The Haun’s (Hawn’s) Mill Massacre by C. C. A. Christensen, oil on canvas, part of the *Mormon Panorama*, a series of large paintings depicting the early history of the Church.
Jacob Hawn and the Hawn’s Mill Massacre: Missouri Millwright and Oregon Pioneer

Alexander L. Baugh

For a number of years I have had a keen interest in researching and writing about the Missouri period of early Mormonism (1831–1839). This interest propelled me to write my doctoral dissertation, completed in 1996, entitled “A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri,” which work has since been published in BYU Studies under the same title.1 Included in this study was an extensive examination of the incident generally known as the Hawn’s Mill Massacre and its aftermath. On the afternoon of October 30, 1838, an extralegal force composed of over two-hundred men, primarily from Livingston and Daviess Counties, Missouri, attacked the isolated settlement of Hawn’s Mill, situated in eastern Caldwell County, killing seventeen Latter-day Saint civilians and wounding another fourteen. This incident, part of the larger Mormon-Missouri War, is the singular most tragic event in terms of loss of life and injury enacted by an anti-Mormon element against Latter-day Saints in the Church’s history.

In conducting my research about the massacre, I canvassed all the primary sources available to me at the time—personal narratives and reminiscences, affidavits, newspapers, government documents, and state and local histories. From these sources I successfully identified each of the Mormon victims and in most instances the extent of their injuries. I also documented the names of a number of Mormon defenders who were also at the mill at the time of the

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attack, but who escaped injury. Finally, I documented and identified by name over fifty of the Missouri vigilante participants. But one individual baffled me. In spite of all my digging, I found very little information relative to Jacob Hawn, for whom the settlement was named and who I assumed was Mormon. Although his name was mentioned in a number of primary and secondary sources and in several narratives, I could find very little personal or biographical information about him—that is, until January 2007, when I received the following e-mail from Sherrie Clement, a cataloger in the LDS Church Family History Department in Salt Lake City:

Kahlile Mehr, a co-worker, forwarded your e-mail to me that indicated you were interested in knowing what happened to the Jacob Haun of Haun’s Mill, Missouri. I’ve only been looking into it for about three weeks so what I’ve found may not be conclusive but I think the links are pretty strong. Hopefully you have more information about Jacob Haun to add.

This is how I got involved. I am interested in children’s literature so I was reading an autobiography by Beverly Cleary entitled *A Girl From Yamhill*. I don’t know if you have heard of Beverly Cleary, but she is a well-known children’s author who wrote the Henry Huggins books, Ramona books, etc. I gave a copy of the autobiography to a friend for Christmas and recently we were discussing it. Beverly Cleary had written about her great-grandfather, Jacob Hawn, who was a millwright and, among other places, had built a mill in Missouri between 1834 and 1843. My friend asked me if I thought that was the same Jacob Haun involved at Haun’s Mill. Because of the spelling difference, I had not really thought about it but I decided to check it out.

As noted in her correspondence, while reading Beverly Cleary’s autobiography *A Girl from Yamhill*, in which Cleary reminisces about growing up in Yamhill County, Oregon, Sherrie made a possible connection to a Jacob Haun who lived in Missouri in the 1830s. Cleary’s notoriety as an award-winning writer of children’s and adolescent’s books is well-known. Since 1950 she has authored over forty books, the most popular being the Henry Huggins and Ramona Quimby series. In the beginning pages of *A Girl from Yamhill*, Cleary retracts in some detail her ancestral roots. The entry that caught Sherrie Clement’s attention, and mine as well, was the following:

My Grandmother Bunn’s parents, Jacob Hawn and his wife Harriet[t], crossed the plains in 1843 in the first large wagon train to Oregon. Jacob Hawn, born in Genesee County, New York, in 1804, of German parentage, was a millwright, pioneering his life. His first wife, like so many pioneer women, died young. He then married Harriet[t] Elizabeth Pierson. In 1834, when Jacob was thirty and Harriet[t] sixteen, the couple left by covered wagon for outposts of civilization in need of mills for grain or lumber. In their covered wagon, they trundled to Wisconsin, Missouri, Texas, Louisiana, back to New York, and then continued on to Missouri once more. Four children were born along the way. On May 18, 1843, the family started for Oregon with a company of “three hundred souls all told . . . traveling by compass due West.”

