

Why did the Mormons settle in Utah?

General Timeline

- 1805 Birth of Joseph Smith, Jr. (JS) in Vermont
- 1816 Smith family moves to Palmyra NY
- 1820 JS is alleged to have received his "First Vision"
- 1823 JS allegedly first sees the golden plates said to contain the Book of Mormon
- 1827 JS marries first wife, Emma
- 1827 JS allegedly receives the plates and begins "translating by the gift and power of God"
- 1830 Book of Mormon first published
- 1830 Mormons incorporate first as a Church, taking name "Church of Christ," with six members in Fayette NY
- 1831 **Church HQ is moved to Kirtland OH**
- 1834 Name is changed to "Church of the Latter-day Saints" (LDS)
- 1835 LDS group purchases mummies and papyri that yield the Book of Abraham
- 1836 First LDS temple completed, in Kirtland
- 1838 Church name changed finally to "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"
- 1839 **HQ of LDS moves to Nauvoo IL**
- 1841 Doctrine of "Baptism for the dead" is introduced
- 1842 JS becomes a Mason
- 1844 Death of Joseph Smith, Jr. on June 27
- 1844 Brigham Young chosen new leader over Sidney Rigdon on August 8
- 1847 **Majority of Mormons in Nauvoo leave with Young to emigrate west. Arrive in Great Salt Lake Valley 7/24**
- 1857 Utah War begins
- 1877 Death of Brigham Young

Tensions had been steadily rising due to 1833 newspaper articles written in Independence, Missouri, which culminated in a manifesto published by many Missouri citizens.

We, the undersigned, citizens Jackson County, believing that an important crisis is at hand, as regards our civil society, in consequence a pretended religious sect of people that have settled, and are still settling in our County, styling themselves Mormons; and intending, as we do, to rid our society, "peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must," and believing as we do, that the arm of the civil law does not afford us a guarantee, or at least a sufficient one against the evils which are now inflicted upon us, and seem to be increasing, by the said religious sect, deem it expedient, and of the highest importance, to form ourselves into a company for the better and easier accomplishment of our purpose — a purpose which we deem it almost superfluous to say, is justified as well by the law of nature, as by the law of self-preservation.

But their conduct here stands their characters in their true colors. More than a year since, it was ascertained that they had been tampering with our slaves, and endeavoring to sow dissensions and raise seditions amongst them. Of this their "Mormon" leaders were informed, and they said they would deal with any of their members who should again in like case offend. But how spacious are appearances. In a late number of the Star, published in Independence by the leaders of the sect, there is an article inviting free Negroes and mulattoes from other states to become "Mormons," and remove and settle among us. This exhibits them in still more odious colors. It manifests a desire on the part of their society, to inflict on our society an injury that they know would be to us entirely insupportable, and one of the surest means of driving us from the country; for it would require none of the supernatural gifts that they pretend to, to see that the introduction of such a caste among us would corrupt our blacks, and instigate them to bloodshed.

We will meet at the courthouse, at the town of Independence, on Saturday next, the 20th inst., [July], to consult on subsequent movements.

On 4 July 1838, church leader Sidney Rigdon delivered an oration in Far West, the county seat of Caldwell County. While not desiring or intending to start any trouble with his non-church neighbors, Rigdon wanted to make clear that the Latter-day Saints would meet any attacks on them—such as had already occurred in Jackson County during the summer and fall of 1833.

We take God and all the holy angels to witness this day, that we warn all men in the name of Jesus Christ, to come on us no more forever. For from this hour, we will bear it no more, our rights shall no more be trampled on with impunity. The man or the set of men, who attempts it, does it at the expense of their lives. And that mob that comes on us to disturb us; it shall be between us and them a war of extermination; for we will follow them till the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us: for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed. — Remember it then all MEN.

Missouri Executive Order 44, also known as the Extermination Order,[1][2] was an executive order issued on October 27, 1838, by the Governor of Missouri, Lilburn Boggs. The order was issued in the aftermath of the Battle of Crooked River, a clash between Latter-day Saints and a unit of the Missouri State Militia in northern Ray County, Missouri, during the 1838 Mormon War.

Missouri Executive Order Number 44, read as follows:

Headquarters of the Militia, City of Jefferson, Oct. 27, 1838.

Gen. John B. Clark:

Sir: Since the order of this morning to you, directing you to cause four hundred mounted men to be raised within your division, I have received by Amos Reese, Esq., of Ray county, and Wiley C. Williams, Esq., one of my aids, information of the most appalling character, which entirely changes the face of things, and places the Mormons in the attitude of an open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this state. Your orders are, therefore, to hasten your operation with all possible speed. The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state if necessary for the public peace--their outrages are beyond all description. If you can increase your force, you are authorized to do so to any extent you may consider necessary. I have just issued orders to Maj. Gen. Willock, of Marion county, to raise five hundred men, and to march them to the northern part of Daviess, and there unite with Gen. Doniphan, of Clay, who has been ordered with five hundred men to proceed to the same point for the purpose of intercepting the retreat of the Mormons to the north. They have been directed to communicate with you by express, you can also communicate with them if you find it necessary. Instead therefore of proceeding as at first directed to reinstate the citizens of Daviess in their homes, you will proceed immediately to Richmond and then operate against the Mormons. Brig. Gen. Parks of Ray, has been ordered to have four hundred of his brigade in readiness to join you at Richmond. The whole force will be placed under your command.

I am very respectfully, yr obt st [your obedient servant],

L. W. Boggs, Commander-in-Chief.

Many people connect Governor Boggs' order directly to the Haun's Mill massacre. At least one firsthand account asserts local Guardsmen referred to an order issued by the governor that sounds similar to Order 44 as justification for the Haun's Mill massacre. The Haun's Mill massacre was launched by Missouri State Guardsmen from Livingston County on the settlement of Haun's Mill, located in eastern Caldwell County near the Livingston County line, which resulted in the deaths of 18 men and boys, some of whom were murdered after surrendering. The firsthand account explains soldiers stated the governor had ordered their expulsion or extermination if they did not leave at once.

"Halt!" commanded the leader of a band of well-mounted and well-armed mobocrats, who charged down upon them as they journeyed on their way.

"If you proceed any farther west," said the captain, "you will be instantly shot."

"Wherefore?" inquired the pilgrims.

"You are d__d Mormons!"

"We are law-abiding Americans, and have given no cause of offence."

"You are d__d Mormons. That's offence enough. Within ten days every Mormon must be out of Missouri, or men, women, and children will be shot down indiscriminately. No mercy will be shown. It is the order of the Governor that you should all be exterminated; and by G_d you will be."

We arrived in Caldwell county, near Haun's Mill, nine wagons of us in company. Two days before we arrived we were taken prisoners by an armed mob that had demanded every bit of ammunition and every weapon we had. We surrendered all. They knew it, for they searched our wagons.

A few miles more brought us to Haun's Mill, where that awful scene of murder was enacted. My husband pitched his tent by a blacksmith's shop.

Brother David Evans made a treaty with the mob that they would not molest us. He came just before the massacre and called the company together and they knelt in prayer.

I sat in my tent. Looking up I suddenly saw the mob coming -- the same that took away our weapons.