

## Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...

Posted by: randyj ( )  
Date: April 07, 2016 09:30PM

This post is an addendum to this one:

<http://exmormon.org/phorum/read.php?2,1763474,1763545#msg-1763545>

In that post, I had written:

"Smith and Rigdon were really just empire-seekers. They wanted the land in Missouri so they could build an agriculture-based financial empire. Fort Leavenworth was across the river in Kansas, and Smith and Rigdon hoped to get rich on Army supply contracts. Their preaching of building a 'New Jerusalem' and 'Zion' were just a front for their secret land-and-money-grabbing scheme."

The church, of course, teaches that western Missouri was the location of the ancient Garden of Eden, and that it was to become the Latter-day "Zion," with a magnificent temple built there. I recently retrieved from my attic the book "The 1838 Mormon War In Missouri" by Stephen LeSueur, which provides further detail on Smith's and Rigdon's true intentions for wanting to settle in, and take over, western Missouri:

"Northern Missouri's Platte country, only recently annexed by the state, had previously served as a government relocation center for American Indians. In 1830 Congress assigned the Sacs, Foxes, Iowas, and a number of other tribes two million acres of choice land east of the Missouri River, bordering Missouri's northwestern boundaries. Local settlers complained loudly; not only did they object to having the Indians located so closely to their borders, but they also coveted the country's fertile valleys and prairies, and they wanted the easy access to the Missouri River those lands would provide. In addition, Fort Leavenworth lay directly across the Missouri River, the garrison's six hundred soldiers and the numerous Indian tribes nearby providing an abundant market for Missouri produce and labor. The temptation proved too much for Missouri settlers, and by 1835 more than two hundred families had settled on Indian lands. The endless complaints from Missouri's congressmen---Sen. Thomas H. Benton labeled the Indians a 'useless and dangerous population'; Sen. Lewis F. Linn warned that the illegal white settlers could not be removed without violence---finally persuaded the federal government to move the Indians across the Missouri River. Land-hungry settlers from Missouri's western counties immediately swarmed to the new area when it was officially attached to the state in 1837...

"The rapid influx of Mormons alarmed the older settlers, especially those who had purchased land or town lots in areas they hoped to develop into prosperous communities. [Mormon bishop] John Corriell reported that the Mormon settlement at Diahman 'stirred up the people of Davies in some degree, [because] they saw that if this town was built up rapidly it would injure Gallatin, their county seat...' In addition, once the Saints moved into a neighborhood, property values would decline because non-Mormons refused to settle there...

"The developing Mormon enterprises also threatened to displace established merchants and businesses, especially in their trade with Fort Leavenworth. The garrison, located just thirty miles west of Caldwell County, purchased supplies not only for itself, but also for the numerous Indian tribes whose reservations surrounded the fort. Local settlers considered the fort's presence a godsend because of the great wealth it brought to the region. Leavenworth's vast market also caught the notice of Mormon leaders, who published enthusiastic reports of the large quantities of goods and grains purchased---and the high prices paid---at the fort. By early October the Mormons' newly organized cooperative firms began bidding for government contracts. The increased competition was not welcomed by the non-Mormon citizens. Consequently, while some merchants viewed the burgeoning Mormon population as an opportunity for increased business, others feared their investments in their farms and towns would be wiped out by the new Mormon communities." (Lesueur, pp. 21, 34-35.)

So we see that the Mormons' troubles in Missouri weren't the product of "religious persecution," but rather was a land-and-money war between competing factions. About 12,000 Mormons moved into the area en masse and tried to squeeze out

the settlers who had already been there for years. Smith and Rigdon concocted the idea that the area was "Adam-ondi-Ahman" and "Zion" in order to induce their disciples to move there and provide the manpower for their planned agricultural-based financial empire. The Missourians retaliated and booted the Mormons out.

And now you know the rest of the story.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: areyoukidding ( )  
Date: April 08, 2016 12:25AM

Great, informative post! I love Mormon history. Everything I learned in seminary turns out to be false.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: JBF ( )  
Date: April 08, 2016 04:45AM

What do you expect from a cult? The Truth?

That would be a novel approach. A Cult that tells the truth. Who would have thought that???????

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: MarkJ ( )  
Date: April 08, 2016 10:29AM

Making money from land speculation in the western territories was a long established practice before the Mormons came along. Washington was a big investor and proponent of western expansion.

