

Fort Supply

June 20, 1856

Bro. W. Wooddruff

In according to your request, I proceed to give you an account of the conversation I had with President Joseph Smith previous to his massacre. The first conversation I had with the Prophet on the following subjects was the night the guard came to take him with a writ. We walked together towards the river and sat down. I asked him how this thing was going to come out. He replied if the brethren would let him manage the business, there should be no blood shed, but if not it would be the hardest blow the Church ever had or would receive, that if he & Hyrum were ever taken again they would be massacred or he was not a Prophet of God. He said he wanted to save Hyrum to avenge his blood. He said that Hyrum was determined not to leave him, but die with him. He told me to go and call Brothers Hyrum, Willard Richards, William Marks, W.W. Phelps, John Taylor & Several others that I do not now recollect their names. Then he and I turned and walked up close to the Mansion. As we were walking along we heard the sound of a company of horses and men. As it was now dark, he sent me ahead to see what they were on getting up. I found a company of 20 men from Carthage having a writ for some 17 men. I talked with them a few minutes and found out what they wanted and returned and told Joseph. He told me to return and tell them he would see them the next day at 10 o'clock. Then I called the above named council

together and we went up to Joseph's chamber. There we talked over the subject of the writ, &c., &c., &c. Joseph said it was the voice of the Spirit for him to go to the West among the Navives [Natives] and take Hyrum and several others along with him and look out a place for the Church. (NB. While sitting on the bank of the river, he said he wanted Brother Hyrum to go aboard of the Maid of Iowa and take both their families to Ohio and leave him to fight the battles. At this time he said he wanted to save Hyrum to avenge his blood.)

When the council was dismissed about 4 A.M., we all went out to Joseph's west gate. There several of us halted. Joseph turned and said something to me like this, "Brother Markham, I want to leave you to take charge of the Legion." Then I replied, "I will do as you want me, whatever it may be. I will go with you, or stop here & defend the city until I die, or go and give myself up, just whatever you say I will do." He held his head bowed down as though he was in a deep study about a minute. Then he said, "Brother Markham, you have always done as I wanted you and you always will. Now I will tell you what to do. Go and dismiss the Legion before daylight so that the men having the writ cannot see that we are under arms, and then send my horse and Hyrum's over the river to us with the 8 o'clock boat. Then go home and sleep till 10 o'clock, and go and get all the men you can to deliver themselves up with you at 10 o'clock, and stand trial. It may do some good. I tell you in the name of Israel's God they shall not have power to hurt you." He repeated these last words three times.

We walked down to the river and he and Hyrum, W. Richards, W. Clayton, W. Marks, General Dunham, and W.W. Phelps then started across the river in a skiff, and I went and dismissed the Legion &c., as I was told, and left word with the guard at the Mansion to have the horses sent over with the 8 o'clock boat, without fail. At 9 A.M. I went down to get the others to deliver themselves up with me. When I got to the Mansion, I found that the horses were not sent along. I found on inquiring that Emma locked the barn door and would not let Joseph's horse go. As she had the key in her pocket, I asked her for the key. She would not let me have it. I took up an axe and said I would stave open the door and sent the horses along. Then she said if I would not do it, she would sent them over with the next boat without fail, "and you may go and deliver yourself up and rest content that they will get the horses." I hunted for the men called for in the writ and found Stephen Perry, and Harvey Redfield and another whose name I have forgotten. We delivered ourselves up.

When I was going to give myself up, there appeared to be considerable excitement manifested by A. Cutler, R. Cahoon, Lucean Woodworth, H. [iram] Kimball and a number of others. They wanted to get a council formed and sent a committee to invite Joseph back. They said it was a bailable case and there was no danger, as they would bail him to any amount they might ask. They said it would break up the place and lessen the value of property; also ruin a number of men for Joseph to leave. They wanted me to be one of a committee to wait on Joseph. I replied, "Mind your own business,

