

MISSOURI REMEMBRANCES OF LEVI JACKMAN¹

My father's name was Moses French Jackman. My mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Carr. My mother was born about the year 1750 or 1760. I think my father was a little the youngest. Soon after they were married, my father moved to the state of Vermont. My mother had five boys as follows: Daniel, Moses French, James Rayerdon, William, and myself, Levi. They had no girls. My father was killed by the fall of a tree on July 7, 1797, three weeks before I was born. He was a man of almost unexampled piety, and his death was much lamented by all who knew him. I was born July 28, 1797. . . .

In February, 1810, we moved to the state of New York; arrived at Batavia on the 26th of March and in the fore-part of April went on a piece of land that we had selected for our home. . . . Soon after our arrival, my mother had a cancer in her breast which terminated her days about the 20th of September, 1819. She was one of the best mothers, and spared no pains to bring up her children in way they should go.

On the 13th day of November, 1817, I married a wife by the name of Angeline Myers. This was in the town of Alexander, Genesee County, and the place where we first stopped when we came to the county.

My wife, when I married her, had a son by the name of Albert Brady. He was then about four years old. We afterwards called him by my name.

We had five children as follows: William was born October 6, 1818. Aurelia was born September 20, 1820. Parmenio was born August 6, 1822. Ammi was born February 6, 1825. The next was a boy, Levi Myers, born May 2, 1828, but he lived only about two hours.

In the year 1830, we moved to the Ohio Portage County. The next winter Joseph Smith and others came to

that country with the Book of Mormon, and bore testimony to its truth, etc. After a fair investigation I believed it, and embraced it. On the 4th day of May, 1831, my wife and her mother were baptized. On the 7th I was baptized. Harvey Whitlock baptized us and many more in that place.

A few days after this I was ordained an elder by Oliver Cowdrey [Cowdery]. This season Joseph Smith with about twenty elders went to the west part of the state of Missouri to find location for the saints. They returned the next fall after having picked on Jackson County for the place. This season a few families moved to the place.

The work spread with much power and signs followed the preaching of the work, and very many received it. In November, at a conference, I was ordained a high priest with many others. It was decided that as many as could (with few exceptions) should move west the next spring.

Wishing to see some of my brothers who lived in Pennsylvania before I went west, I started in March, in company with Peter Whitmer, to see them.

The first evening after we arrived at my brothers in Columbus, we attended a Methodist meeting and were invited to preach. It was new work to us, but we did the best we could. When we were through we were opposed, and abused by their leader. We were invited to preach the next evening in a school house in another part of town. At the appointed time we went to the place. The house was full. A stand with a lamp and candle burned on it, with



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¹Levi Jackman wrote his life sketch at the age of fifty-four. He died July 23, 1876. His autobiography is located in Brigham Young University Special Collections. A typescript copy was submitted by Mrs. George Platt, a descendant of Jackman, giving permission to print this excerpt.

two chairs to point the place for us. If ever I felt small it was at that time. Brother Porter testified to the Book of Mormon, made a few remarks and sat down. I found good liberty in speaking, and the people did honor to the name of gentlemen and ladies, and I hope some good will result from the interview. We soon returned home.

Persecution had already commenced in this place. Early in the spring, [at Hiram, Ohio] Joseph Smith and Sydney [Sidney] Rigdon were taken from their beds, and dragged on the ground for some distance. Joseph was taken near half a mile and beaten till he was left for dead.

On the 2nd of May, 1832, I started with a company of near one hundred for the west, and arrived at Bever, on the Ohio River, on the 6th. We chartered the steamboat, Messenger, and started down the Ohio on the evening of the 7th, and arrived at St. Louis on the 14th. We left St. Louis by land on the 20th, after shipping a part of our goods for Chariton. The teams arrived at that place on the 7th of June. At this place, Brother Shanks and myself and families had to stop for want of teams. I soon went to Jackson County, a distance of 110 miles, and got teams and we started on the first day of August, and arrived at Independence on the 14th. In a day or two we went to another settlement of the brethren west of Independence about ten miles. This was called the Timber Branch.