<http://lehrmaninstitute.org/history/founders-land.html>

The genius of Smith was to convert your buyers and have them move to the property before you sell to them.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: randyj ( )  
Date: April 11, 2016 02:03PM

"Making money from land speculation in the western territories was a long established practice before the Mormons came along. Washington was a big investor and proponent of western expansion."

True. Acquiring land and becoming wealthy is part of the American dream. But no people or groups are out there misrepresenting the history except for the Mormons. That misrepresentation fuels a large portion of the devotion and dedication modern Mormons have towards the church, and it's all built on a "big lie."

This issue reminds me a little of watching the old 1950s Walt Disney fairy tale Fess Parker version of Davy Crockett and the Alamo. The image presented was a bunch of good old patriotic Americans going out to Texas to free the land and the settlers from the evil dictator Santa Anna. The truth is that Texas was Mexican territory, and the Americans (largely southerners) wanted the vast region so they could get rich raising cattle and cotton. Nowadays, that info is widely known and accepted as the actual reason for the Texas war. But Mormons still tell a false story and give false reasons for the Missouri War.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: Elder Berry ( )  
Date: April 11, 2016 03:12PM

MarkJ Wrote:

- > The genius of Smith was to convert your buyers and
- > have them move to the property before you sell to
- > them.

And Nauvoo proved that.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: blueorchid ( )  
Date: April 08, 2016 10:42AM

Thank you so much of that, randyj. You have greatly expanded my knowledge of that particular part of Mormon History since I am fascinated with it because I see the Mormons as being retaliated against for bad behavior, or at least questionable tactics. It was not religious persecution for the most part. Being Mormon was just an annoying detail, not the main impetus.

No wonder Joseph made Missouri the Garden of Eden. He did have a gift for a con even if he didn't turn out to be virtuoso in the end.

What really makes me sick though is how badly the Native Americans were abused.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: randyj ( )  
Date: April 11, 2016 02:20PM

"No wonder Joseph made Missouri the Garden of Eden."

Ironically, early on, Smith identified the Great Plains as the "land of desolation" of the BOM, which was of little value to "the world":

"The world will never value the land of Desolation, as it is called in the book of Mormon, for any thing more than hunting ground, for want of timber and mill-seats: The Lord to the contrary notwithstanding, declares it to be the land of Zion..."

"What the design of our heavenly Father was or is, as to these vast prairies of the far west, I know no farther than we have revelation. The book of Mormon terms them the land of desolation..."

<http://www.bookofmormonpromisedland.com/W.%20W.%20Phelps%20LAND%20OF%20DESOLATION.htm>

But that was a few years before Smith realized how much federal money there was to be made in the area.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: Liz ( )  
Date: April 08, 2016 10:47AM

Wow. Just wow.

You'd think it couldn't get any clearer as to the intentions of Joseph Smith and Co. but then you read something like this and the anger comes back.

Con artists.

Ruined lives.

Legacy of fraud and lies.

And still it continues by the current leadership. The real estate holdings by the LDS church continues to this day by bilking unsuspecting converts and members.

The irony is when family members continue to believe even when evidence is given that it is a fraud. The church is more important to them than family or truth. The con lives on.

Thanks for the information about the move to Missouri. It is one more piece of the mormon puzzle of that time.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: Eric K ( )  
Date: April 08, 2016 10:49AM

Wow – Great job Randy. This will be archived for sure. I hope to see you Sunday.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: funeral taters ( )  
Date: April 08, 2016 11:29AM

Thanks for sharing this interesting history. I learn a so many interesting facts on this forum.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: blueorchid ( )  
Date: April 09, 2016 11:10AM

Topping so more get the chance to read. This is great information to know and have in the back of your mind when the Mormons start talking about "persecution" of the early Saints.

I guess it really hits home for me because my father could go on about the persecution of the Mormons foreeeeeeverrr.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: Chicken N. Backpacks ( )  
Date: April 09, 2016 01:59PM

It just makes you sad to know how frikkin' jerky people are to other people.

The only problem with humans is that they're humans...

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: seekyr ( )  
Date: April 09, 2016 06:34PM

This account seems MUCH more logical and plausible than the Mormon version.

[Re: Follow the money: Why western Missouri became the Mormon "Zion"...](#)

Posted by: randyj ( )  
Date: April 11, 2016 02:23PM

"This account seems MUCH more logical and plausible than the Mormon version."

Not to mention the fact that it's supported by well-documented history.