

Cemetery 25th Cemetery Anniversary Remembrance

Carthage, Illinois – Carthage jail
Saturday Morning, August 6, 2016

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I am so grateful to be here. Such a sacred place, such a tragic place. I am grateful for the beautiful music sung by Kim and her son Bryan. The song, A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief, was just becoming popular in the State of Illinois when John Taylor sang it here in the jail. It was sung by many different denominations. The question is, why was John Taylor asked to sing? It was he had such an amazing tenor voice. Years later as President of the church he strongly believed that the song of the heart could change the feelings. When people would come for counseling to him such as men having an issue of water rights or a husband and wife. He would always start these sessions by singing a verse of a hymn. Then he would ask, is there still a problem? If they said yes he would sing and sing until they would say, Oh President Taylor there is no problem here.

As for me, I thought it might be of interest to you if I began on June 24th because that's the very time that Joseph Smith and Hyrum, his brother, Joseph is 38 ½ years old, Hyrum is 44. They are about to leave from Iowa and they end up in Nauvoo about 6:00 in the morning on the 24th. Both men will stop to say good bye to their families. For Hyrum, he and his wife, Mary Fielding Smith, will take the time to read some passages from the Book of Mormon. They then meet each other and they will be accompanied by about 40 friends and they will begin a ride that will eventually end up here in Carthage. Today we call it the Martyrdom Trail. Boy Scouts can receive merit badges by going on the same path whether they ride bikes, they hike it, they ride horses it is still the Martyrdom Trail.

As Joseph and Hyrum accompanied by about 40 friends neared this town of Carthage they were met by government forces. They were told and forced to turn around and head back to Nauvoo. The reason was because the government forces were to disarm the Nauvoo Legion and take weapons that had been State issued. As they turned around and went back the government forces disarmed much of the Nauvoo Legion from these State arms.

Months later in September, when Governor Thomas Ford came to review the troops in Nauvoo, still the Nauvoo Legion and to appoint Brigham Young as Lieutenant General. Brigham Young asked Governor Ford to stay long enough while the troops paraded in front of him. Brigham Young asked the troops as they paraded this time to bring their children's toy wooden swords and their toy wooden guns. As Governor Ford saw them in uniform carrying children's toys he asked Brigham why. Brigham said, "I wanted to show you what it was like when we were disarmed and could not come to the aid of Joseph and his brother Hyrum.

With that, they had been turned around. The Nauvoo Legion is basically disarmed of all State arms and then they were told you can head to Carthage. As they arrived back in Carthage although they had left early in the morning, they arrived here at about five minutes to midnight. As they did so they were taken directly to the Hamilton Hotel. Owned by a man named Artois Hamilton. The town of Hamilton some of you have driven through was named for this man. Artois Hamilton was one of the rich men in Carthage. The people down in Hamilton hoped by naming the town Hamilton they could attract him down there

but it never worked. Artois Hamilton welcomed them into the hotel. It was unusual who was staying in the hotel the night of the 24th. You have got Governor Ford which makes it his official residence. You have got Artois Hamilton the owner proprietor. And you have men that we call conspirators William Law and Robert Foster, the Higby's and others. Now you have Joseph and Hyrum. So much noise was made from government troops that had gone to the square in Carthage. They were there from Warsaw and Carthage itself and Quincy and McComb and others. They had set up a little tent city on the town. Many had come to the hotel and were demanding to see Joseph and Hyrum. Governor Ford looked out the window and told them to go home and back to the square and that in the morning they would see Joseph and Hyrum.

We are now on June 25th. Early in the morning. Thirty eight and a half year old Joseph Smith knocked on the door of Governor Thomas Ford. As Joseph did so at this point he is the Mayor of Nauvoo. One of the largest towns in the State of Illinois. Joseph is running for President of these United States. He knocks on the door and demands an audience with the governor. The governor indicates he would be happy to see him but not now. But Joseph and Hyrum needed to get prepared because Governor Ford wanted to go see the troops on the town square. Joseph and Hyrum accompany the Governor. It is a pretty difficult time the Carthage Greys are acting pretty mutinous during this time. Joseph's friends are close by. His friends carried walking sticks and their thought was they can protect the prophet by swinging their sticks. So what you've got is the Governor, Joseph and Hyrum, and friends walking behind them with sticks swinging back and forth because they realize a stick isn't much of a weapon unless it's in motion. They are starting to look through the group of the military to see if anyone is pulling a gun or a knife.

They eventually make it back to the hotel. Joseph again is knocking on the door of Governor Thomas Ford. He wants to know Governor can you meet with me now. The Governor said yes. Joseph said, "I just have one question. If you were to leave Carthage will you take myself and my brother Hyrum with you?" Governor Ford said yes. Joseph was confident that their lives would be spared and that mobs would not rule as long as the Governor said in Carthage. Joseph asked him again, if you were to leave, even if you were to go to beautiful Nauvoo will you take us with you? The Governor Ford said yes. With that, Joseph and Hyrum now head to see a local judge here in town named Robert Smith. No relationship to Joseph Smith that we have found so far. They went to see him on the charge of rioting on the streets of Nauvoo as it related to the destruction of the Nauvoo Expositor. How do you plead the judge wanted to know. The answer was not guilty. They had already been acquitted twice in Nauvoo.

They asked to be released. They asked the judge to hold court. The judge said no but they could post bail. For each man charged at that time the bail then for Hyrum and for Joseph was 500 dollars. They did not have the money but their friends who had accompanied them did. Money was put forward. The judge became flustered and finally said they would be under house arrest. The house arrest would be back at the Hamilton Hotel.

