

# Missouri State Archives: Finding Aid 5.1

## Mormon War Papers, 1837-1841

[ Full-text transcription of: Witness Reed Peck, a Mormon dissenter ]

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Reed Peck a witness, produced, sworn, and examined on behalf of the State, deposed and saith  
A short time after Cowdery & the Whitmers left Far West (sometime in June) Geo. W. Robinson and Philo Dibble invited me to a Danite meeting. I went, the only speaker was Dr Avard who explained the object of the meeting and said that its object was, that [“they” crossed out] we might be perfectly organized, to defend [“ourselves their” crossed out] ourselves against mobs, that we were [“to” crossed out] all to be governed by the presidency and do whatever they required, and uphold them: that we were not to judge for ourselves whether it were right or wrong. that God had raised us [“up” crossed out] a prophet who would judge for us. and that it was proper we should stand by each other in all cases. and he gave us an example:- if we found one of the Danites in a difficulty, in Ray or Clay for instance, we should rescue him, if we had to do with his adversary, as Moses did with the Egyptian-put him in the sand; It made no difference whether the daniete was to blame or not, they would track to Far West, and there be taken care of- The question was asked whether it would extend to a legal process.- Avard answered not. The Danite oath was administered to about 30 or 40 persons at this meeting.- Philo Dibble told me who the head officers of the Danite [“members” crossed out] were: that George W. Robinson, was Colonel, that he Dibble, was Lieutenant Colonel, and Seymore Brunson Major, and that I was chosen Adjutant. After that I had a talk with Geo. W. Robinson & Philo Dibble together, in which I was informed who the officers were as above, and further, that Jared Carter was Captain General of the band, Cornelius P Lott Major Genl. and Sampson Avard Brig General this is as I now recollect it. Dr Avard in speaking to the society remarked that it would be impossible for the presidency to explain the object of the society, to every member, but that the presidency would explain their views or wishes, to the head officers, and they to the members of the society- I was present at one meeting where the officers of the society were

presented & introduced to the presidency , each office receiving a blessing from them- Avard stated that he had procured the presidency to come there to show the Society, that what he was doing was according to their direction or will- And while there the presidency approved of Avards course in the society. Dr Avard how-ever did not explain to the presidency what his teachings had been in the Society\_

I heard Avard, on one occasion say that the Dan-ites were to consecrate their surplus property, and to come in by tens to do so. and if they lied about it,- he said Peter Killed Ananias and Sapphira, and that would be an example for us- When appointed adjutant of the Danite band, as refered to above, I did not think proper to object openly, tho' I determined within myself not to act, & the lists, and other papers brought to me for recording, I threw aside & made no record of-

On the day before the last expedition to Daviess I heard Joseph Smith Jr, in a speach say, in refference to stealing, that in a general way he did not approve of it, but that on one occasion, our Saviour and His disciples, stole corn in passing through the corn fields for the reason that they could not otherwise procure any thing to eat. He told an anecdote of a dutchmans potatoes, and said in Substance that a colonel or captain was quartered near a Dutchmans from whom he wished to purchase some potatoes, who refused to sell them, the of-ficer then charged his men not to be caught stealing the Dutchman's potatoes, but next morn ing he found his potatoes all dug- I think this was in refference to the expedition to Daviess, and that they had been compeled to go out there so often, that the people there ought to bear the expense

Such men as would oppose things undertaken as being unlawful, & such as they feared was a vio-lation of the law. I have heard Smith & Rigdon in their publick addresses denominate "O don't men" these I understood to be those who were denominated also dissenteres; and in refference to ["such" crossed out] men who were hanging

hanging back, & did not wish to engage in their expeditions, they were called traitors, and refer