brethren, and let Joseph alone. I have got my orders from him and I will die before I vary from them." I then went and delivered myself up alone. The officer having the writ told me to get as many as was going to deliver themselves up, and get a sufficient guard, and come on in the afternoon, as they did not wish to wait any longer. I got the aforesaid men that was willing to deliver themselves up. Philemon Merrill, with a guard of eleven men, and we, proceeded to Carthage about 5 o'clock P.M. When we arrived at Carthage, there was considerable excitement because Joseph and Hyrum were not along, and a good many threats by the people that they would have them or they would go and destroy Nauvoo. General Deming took us in his charge; also our arms, and the arms of our guard. He promised, on the honor of a man, to deliver them up to us again. He reported to the Governor that we had come, but they would not receive us that night as they were not ready to try us. General Deming lodged us, guard & all, in the upper room of the jail, where Joseph was killed, and set a guard round us.

About 11 o'clock at night John A. Hicks sent along an officer with a writ for one of my guard. There was with the officer about 12 men. I told them to wait until daylight, as we should all be there. I received a letter from General Deming about daylight, informing me that the Governor would not receive us as prisoners as Joseph & Hyrum were not along. He said there was evil designed against us, especially me. And he said we had better take care of ourselves. We counceled together in prison and concluded that the prisoners and I would clear, leaving our guard to get our horses

and come after us, which we did. Keeping off the road until we got about half way to Nauvoo, I began to get uneasy, as our guard did not follow as was expected. Here we saw a company coming from Nauvoo. When they came up I found that it was Joseph & Hyrum coming to give themselves up. I went to Joseph and showed him the letter I got from General Deming, and told him what had passed, and the threats that had been made. He read the letter and told me about the committee going to him in Iowa, saying that he had always said he would stand by them until death. But now, as the wolf had come, he left the flock for them to be destroyed. He remarked, "I could not stand such language as that," and said, "If the people do not want me to live for their sake, I do not want to live for my own." He said he told them he would go back & deliver himself up and go like a lamb to the slaughter. Then I asked him if I might go with him and die with him. He looked up at me and smiled, saying, "I have told you that they will not have power to hurt you, but you may go along." I got into the wagon and rode with him until we got to Brother A. Fellows' house. From there we saw an armed force of about 100 men coming from Carthage. Both them and we came to a halt, when we sent a flag of truce to see what was wanted here. My guard, that was to bring on our horses, came up to us. They said, after we left, several of them were taken with writs and General Deming interfered, and took them from the officers several times. At last he put them in a hollow square, formed by Capt. Dunn's company, and instructed them to deliver the guard safe to me, which Capt Dunn did. Here Capt. Dunn came up,

saying he had an order from the Governor for the public arms. About that time I looked towards Nauvoo and saw two men ride quickly towards the city. I asked Joseph if he had sent an express back. He said, "no." I told him there were two men going. He hung his head about a minute and replied, "The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth." Here we returned to Nauvoo and delivered up [to] them the arms, and we returned to Carthage about 10 o'clock P.M. Next day we were brought up for trial and all got bail. When fixing to return home, Joseph and Hyrum were taken with another writ for treason. They were brought before the Justice that issued the writ and he, without trying them, made out a Mittimus and sent them to jail without out a trial. They were lodged in the lower room for the night. While there I saw several men with their fire arms peeking through the windows. We got Joseph and H.[yrum] in one corner of the room, where they could not be seen and guarded them all night. In the morning Doctor Southwick (a man from Texas, trying to get Joseph to go to Texas with the Church, he being in jail with us all night) and I went into the town to see what was going on and found a good deal of excitement, especially with the Carthage Greys, as they had rebelled, saying they would kill Joseph & H[yrum]. The Governor made a speech to them, after which they came back and joined the brigade. That afternoon there was a council held in Hamilton's Tavern. Doctor Southwick was in the meeting. Seeing what was going on, he said he had the minutes of the meeting and the purport of said meeting was to take into consideration the best way to stop Joseph and Hyrum Smith's career,