As a people we now began to enjoy ourselves, supposing that our warfare was ended. A printing press was already in operation; one store; schools were in many places; mechanics and farmers all busily engaged, and everything seemed to promise peace and prosperity.

But our hopes were soon blasted. The spirit of slander and persecution soon began to show itself. The mob soon began to hold meetings to take measure against us, and our once clear horizon began to show the gathering of a dreadful storm which was soon to fall on our defenseless heads.

On the 20th of July, a meeting of from 300 to 400 of the mob gathered at Independence to commence their operations of destruction. They tore down our printing office (a two story brick building), and destroyed most of the contents. They stripped, and tarred and feathered Bishop Partridge and one Allen, and threatened death and destruction to all the saints if they did not leave the country.

Some of our leading men, for the sake of a compromise for the present time, agreed for themselves, to leave the country; one half of them by the first of January next and the other half by the first of May and to use their influence to have all the Church do the same, hoping something would turn in our favor before that time. We laid the matter before the Governor, but he had not power to help us. After frequent insults and abuses, they laid a plan to be carried into effect on the evening of the 31st of October. That evening I shall never forget. I had been in bed some time, suspecting no evil, when I was called on by Brother Peck who informed me that the mob was throwing down houses nearby, in the south part of the settlement. I arose, put on my clothes, and went to the door.

The moon was shining in its meridian glory, not a cloud to be seen, not a breeze of wind to disturb the quiet repose of the leaves of the trees. All nature seemed to be hushed into silence to witness a tragedy not often acted on the earth by people who call themselves civilized.

A mob party of from 40 to 50, with weapons of death, had come upon our settlement in an hour not looked for, and had commenced throwing down houses, and shamefully beating the men when they could catch them, while the women with their little ones fled to the woods to hide themselves in the brush to save their lives from being taken by the mob. The falling of the logs and boards as they fell to the ground, could be heard quite a distance in the stillness of the night and was well calculated to strike horror to the saints who saw that destruction awaited them.

Some fifteen houses were more or less demolished, and some of the men pounded in a shameful manner.

The next morning the people sallied forth from their hiding places, and witnessed the destruction of their once happy homes where they had so lately enjoyed the prospect of peace and future prosperity. All hopes of remaining in that country were at an end, and gloom and sorrow were the common lot of all the saints.

About this time Brother Gilbert's store was broken into by the mob, and many of his goods were strewn about the streets. . . . The brethren that lived in the Timber Branch thought it best for their safety to go some two or three miles to a small branch that lived on the edge of the

prairie, where the brethren had a grist mill, and try to save that from the mob.

We had been in that place a few days when, on the 4th day of November, 1833, a messenger came in haste and informed us that a mob was at the River Blue; had taken the ferry, and was committing violence on the people which were between the Timber Branch and Independence.

David Whitmer, who had charge of the post, took about fifteen men and went to see what was going on, leaving the place in my charge. In two or three hours he returned and said that the mob met them on the way and dispersed his company. Those of us that remained started as fast as possible to learn the fate of our brethren. We numbered about thirty with fifteen guns.

We soon came in sight of the mob in and about Christian Whitmer's house. They numbered about sixty, well armed. They did not discover us till we were within pistol shot, when James Campbell, their leader, called, "There come the Mormons, damn them um, shoot um." A general discharge took place, the mob ran in confusion crying, "Go back, Mormons. Go back, Mormons." They left two of their numbers on the ground. One lawyer by the name of Brazill was killed, one more mortally wounded by the name of Linvill. One of our men by the name of Baber, was mortally wounded. A number of both sides were wounded. It was about sunset, and some thought that we had better stop in an empty house near by, but by my advice as to a place of more safety was to return to the mill.