ing to such, as I understood, Mr Rigdon proposed that blood should first begin to flow in the streets of Far West- but his proposition did not carry. The proposition was then made, and carried unanimously that those who thus hung back, should be pitched upon their horses ["with" crossed out] and made to go, and placed in front of the ["battle" crossed out] army. All the above occurred in Far West. the day before the last expedition to Daviess-The following of the Defendants were in the last expedition to Daviess City. Jos Smith Jr. Hiram Smith. P. P. Pratt. Lyman Wight. Amazy Lyman I am certain was not there, Geo. W. Robinson, Cabel Baldwin Alanson Ribley were there, John Buckhannon was not there, Geo W. Harris, Geo Grant & Darwin Chase were out. Isaac Worley was not about. Alex.a McRay was there, Ebenezer Robinson was there, John S Higby I think, James M Henderson was there, Edward Part-ridge was there, Francis Oligby I think was there, Geo Kimble was there, Amaso Younger was there. James W Rawlins Maurice Phelps were there. When the troops arrived at Diahmon they were divided into companies of 20, 40, 50& just as they might be called for, those companies were sent out in different parts of the county, as I saw them thus occasionally going out & coming in. I saw a company of about 50 called a fur company come once some had one thing, & some another, one I saw with a feather bed, another had some spun yarn\_ I understood from some of those who were bringing property, that they were to take it, to the Bishops store & deposit it, and if they failed to do so, it would be considered stealing. -As the property was brought in there was a general shout of hurrah, and waving of hats by those in camp- I heard Demick Huntingdon, one of the troops, tell in Camp, that the mob had burned the store-house in Gallatin but that the Mormons had

hauled off the goods. And also that the mob were burning some Mormon houses. I looked at him as though I did not believe it. and he stooped down to me, being on his horse, and whispered to me, that it was Capt Brunson who had gone with 20 men to the grindstone Fork who was burning those houses. The goods taken in Gallatin was generally understood in Camp,

to have been deposited with the bishop as con-  
-secrated property- When the Companies  
would return from their expedition, they would  
make their reports to the presidency who were  
there- As this company above referred to  
as the fur company, passed with their plun-  
-der, I heard Mahlon Johnson, who lived in  
the lower part of Caldwell, ask Joseph Smith  
Jr, if these proceedings would not endanger  
the families living in that ["lower" crossed out] part of Cald  
-well, and insite the people to come on them, and Smith asked him what he was talk  
-ing about, that this was the first step they  
had ever taken to quell the mob.

I heard Perry Keepes Kiso, one who was engaged in  
the depredations in Daviess, say that Joseph  
Smith Jr. remarked in his presence, that it  
was his intention, after they got through in Da  
-viess, to go down and take the store in Carrol  
-ton; this remark Smith made while in  
Daviess. After the mormon troops re-  
-turned to Diahmon Far West from Daviess. I saw several  
of the captains of tens, who had been in that exe-  
-pedition, making out a list of their men, for  
the purpose, as they said, of being handed in that  
they might receive their portion of the spoils-  
-I heard Darwin Chase say that he was in the  
expedition against Bogart. Several days before the Militia came  
to Far- West I learned through Mr Arthur of Clay  
County, that they were raising the Militia,  
On monday before the militia arrived I went  
out toward Crooked River, to see if I could meet  
them. I met a young man who informed me that  
Genl Donephan was on Crooked River with the  
militia. I returned to Far West and informed

Mr

Mr Rigdon & Jos Smith Jr, as well as giving  
general information of the fact. I proposed to  
Mr Smith to go next morning and try to find them  
to which he assented, I was disappointed in my  
effort & returned late in the evening to Far West,  
Just as I arrived I saw the militia & I went  
down to them with a flag. I met with Genl  
Donephan who recd. me , & told me there were  
about 1300 in number & that they were militia.  
On my return to town I met with Jos Smith Jr.  
& informed him, that the troops were militia  
under Genl. Donephan's command. (as I then sup-  
-posed was the case) Mr Smith asked me their  
number & when I told him, he replied- keep  
up good courage we can whip that number  
if they make an attack upon us. Some other

person came up at the time and enquired of me their number. and Mr Smith answered, that Mr Phelps, who was a judge of numbers having seen troops before, said that there is about 250. as he would suppose. Mr Geo W. Robinson then whispered to me not to tell the men the number of the militia, that it would frighten them, or damp their courage [“and further this deponent saith not,

Reed Peck” crossed out]

