

The event portrayed in this vignette occurred during the history of the church. The setting is Missouri during the 1830's. The characters in each vignette are real people, except for the Missourians, Rath and Vern. These characters are fictional. The Narrator, Elijah Andrews (a reporter), is also fictional and used in telling the story. The remaining characters are portrayed in the correct historical setting. Actual names are used, with quotes in **boldface type**.

Mormon Missouri Vignette Number Three

Historical Synopsis: The Gallatin Election Day Battle was a skirmish between Mormon and non-Mormon settlers. Two major candidates for office, Colonel William Peniston and Judge Josiah Morin visited Adam-ondi-Ahman to court the Mormon vote. Afterward, Peniston decided that the Mormons planned to vote as a bloc for his opponent and conspired to prevent them from voting, by force if necessary. When Election Day arrived, Peniston made a speech in Gallatin to stir up the crowd against allowing the Mormons to vote. When about 30 Latter Day Saints approached the polling place approximately 200 non-Mormons forcibly attempted to prevent the Mormons from voting and a brawl ensued. Although vastly outnumbered, the Mormons held their own and drove away their attackers.

Cast of Characters: (actual historical persons are italicized).

- Elijah Andrews (reporter)- dressed "stylish 1830's".
- **William P. Peniston** (*Missourian*)-dressed "rough frontier style 1830's".
- **Dick Welding** (*Missourian*)-dressed "rough frontier style 1830's".
- Mormon Man: (part of Mormon group) –dressed "pioneer style 1830's".
- **John Lowe Butler** (*part of Mormon group*)-dressed "pioneer style 1830's".

Eli: I had on good authority that the local Judge Morin, had been informed that the Missourians were going to prevent the Mormons from voting at the election in Gallatin. The Missourians were determined to elect Colonel William P. Peniston. He had been a ringleader against the Mormons in Clay County. Missouri leaders knew that trouble was brewing against the Mormons and did nothing to stop it. I also knew the Missourians did not plan to allow the Mormons their rights to vote as citizens of our country. I was incensed that the Constitution and the rights it guaranteed to all citizens seemed to mean nothing to the Missourians, especially when it came to the Mormons.

(Eli pauses.)

On August 6, 1838 I mounted my horse and headed to the settlement of Gallatin. Even in good times, I knew election days on the frontier were rough, tough days with lots of drinking and often ended in a brawl. I had hopes the election in Gallatin would end in just a drunken brawl and not something worse. When I arrived, trouble had started.

(Missourians are gathered. William P. Peniston man stands on a barrel to speak. He is trying to stir up the Missourians)

William P. Peniston (standing on a barrel): ***"The Mormon leaders are a set of horse thieves, liars, counterfeiterers, and you know they profess to heal the***

sick, and cast out devils, and you all know that is a lie. The members of the Church are dupes and not too good to take a false oath on any common occasion. They steal and your property is not safe if there are Mormons around. If you let the Mormons vote you will lose all your rights. If you suffer such men as these [Mormons] to vote you will soon lose your suffrage.

Dick Welding: Yeah, he's right we don't have to let them vote. They will vote for their own man. **The Mormons were not allowed to vote in Clay County no more than the negroes.** We have to stop them, we can't let them vote for their man. Watch out here they come, get ready. This is our Missouri. No Mormons are voting today!

(The Missourians look off to see a group of Mormon men walking toward them. The Mormons walk up to the men.)

William P. Peniston: You are not welcome here. You will not vote today. Go home.

Mormon man: It is our right to vote in this country and we will vote.

(The group moves forward. The Missourians start fighting the Mormons.)

Eli: The Missourians outnumber the Mormons nearly ten to one. The Mormons did not come prepared for a fight. (Watches for a moment.) But the Missourians are getting a good fight (points back). Ouch, that was Abraham Nelson that got knocked down. It would appear the Mormons are grabbing anything to use as a weapon. I am going to try to get a little closer.

(Just then one man comes flying out of the brawl and lands on the ground in front of Eli.)

Eli: Excuse me, excuse me, (helps the man up). My name is Elijah Andrews. May I speak with you? What is your name?

