat the blow on Brown.

Perry Durphy attempted to suppress the difficulty by holding Dick's arm, when five or six of the mobbers seized Durphy and commenced beating him with clubs, boards, etc., and crying, "Kill him, kill him; G—d d—n bim, Kill him!" A general scuffle commenced with fist and clubs, the mobbers being about ten to one of the Saints. Abraham Nelson was knocked down, and had his clothes torn off, and while trying to get up was attacked again, when his brother, Hyrum Nelson, ran in among them, and knocked the mobbers down with the butt of his whip. Riley Stewart struck Dick Welding on the head, which brought him to the ground. The mob cried out, "Dick Welding's dead, hy G—d; who killed Dick?" And they fell upon Riley, knocked him down, kicked him and hallooed, "Kill him, G—d d—n him, kill him; shoot him, by G—d!" and would have killed him, had not John L. Butler sprung in amongst them and knocked them down. For about five minutes it was one continued knock down, when the mob dispersed to get their firearms.

Very few of the brethren voted. Riley, escaping across the river, had his wounds dressed and returned home.

Butler called the brethren together and made a speech, saying, "We are American citizens; our fathers fought for their liberty, and we will maintain the same principles," etc., when the authorities of the county came to them, and requested them to withdraw, stating that it was a premeditated thing to prevent the "Mormons" from voting.

The brethren held a council about one-fourth of a mile out of town, where they saw mobbing recruits coming in, in small parties, from five and ten, to twenty-five in number, armed with clubs, pistols, dirks, knives and some guns, cursing and swearing.

The brethren, not having arms, thought it wisdom to return to their farms, collect their families and hide them in a thicket of hazel bush, which they did, and stood sentry around them through the night, while the women and children lay on the ground in the rain. [For further particulars, see pages 44 and 441.]

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Office and P. O. Address: No. 154 N. Second West Street, Salt Lake City.