They returned to the Hamilton Hotel and were then re-arrested this time for treason against the United States. For treason there is no bail. Joseph and Hyrum by the evening of June 25th are now in Carthage Jail. They spent that evening in the debtor's prison or what we call the debtors cell. Those kind of brick and mortar cells were all over the 26 States of the United States at that time. About 70 thousand men were incarcerated in these debtors' cells. The night of June 25th, 1844 so were Joseph and Hyrum.

The next day, June 26th, Joseph and Hyrum while in this Carthage Jail would have more than 40 visitors. Obviously the most important visitors will be two apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ: John Taylor and

Willard Richards. The only two apostles not serving as political volunteers to put forward Joseph Smith as President of the United States. You'll say where was Brigham Young and Wilfred Woodruff? They were serving together out in the Boston area. They were talking about we have had a Democratic President we have had a Wig President but now it is time to have a President of these United States. Orson Pratt and Orson Hyde were saying the same down in Washington D.C. as so it was. So visiting in that Carthage Jail will be John Taylor and Willard Richards. Other visitors will be Thomas Ford.

As Thomas Ford comes to the jail, Joseph says to him I have but one question for you. If you were to leave town would you take me and my brother Hyrum with you. Thomas Ford said yes. Joseph said, "But even if you are to visit beautiful Nauvoo and Thomas Ford said yes.

There was another visitor of the 40 that I wanted to feature. His name was Uncle John Smith. As Uncle John came to see Joseph, Uncle John by this point had been a Stake President in Adam-ondi-Ahmen. He had been a Stake President in Zarahemla over in Iowa. He has now come to visit his nephews Joseph and Hyrum. He asked, "What can I do?" Joseph said, "I want you to get on a horse and to go quickly to a small little town called Ramous in Hancock County. There to find Almon W. Babbitt. Babbitt at the time was a Branch President in Ramous. Uncle John Smith was told now you find Almon Babbitt and you tell him that we need him to defend us in the court of law." As Joseph anticipated there would be a court case for the charge of treason. Uncle John Smith hurries to Ramos. He finds Almon W. Babbitt who is mentioned in Doctrine of Covenants, Section 124 and is told to beware of the golden calf. Almon W. Babbitt didn't like that part of section 124 and actually told Joseph to take it out. Uncle John Smith said to Almon W. Babbitt that Joseph and Hyrum are now incarcerated in Carthage Jail. He said, "Did you know that?" and Babbitt said yes. Uncle John said, "Oh good, I have come to ask you from Joseph, Can you defend them in a court of law?" Almon W. Babbitt says, "Uncle John, you are too late. I have already been hired by the other side."

We come now to June 27th. On June 27th early in the morning, Latter-day Saints are now rushing to the Jail. They have an amazing message for the Prophet Joseph. The message is, Thomas Ford has left town. The Governor is gone. Where did he go? He went to beautiful Nauvoo. What's he doing in Nauvoo? Well he is on the very stand where Joseph Smith had unsheathed his sword. He said he would protect this town even with his blood. What else is Thomas Ford doing? He is actually receiving refreshments at the mansion house from Emma. Well Thomas Ford didn't pull the trigger but there is no question that he allowed mobs to rule on June 27th.

Now Thomas Ford, he had actually been a pretty good member of the Supreme Court, a judge on the Supreme Court here in Illinois. His cases, his logic, almost flawless but as a Governor he is at fault. For Thomas Ford he wrote a book called the History of Illinois. It's not an exciting book to read unless you are looking forward to sleeping. In the book written by Thomas Ford he talked about his three greatest fears. One of his fears is all just in a small paragraph and I was so thrilled when I found it. One of his fears was that there would be people who would keep the name of Joseph Smith alive.

I am so grateful to you as I look out to you – you have done it. That he is not just somebody way back in history. So for the Smith's and their descendants the gratitude knows no bounds.

His second fear was that place names, such as Carthage a tiny little place and Elvaston in 2010 actually increased by one person since 2000 since Elvaston is 101. These tiny little towns would be remembered like Nauvoo with what about 1000 people. That they would be about as well-known in this world as

town over in Israel. You realize people over in Siberia and Tokyo, you name it, Mexico, all over the world know about what happened here.

His third greatest fear is that there would be some great speaker who would link his name with Pontius Pilot and Herrod. Who was that great speaker that did that for Thomas Ford? On June 27th, 2002, the Nauvoo Temple was dedicated. There was a great man and we are about the same size his name was Gordon B. Hinckley. You had the Mormon Tabernacle Choir singing Praise to the Man. A poem said by WW Phelps at the funeral of Joseph Smith it was a eulogy. Standing up was Gordon B. Hinckley before he dedicated that beautiful temple who did he talk about Thomas Ford.

Well everyone, I am grateful to be here. I am grateful to be in the presence of you. I am grateful to be in the presence of Elder Ballard. A man that has travelled this world all over the place telling everyone about the prophet Joseph Smith and the prophet Hyrum Smith. As for me, I would like to leave you with my testimony. That song Praise to the Man, Millions shall know Brother Joseph again. Of all of the great blessings that have been mine. There is none greater than I can be numbered among the millions who know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. In this building right over there he and his brother Hyrum were incarcerated and Hyrum is killed and that part my esteemed friend Richard H. is going to tell you about. I would like to close once again saying what an honor it is for me to be here this day and to be in your presence. By the way, Elder Ballard, you have great grandchildren. I say this humbly in the name of Jesus, Amen.