John: Butler, John Lowe Butler. (He looks back like he isn't sure he wants to talk, but would rather get back to fighting.)

Eli: And you are a Mormon?

John Lowe Butler: Yes sir, and I plan to vote.

Eli: Wait, before you leave, can you tell me what's happening?

John Lowe Butler: *I [came today with] Brother Gee, he lived close by us, and we [came to vote in] the election in Gallatin in Daviess County [but]*

there's a mob trying to stop us. *I rescued some of the Saints from a furious mob, and the Lord did strengthen my body far beyond the strength of man.*

When myself and Brother Gee got here, there was a large crowd of folks. ...They said that the Mormons should not vote because the Mormons did not vote to suit them; they must not vote at all. Now Saints [do] not like to be deprived of, their liberty and rights, so some were determined to go and put in their vote. Now for my part, I felt like backing everyone for it was our right...we all started to go and put in our votes. I was about the last one and the brother that was on ahead got knocked down and then Brother Riley Stuart interfered for him and one of the mob rushed at him with a knife. Riley turned and ran when he saw the man draw his knife. I then ran after the ruffian and as it happened, I saw an oak stick lying in the road...I struck him and as I struck him there had been another fellow running after me with a loaded horsewhip and struck me right between the shoulder ...There was so much excitement after that, that I could hardly tell what transpire[d]...

Eli: Thank you John.

(turning to the group) Although, outnumbered the Mormons held their own against the Missourians. Later the next day I found John Butler again and he told me the following:

John Lowe Butler: When it was over. *They...commenced carrying off the men that had been knocked down and some killed and some were standing up against the fence and against the house with the blood running from their heads and faces,*

Brother Samuel H. Smith came up to me and said let us go home, but when I got to where I had left my wagon, I found it gone, so Brother Smith said, "come and go home with me, " which was bout three miles from my house.

I concluded to ride over to Far West some fourteen miles from where we lived and I saw Brother Joseph Smith. He resided there. He asked me if I had removed my family. I told him no, I had not. "Then, " said he," go and move them directly and do not sleep another night there." "But," said I, "I don't like to be a coward." "Go and do as I tell you," said he...I then said to my wife, "We must pack up our things and leave here directly for Brother Joseph has told me to." ... So we loaded up one wagonload and took it down to Brother Taylor's about one mile and a half.

Now about sunrise, or a little while after, Brother Gee saw in the distance a large body of men...He then ran down to Taylor to tell them that we were all killed...and when he saw us, he said, "Oh, I am so glad that you are here for there are about thirty men around your house to kill you all." I then saw the hand of the Lord guiding Brother Joseph Smith to direct me... I f he had not...we should all have been murdered, and I felt to thank God with all my heart and soul.

Eli: (again facing the youth group) Might I add, even though few Mormons were able to vote, the Missourians man', Peniston, lost the election. Sadly, after the fight in Gallatin everything in these parts went crazy.

(Pauses a little, he seems to be gathering his thoughts and then speaks.)

First I heard of Mormons attacking Missourians and then Missourians attacking Mormons. With each telling of events, the numbers got bigger and the attacks grew worse. I knew I had to keep a cool head and report only facts. Some of the facts were as follows: On August 13th, a Daviess County judge issued writs for the arrest of Joseph Smith and Lyman Wight. This was due to reports of a Mormon invasion through upper counties. One area in particular was the area the Mormons call "Diahman." It is suppose to be sacred ground to the Mormons. Joseph Smith led a group to protect the Saints in this area. This was followed up by, a committee of Carroll county citizens ordering the Saints to leave the county. August 20th one hundred armed men rode into DeWitt and threaten the Mormons. Numerous citizen groups and vigilante groups met and resolved to bring Mormons to justice.

Then, on August 30th Governor Lilburn W. Boggs responding to reports of a disturbance, ordered twenty-eight hundred state troops to stand ready to march on the Mormons. It looks like he has declared war on them.

I find myself concerned for the Mormons. I admire their spirit but they are vastly outnumbered with few friends in the area. They are surrounded on all sides by Missourians. Sadly, I do not see how a serious conflict can be avoided.

(Eli walks away.)