

them to leave under pain of extermination. But they were told that any of them who would renounce their religion would be permitted to stay. The result was that about fifteen thousand persons were expelled from Missouri and their property, to most of which they still hold the titles; and when the day arrives that the Constitution of the United States becomes absolutely the supreme law of the land, so that all men can be protected in their civil and religious rights, they and their children will go back and enjoy their cherished homes in the State of Missouri.

After leaving Missouri they located themselves in the State of Illinois. There was a town known as Commerce—noted for being unhealthy. The location was very beautiful, but the place was surrounded with swamp lands to a considerable extent. Attempts had been made to settle it, but there were a great many graves in the burying ground, and but very few living people in the vicinity. The Saints went there and purchased property. They drained the swamps and cleaned them out, and converted the whole vicinity into gardens, and continued to improve and enlarge the place until February, 1846. The commencement of the settlement in Commerce, Hancock County, Illinois, was in the summer of 1839.

June 27, 1844, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the Prophet and Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, were murdered in Carthage jail, in Hancock County, Illinois, while under the pledge of the Governor, Thos. Ford, who had plighted the faith of the State, at the time of their arrest, that they should be protected from mob violence, and have a fair trial in the lawfully constituted courts of the State. They were confined in jail on a trumped up charge

of treason upon the affidavit of a drunken vagabond. They were murdered by about 150 persons with blackened faces, some of them persons of high position in society. I will here say that in all these transactions—I refer to the outrages committed by the mobs on the Latter-day Saints—there never was a single instance of the guilty parties being brought to justice under the laws of the State where the occurrence transpired.

The city of Nauvoo and vicinity had probably about 20,000 inhabitants. They were remarkable for their industry, and the city was conspicuous for peace, quietness and good order, and for the rapid manner in which improvements had been made. They continued to build up the city though they were constantly harassed by mob violence, and warned from time to time that they should be driven away. They finished the Temple, which was one of the most beautiful structures in the Western States, and dedicated it unto the Lord. They were progressing with other large buildings, establishing factories and making many improvements, when the efforts of mobocracy culminated in their expulsion from their beautiful city and Temple.

That they might not act hastily nor unadvisedly, a committee of Latter-day Saints prepared a petition and sent it to the Governor of every State in the Union, except the Governor of Missouri, and also to the President of the United States, asking them for an asylum, and to afford them that protection which was extended to other religious bodies. All the States, except one, treated their application with silence. Governor Drew, of Arkansas, wrote them a respectful letter, in which he advised them to seek a home in Oregon.

Previous to the death of Joseph Smith, he had selected twenty-five