

Missouri State Archives: Finding Aid 5.1

Mormon War Papers, 1837-1841

[*Full-text transcription of:* Letter from Governor Boggs, Jefferson City, MO to Colonel Wiley C. Williams, Aide to the Governor]

Richmond

Oct 23rd. 1838

Dear Sir

I have recently seen Col Price, who made known to me the object of his mission to this part of the State. In reference to the lawless depredations said to be practiced on the Mormons, I have no doubt that the charges are to a certain extent true, and I have as little doubt that the perpetrators of them can be effectually brought to justice by the civil authorities. If, instead of writing those inflammatory letters to members of the Legislature, these same men would come before me and give such information, as the law requires against these lawless characters, I should bring them to an immediate account, and I am satisfied there is virtue enough in this community to aid and sustain me in so laudable an undertaking. I have heard frequent complaints, and have uniformly invited them to institute a legal investigation, but no person has thought proper to do so.

In most of the cases of outrage against the property of Mormons, it has been by persons who pretend, and perhaps truly, that the Mormons were them, or by persons who say that the mormons, in their late outrages upon them, have destroyed their property, and they take this means to indemnify themselves. This certainly is an unlawful and highly objectionable course. But I think it very ungracious in Mr Arthur to charge it upon the citizens of the surrounding counties, exempting his own county of Clay. If rumor be true, he himself has been very extensively engaged in collecting his Mormon debts, in property chiefly, and at prices less

than half what would be asked or given
in ordinary cases. This with me is only rum
=or, but there are men who say so who

are equally respectable with Mr. Arthur. As it
regards the Military force recommended by
him, I should look upon it as a direct input
=tion upon the power and efficacy of the
civil authorities to maintain this law
in ordinary cases, and would, in effect
be reversing that [“to” erased] salutary constitution
=al principle which renders the Military
subordinate to the civil authority.

I cannot but express regret that the time, in
my opinion is not very distant when we
shall have the same scene to go through with
the mormons that we have lately witn=
=essed. If the Mormons would disperse
and not gather into exclusive communities
of their own, I think with the exception
of a few of their leaders, the people
might be as reconciled to them, but this
they utterly refuse to do, they tell me
that it would amount to an aband
=onment of their creed & religion,
for they believe, you know, in this
gathering, together of the Saints,
and that they shall come out from
the world, Suggest, the matter to them,
as I have done, for the sake of
their peace and safety, and they
will give you many scriptural
reasons why they should not do so.

The mormons, appear lately to have taken
new courage and [“appear” crossed out] to be determined
not to move; the citizens are equally deter
=mined they shall, for nothing but
expulsion or the other alternative will
satisfy this community, that is, if the,
mormons hold out under their former
principles and practices. This I know
is strong doctrine for some of the mem—
=bers, and such as I have not encour
=aged, occupying this Station I do, either
by act or expression, yet I can easily
find men in this community, noted
for their good moral character and correct
deportment, who are determined the
mormans shall not reside among them
The alternative is presented, the expulsion

of this mormons, or the virtual relin
=guishment of their own homes.

There has been from parts of this State,
as well as from other states highly
respectable gentlemen, who came
among us with all their sympathies
and prejudices enlisted in favor
of the mormons, but after traveling
through the country, hearing
and seeing which they did, [] they
undergo an entire change of
opinion, such as has frequently
astonished me.

I have written [~~“this letter”~~] to you
in conformity with the request
made by you through Col Price
in reference to the necessity of a
Military force to sustain and
uphold the laws.

I am
very respectfully
Austin A. King

Govr Lilburn W. Boggs
Jefferson City