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*A Girl From Yamhill*
Could this be the elusive Jacob Hawn of Hawn’s Mill fame? I had to make sure for myself. With some additional source information from Sherrie, and a research trip in November 2007 to Yamhill County, Oregon, the search was on. I basically began my search by trying to find sources on Jacob Hawn in Oregon, since I assumed there would be more documented information on him in the latter part of his life than in his earlier years. In this way I hoped to connect the dots. Jumping ahead to the end of our story, because of Sherrie’s lead, I am absolutely certain that Jacob Hawn of Yamhill County, Oregon, is the same Jacob Hawn of Hawn’s Mill, Caldwell County, Missouri.

**Early Background**

Jacob Hawn was one of four children born to Henry Hawn, who was born in Germany (wife unknown). As a young man, Henry immigrated to Canada,
then relocated in Pennsylvania, and finally settled in Genesee County, New York. Henry and his wife had four children—Jacob, James, Michael, and Mary. Jacob was born January 13, 1804, in Genesee County. As a young man, Jacob married a woman by the last name of Myers who died early on in their marriage, leaving no children. On November 18, 1833, Jacob, then twenty-eight, married his second wife, fifteen-year-old Harriett Elizabeth Pierson (also Pearson), which marriage is reported to have taken place near Buffalo, New York. Harriett was born on August 31, 1818, in Newark, Hudson County, New Jersey. She lost her parents at a young age and was raised by family living in Cattaraugus County. Shortly after their marriage, Jacob and Harriett left New York and moved near Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he built at least one mill and possibly more.5 Here, their first daughter, Laura was born on September 1, 1835.6

Sometime in late 1835, the Hawns moved to western Missouri. Land records show that on December 7, 1835, Jacob entered a claim for forty-acres on Shoal Creek in what was at that time a sparsely settled part of Ray County, making the Hawn family among some of the earliest settlers in that part of the county.7 Significantly, Hawn’s 1835 land record shows the spelling as being H-a-w-n, not H-a-u-n. While early Mormon sources and narratives give both spellings (though H-a-u-n is still the most common), references made to Jacob and Harriett in Oregon histories, and virtually every family source I found, always use H-a-w-n. Even their grave markers use the “w” spelling—a clear indication of the correct spelling. Missouri state histories, county histories, and Missouri atlases generally use H-a-u-n, which probably explains why most historical literature written about the massacre uses that spelling. Furthermore, given the structure of the name and its phonetics, it is easy to see how the “u” spelling was adopted. But if we were to be historically accurate, writers should use the H-a-w-n spelling (which is what I have done in this article). However, because H-a-u-n has been adopted as the quasi-official site name on virtually all current maps and reference materials, it will be difficult, if not impossible, at this point to try to change or correct the spelling in public records or signage.8

After collecting and compiling all the information I could find on Jacob and Harriett Hawn, I have come to the conclusion that the Hawns were not affiliated with Mormonism before coming to Missouri in late 1835, and in fact, were never Mormons. I, like many other historians who have written about the Missouri period have simply assumed they were Mormons, mainly because they settled in what became a Mormon county and lived among members of the Church. This is not to say that before coming to Missouri they were unaware of the Church or had never heard of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. On the contrary, after all, Jacob was born and raised in Genesee County,
New York, situated less than fifty miles from Wayne and Ontario Counties, and resided in western New York until late 1833. Surely he and Harriett had heard some reports concerning the Mormonites. En route to Wisconsin from New York, they may have passed through northeastern Ohio, perhaps even Kirtland, where they could have come across or heard about the Mormons. But one of the strongest arguments supporting the conclusion that Jacob and Harriett Hawn were not Mormons is the fact that none of the Saints who actually lived at or in the vicinity of Hawn’s Mill (and therefore personally knew the Hawns) ever mention in their narratives anything about them in connection with membership in the Church. Furthermore, later sources describing their years in Oregon, and even more particularly the histories written by their children, make no mention of their ever being associated with Mormonism.9 Simply stated, Jacob and Harriett were an adventurous couple who thrived on the prospects and opportunities of the American frontier—first in the remote northern region of Wisconsin, then northwestern Missouri, and finally in the Willamette Valley of Oregon Territory. They simply bumped into Mormonism in Missouri in the mid–1830s, left Missouri in late 1838 or early 1839, and then made their own way to the West in the early 1840s.

