

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 Keytesville, MO to General John B. Clark, 1st Division of Missouri Militia]

Keytesville Nov 25th 1838

Genl Clark

Sir I persuance of your order dated at Far West Nov 7th I marched with the troops under my command for Adam Ondi Ahman in the County of Davies where I arrived on the 8th Immediately after my arrival I had called together all the Mormons then residing in Daviess County and distinctly informed them of the nature of the order of the Commander in Chief and that you had transfered the same to the undersigned to be executed in the County of Daviess I also informed them that they would be permitted to remain in Daviess County during the winter or that they at their option should be permitted peacibly to remove themselves and property to Caldwell County if they desired so to do that I would remain ten days with a sufficient force for their protection and that I would give to such as desired it a written permit to remove to Caldwell or out of the State So soon as this was made Known to them they unanimously made application and received the permit above alluded to and in the course of ten days all the Mormons residing at that point with a few exceptions had removed in peace and safety I would here give it as my opinion that owing to the hostility these people had produced against themsilves by their excesses and depredations upon the property and lives of the Citizens would not have been permitted to remain here

in safety and of this the Mormons seemed to be well satisfied I found the greater portion of these people to be late emigrants to this place from Canada and the Northern parts of the United

States encamped mostly in tents un=
provided [~~“for”~~] with provisions for the
winter I was told upon enquiry that
the prisoners had not been guarded
since their surrender and that such as
knew they could be identified by the
Citizens had mostly absconded such
of the Mormons as could be identified
were placed on trial before a justice
of the peace

The Mormons have done immense injury
to the Citizens of the County first by
robbing them of all their movable property
and then burning their houses apart
of this property was found at Adam Ondi Ahman
but the greater portion is still missing
The people of Daviess County during my
stay among them conducted themselves
towards the Mormons with great proprie=
=ty and even generosity I am fully satis=
=fied for myself that no people having any
claims to honesty would permit such
a band of robbers as these Mormons
have proved themselves to be to reside
among them it is useless for me here
to recapitulate the evidence upon which
this opinion is founded as you as you
must be fully in possession of the
same from the enquiry now going
[~~“on”~~] forward at Richmond
I have great pleasure in being able

to testify to you of the good [~~“behavior”~~] conduct
of the troops under my Command both
officers and privates discharged their
duty to my entire satisfaction and without
a murmur so far as I am informed
no Mormon was injured in person or
property by any person under my Com—
mand

Finding the Civil authorities of Daviess
County in a situation to discharge all the
duties required of them by law I referred
to their decision all matters in
dispute in relation to property between
Citizens and Mormons under the belief
that an exercise of Military authority
under the circumstances would have
been improper.

The extent of the injury sustained

by the Citizens would not be fully ascer
=tained but so far as my observation
and information extended the whole
County is laid wast and I fear many
will suffer during the winter. It is
impossible witness these scenes of
distress without feeling the deepest
indignation against the leaders
of these people who under the sacred
name of Religion have caused their
followers to commit the most horrid
crimes ever perpetrated in any County
and that too as they alledge ["d" erased] for the ad
vancement of the Kingdom of Christ
The troops under my command have
all returned home and I am this far on
the rout subject to your further orders
I have the Honor to be

with great respect
Your obt svt

Robert Wilson Brg Genl
2nd Brg 1st D. M M

Nov. 25, 1838