The most of our men felt cheerful and ate their supper and attended to the wounded as though nothing serious had happened. But it was different with me, I could neither eat or sleep. I saw that we were in a situation that nothing but the arm of God could preserve us as we were few in number and surrounded by thousands who waited only for some pretext to cut us all from the face of the earth. I saw that they then had something to start on, and unless the Lord should do something for us, we must all be hewn down by a raging and relentless mob. While thus reflecting on our situation, it was proposed that two or three of us should go to town and see how things were shaping in that quarter. I proposed to go for one. Three of us started and went a back route where it was not inhabited, and got to the place where the brethren lived sometime before day. A scene of horror and destruction presented itself. The news of the battle, much exaggerated,

had reached the mob in town. They had seized a number of our men and put them in prison, and were threatening death and destruction to all the Mormons.

The leaders of our people were trying to effect some treaty with the leaders of the mob, but it seemed like tempering with demons. The mob made a demand of all our men that were in the battle. This was agreed to for we could not help ourselves. I then expected to be tried for my life by a mob court, and the chance of escape was small.

But they altered their minds, and made other arrangements and claimed but seven men as prisoners. Our people were to give up their guns, and leave the country without delay, and they were to protect us from insults by keeping a guard up to preserve the peace. And they were to charter the ferry for us to cross the river, which they failed to do, as in everything else they had agreed to do. After all the arrangements were made, I started for home. I soon met Lyman Wite, who hearing of the situation of the brethren in prison, and supposing they would be murdered, had raised all the brethren, about 100, and had started to release them or lay the town in ashes. I informed him of the arrangement, and it was consented to. They gave up fifty-one guns to the mob. When the guns were surrendered, the mob did not dare to take them from the hands of the brethren, but ordered them to stack the guns against the fence from whence they fetched them.

I went home in hopes that we should remain undisturbed till we could get away. But in this I was deceived. No sooner were we disarmed, than they, without fear, went from house to house, plundering, whipping and insulting whom and as they pleased, threatening the women and children with death and everything that was calculated to spread horror and dismay through the country where the most of the men were driven away and none to help them.

After spending a few days at home getting ready for my departure, I started for town to get some salt. I kept a little from the road to save insults. I happened to fall in with a company of women and children with bundles in their hands, with one wagon and one man. They told me that an armed mob had gone up and threatened to burn them up if they were not gone when they returned, and the little group was making their way for the prairie. The sun was about two hours high. I soon reached the west part of the town where the brethren lived.

The whole place was in the utmost confusion. The mob was raging like friends of darkness, and it was with great difficulty that their head men could keep them from murdering the entire people. At this critical moment the cry of MURDER was heard at a short distance. I said to Brother Sylvester Howlett [Hutlet?] who was standing close to me, that this was no place for us. We started in haste for the woods and soon got into the thick brush, where we would be safe for a short time.

It soon became dark and we could not travel as the brush was very thick and no road. We wanted to strike out on the prairie but we could not tell which way south was. We kept on till we struck a trail but did not know which way to go. We lay down, watched the move of the stars. We then started and soon came out. I had a few hours of deep reflection on our situation. I expected the mob had gone up according to the report of the women I had seen, and what I had since seen and heard confirmed it in my mind that they had gone up to make a general slaughter. I did not really expect to see my family anymore and the appearance was that if we saved our lives it

would be by going through the unsettled part of the state of Illinois or St. Louis.

We concluded, however, to go on a back trail towards home and see what we could discover. We found some men in a back settlement who informed us that the mob had done no injury only by way of hurrying us off. I then went home and found my family with each a little budget ready to start on my return. But I concluded to wait a few days as I had no team neither did we know where to go as every avenue seemed to be stopped. Attempts were made to go to different counties, but the inhabitants refused us admission, and for a long time it seemed that we must stand still and be murdered all together.

But at last we gained admittance into Clay County on the opposite side of the river and by the last of December the brethren were mostly in that county and many without shelter for winter. But as a general thing the people were kind to us. In the summer of 1834, Brother Joseph, with about 100 brethren, arrived from the east to render some assistance to us. He organized the Church in that country and established a high council of which I was appointed a member.