At this Stage of the examination of Reed Peck the following named defendants [ ] King Follet Samuel Bent J Ebeny Brown William Whitman and Jonathan Dunham were brought to the bar of the court and put upon this trial for the offences alleged against the other defendts and time being allowed them to employ counsel they retired and again returned to the bar appearing by their counsel Mess Rees & Donephant the examination of Reed Peck was then continued Reed Peck deposeth and further saith that Jonathan Dunham was in the last expedition to Daviess and was Captain of a company of 50 which I have spoke of as called the Fur Company. He went under the fictitious name of Capt Blackhawk. when the men were paraded, they were called out as all belonging to Capt Blackhawks company my impression is that King Follet was not in that expetition, but he was captain of 12 men

in far West under the Daniet order as I understood as he was neither an Officer or private of militia and was Known and called under the fictitious name of Capt Bull and by Com =pany was called the regulators, I saw William Whitman on the Expedition to Daviess and seemed to be one of the troops engaged with others, some time previous to the difficulties in Daviess the first time when the militia went out there for the purpose of keeping the peace, I heard Jo. smith Jr in a public address say that he had a reverance for the con =stitution of the united States and of this State but as for the laws of this State he did not intend to regard them nor care any thing about them, as they were made by lawyers and blacklegs the above things said some time in last July or August. On the eve of the last expetition to Daviess I heard Joseph Smith Jr. say that they meaning the heads of the church had appealed to the Govt for protection and he had sent us back word that we must fight our own battles, he further stated that the law was unequally ad =ministered, all against us and none for us and spoke of the prosecu =tions set on foot in Daviess as an instance and He then said we must take our own cause in our own hands and defend ouselves\_\_ that he did not calculate to regard the laws any longer, I think & was in the last of June or first of July last that I heard Dr Avard say that he had Just returned from a Council with the presidency in which council Jared Carter was broken of his Office of Capt Genl of the Danite band for having spoken against Sydney Rigdon one of the presiden

=cy, it being a regulation of that society that no one should speak against them- or hear any one else do it with impunity In that council Avard said an arrangement was made to dispose of the dissenters vozt, that all the head offices, of the Daniet band should have a list of the dissenters both here and in Kirtland and said he I will tell you how I will do with them when I meet one damning the presidency I can damn them as well as he, and if he wanted to drink he would get a bowl of brandy & get them half drunk and taking him by the arm he would take him to the woods or brush and said” he (would) be into their guts in a minute and put them under the sod” he gave this a an example of the way they should be disposed of the only mo -tives for getting rid of the dissenters in this way as far as I ever learn =ed was this if they remained among the mormons they would introduce a class there that would ultimately endanger their lives & destroy the church and if they were suffered to go out from among them they would be telling lies on them in the surrounding country, these reasons I gathered from Mr. Rigdons Salt Sermon and Mr Rigdon said in the Same Sermon that he would assist to erect a gallows on the Square and hang them all. Jos Smith Jr

was present and followed Mr Rigdon after he also made the above declaration and said he did not wish to do any thing un =lawful. he then spoke of the fate of Judas & said that Peter had hung him (Judas) & said that he approved of Mr Rigdons Sermon & called it a good sermon and further this de

=ponent saith not **Reed Peck**

**James C Owens** a witness who was produced on a former day and [ ] been called back to the bar again further deposes and saith. He does not think Wil =liam Whitman was in the Danit expedition to Daviess, I think he was left at far west as Captain of the town guard though he may have been in Daviess for aught I know and further this deponent saith not **James C Owens**

**William Splaun** a witness produced sworn and examined on behalf the State deposes and saith I was at Eli Bagleys in Daviess county when an armed company of men about 1000/2 in numbers James H Raulins and Jesse D Hunter two of the defendants were of the company they came to Bagleys they enquired who I was and if I was a mob character and learning I was not they let me alone they inquired for John Raglin and Said they heard he was a mob character and had gone for men to fight them and if they got their eyes on him they would take his life & that he had better keep out of the way to be positive that Hunter was of the company I will not but I have little or no doubt of it from his ap -perance this was on Saturday after I learned that Gallatin was burned the Thursday before and during the time the mormon troops were in Daviess county and further this deponent saith not

**William Splaion**

**Thomas M Odell** a witness produced sworn and examined on behalf the State deposes and saith, that on the Saturday after

Gallatin was burnt and armed company of 12 men rode up to Mr Raglins house in Daviess County where I resided, they inquired for John Raglin I told them where he had gone, they said their object was to drive the mob from the county and said that I must go. I replied I could not. that I had no way to get off and that my family in is bare footed they replied that made no difference I must go, and said if I was not gone by next morning by sunrise they would take my life, they told Mrs Raglin she must [ ] that there she could not stay and that Raglin had better never show himself there that they would take his life if ever they set their eyes on him next