as Joseph's view on Government was widely circulated and took like wild fire. He said that if he did not get into the Presidential chair this election, he would be sure to next, and if Illinois and Missouri would join together to kill them, they would not be brought to justice for it. There were delegates in said meeting from every State of the Union except three. The Governor and Capt. Smith of the Carthage Greys was in the meeting also. The Doctor said the meeting was broken up in a hurried manner, as the sentinel reported that Col. Markham was coming upstairs, when the meeting dismissed in a hurry. They left the minutes on the table and the Doctor picked them up, and brought them to me and read them. He agreed to copy them and give me the original. I went to jail and told Joseph that they intended to kill him. He made an observation like this: "Be not afraid." Nothing more particular passed through the day. The next morning I went out again & found that the Governor was going to the City of Nauvoo with about 100 men. I went and told Joseph that I did not consider them safe as the Governor had gone, leaving the Carthage Greys to guard the jail, and dismissing the rest of the troops. Before leaving I went to the Governor and got a permit written and signed by his own hand, giving me leave to go in and out of the jail when I pleased. Before starting he pledged his word on the honour of the State that nothing would molest the prisoners. I told the Governor that I did not consider the Carthage Greys a safe guard, saying that I considered he should leave another guard. It was at this time that he pledged his honour, and the faith of the State, that no measure would be taken but according to law.

I had no more conversation with Joseph till about one o'clock. We were sitting together on the bed. I said, "I wish you would tell me how this fuss is going to come out, as you have at other times, before hand." He replied, "Brother Markham, the Lord placed me to govern his kingdom on the earth, but the people have so taken away from me the reigns of government by the committee making the statements they did concerning me leaving the flock, I gave way to them. The whisperings of the Spirit left me and I am now no more than a common man. I can do nothing for myself except they place me back to my former position. If they don't do it, I am gone. About this time Doctor Richards was taken sick. Then Brother Joseph said to me, "Brother Markham, as you have a pass to go out and in, you will need to go out and get the Doctor a pipe and tobacco to settle his stomach." I went out and got a pipe from Sheriff Backenstoss and bought some tobacco in a store close by and was returning. John Eagle was in the store and threw out considerable threats against the Mormons, and in particular against me. When proceeding to the jail, I was assailed by a man by the name of Stewart. He called to me, "Old man, you have got to leave the town in five minutes." I replied. "I shall not do it. Neither can you drive me. You can kill me, but you cannot drive me." Then he turned and charged upon me with his bayonet, and I parried it off with my left hand and knocked him down with my right. He hollowed and all the Carthage Greys rallied round me with their guns and bayonets, and told me I had got to leave the town forthwith or I would be a dead man in a short time, making



passes at me with their bayonets. I parried them off with my left and knocked them down to the amount of 10 or 12 with my right. Then they got so close that I had no chance, Eagle in the gang urging them on. Hamilton, the inn keeper, came out and said I had better go home as I would only get killed if I remained. He said, "You can do the prisoners no good and I will bring you your horse." I told him I was not going home and not to bring him. He cried and brought my horse up, and they forced me on him with the points of their bayonets until the blood filled my shoes. They then formed a hollow square round me and desired him to go and tell Joseph the reason I did not return. When near Brother Fellows', I heard the report of a large amount of fire arms discharged in Carthage. On arriving at Nauvoo I found the Governor on Porter Rockwell's frame, making quite an inflammatory speech to the people. About that time two of the mars[hals] and ten others handed in their names to the Governor, accompanied with affidavits that they were afraid for their lives. The Governor turned to the people and said, "Gentlemen, you do not know the danger you are in. If there are any of these men missing, under any circumstance whatever, your lives and the lives of your wives and children will atone for it. Your houses are, as it were, on kegs of powder and the matches are all ready lit to set it off." Then the Governor came down [out] of the house. I met him at the Mansion door. I told him how they used me in Carthage, after he started, to which he replied, "That is nothing to what you have don here." I replied, "You are a D---d liar." He turned in to the west door of the Mansion and left me.

The next morning G.D. Grant came to my house at daylight and told me that Joseph and Hyrum were killed in jail. Brother Grant said he was coming into Nauvoo and was within two miles of the city when the Governor met him. He told the Governor what transpired at Carthage. He was then taken into custody, and marched two miles east of Carthage. The Governor said if he would let me go to the city, Markham would call out the Legion and destroy Carthage and Warsaw before morning, and [would] then get fresh horses and follow us and kill us off.

Respectfully,

Stephen Markham