

# Missouri State Archives: Finding Aid 5.1

## Mormon War Papers, 1837-1841

[ *Full-text transcription of:* Letter from General Robert Wilson, 2nd Brigade, 1st Division of the Missouri Militia, at Adam-on-diahmon, MO to General John B. Clark, 1st Division of Missouri Militia, Richmond, MO ]

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### Copy

Head Quarters 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade 1. D. M. M.  
Adam-on-di-ahmon. Nov: 12-1838

Maj. Genl: Clark,

Sir-In pursuance of your order of the 7<sup>th</sup>. at Far West, I took up the line of march with my command, & arrived here on the 8<sup>th</sup>: we suffered much from the inclemency of the weather, which still continues.

On my arrival here, I found The troops had left. I met Col. Burges some two miles from this place, he being the last. I immediately placed a guard around the Town, & ordered the Mormons to parade, which order was promptly obeyed, and about two hundred men entered their names. I then proceeded to the investigation as you required by your order. Justice Black & other citizens being present I caused such of the Mormons as were supposed to be guilty of crimes arrested and handed them over to the Civil authorities for trial—it however appears that the most guilty had previously escaped, they having ample opportunity, as I am informed the Town had not been under guard up to the time of our arrival. The investigation is still progressing, but with but little hope of affecting much, as the Citizens seem to be unable to identify but few.

It is perfectly impossible for me to convey to you any thing like the awful

state of things, which exist here--language is inadequate to the task. The citizens of a whole county first plundered, & then their houses & other buildings burnt to ashes, without houses, beds, furniture or even clothing in many instances to meet the inclemency of the weather. I confess that my feelings have been shocked with the gross brutality of these mormons, who have acted more like demons from the infernal regions than human beings. Under these circumstances

you will readily perceive, that it would be perfectly impossible for me to protect the mormons against the just indignation of the citizens.

I therefore promptly informed the mormons in a short address of all the facts that had then come to my knowledge—told them I should remain in Daviess County ten days, & would endeavor to protect them during that time—at the end of the ten days I would leave & was not authorized to promise them further protection in Daviess County—that you had promised protection in Caldwell County—that such of them as wished to remove to Caldwell, or out of the State, I would give a permit to that effect, & would guaranty their safety on the rout. The mormons themselves appeared pleased with the idea of getting away from their enemies, & a justly insulted people, and I believe all have

applied & received permits to leave the County, and I suppose about fifty families have left & others are hourly leaving, & at the end of the ten days, Mormonism will not be known in Daviess County.

This appeared to me to be the only course left to prevent a general massacre and I hope my course in this matter may meet your approbation, as it has been your pleasure to commit to my charge a most important command without Special instructions. I feel the more bound not only to return you my sincere thanks for the honor thus done, but to give you a full account of all my acts. Nothing has been left undone on my part to justify that confidence.

The Citizens of Daviess have co-operated heartily with me, & to their praise be it said, have shown a degree of compassion & charity, unparalled under the Circumstances, to their enemies, and have cheerfully obeyed every order I have found it proper to give in this matter, & I now confidently believe I shall be able to close this most shocking insurrection without further bloodshed—

I had previously to receiving your order discharged all the Troops under my command except one company under Capt Newbold. This company will be retained until I close my business here. I expect

without otherwise ordered to remain here until tomorrow week, & then set out for home. If therefore it is your pleasure to give me further orders before leaving, I

would suggest that they be forwarded in time to reach here before that time—

It would astonish you to see the immense piles of stolen property which has been brought in & deposited by the mormons, consisting of almost everything to be found at a farmhouse, & much remaining yet concealed—Large quantities have been found buried in & near towns—

I have been making all possible exertions, to collect & preserve this property for the owners, but I find it hard to do, as these dirty thieves are more skilful in the pilfering line than any I have yet seen. The Citizens inform me that much of their property has been to Far West. I suggest that you order them to return them here at their own expense—

I write in a miserable shanty, called the Lord's Store house late at night after having been well soaked in the rain during the day, & much fatigued—I may have omitted some things, but when I am more comfortable, I will write you more fully—

I have the honor to be with unfeigned good will

Your Obedt: Servt:

R. Wilson. Brig. Genl..

Comr 2<sup>nd</sup> Brig. M. M.