The Hawn’s Mill Settlement

It probably took Jacob Hawn several months to build his mill and begin operations. In November 1995, I, along with LaMar C. Berrett, professor of Church History and Doctrine at BYU, and three other team members, with permission from Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ) officials, conducted an archaeological ground survey of the Hawn’s property. The team made two significant discoveries immediately southeast of the mill site on the south side of Shoal Creek. The first of these discoveries was the presence of an old wagon road leading directly to the mill and stream, likely used by people coming to the mill from the south. Even more significant was the discovery just a few feet from the road of a number of household items and artifacts, clearly suggesting the presence of a cabin.10 Another study, this one conducted by F. Richard Hauck of the Archaeological Research Institute in March 1999 using ground-penetrating radar, revealed the remains of a foundation or root cellar at the cabin location. These two discoveries led the team to conclude that this was the probable location of Hawn’s cabin, since historical sources indicate his home was on the south side of Shoal Creek, and he probably constructed his home to be adjacent to or close by the mill.11 The fact that Jacob Hawn constructed the mill at this particular location on Shoal Creek suggests he recognized the agricultural and economic poten-
Aerial photograph showing the approximate location of Jacob Hawn’s 40-acre property, including the old wagon road leading to the mill, the mill and dam, and the Hawn cabin. Image courtesy of Alexander L. Baugh.
tial of the region, and he believed the area’s surrounding population, at that time and in the future, would support the mill operation. He did not have to wait long for additional neighbors. As part of the relocation agreement made between Clay County leaders and citizens with the Mormons, beginning in May and continuing through August 1836, Mormon leaders began searching out and purchasing land parcels near Shoal Creek, approximately sixteen miles to the west of Hawn’s property. Part of that property purchase became Far West, the new Mormon center. In addition, individual Mormons began making their own land purchases, mostly in the vicinity of Far West, but a number of Mormons also settled along stretches of Shoal Creek, including in the region of Hawn’s establishment.

During the fall 1836 Missouri legislative session, Alexander W. Doniphan, Clay County’s representative to the state legislature and the Mormons’ hired attorney, introduced legislation proposing the creation of a county for the Mormons situated north of what was considered “incorporated” Ray County. Doniphan initially proposed the county be 24 by 24 square miles. However, a number of non-Mormons living between the 53rd and 54th township lines protested being included in the Mormon county, so this region (called the Buncombe Strip—6 by 24 square miles) was attached to Ray County, leav-
ing the proposed Mormon County at 18 by 24 square miles. As discussions progressed, Doniphan began to fear that the bill to organize one county exclusively for the Mormons might not pass, so he proposed that a second county (essentially a non-Mormon county) also be created, which lay directly north of the proposed Mormon county. The bill passed the House on December 23, and the Senate on December 27. On December 29, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs signed legislation creating Caldwell County in behalf of the Mormons, situated directly north of Ray County, and Daviess County lying directly north of Caldwell.13

With the creation of Caldwell County, Hawn’s property and the settlement community became part of the Mormon County. It was later reported that “every Gentile in the proposed new county that could be induced to sell his possessions at a reasonable price was bought out, and his place taken by a Mormon.”14 If Hawn indeed was not affiliated with the Church (and I contend he was not), he obviously chose to remain and not sell out. His decision to stay probably stemmed from several factors. He had clearly made a substantial investment in his milling operation. Whereas a typical farmer could simply
sell his land and cabin and start over, a miller’s milling operation represented a sizeable building project. After all, the construction of a dam, a millrace, and the mill itself, including the mechanical gear, represented a sizeable investment in terms of equipment and construction—something most mill owners were not likely to just walk away from. Hawn was also probably enjoying brisk business. And finally, he apparently did not have any objections to the Mormon people, but in fact saw them as business patrons and customers.

Significantly, Jacob Hawn was joined by a few other enterprising Mormon millers. The first of these, Robert White, purchased 160 acres of land on August 2, 1836, eighty acres of which was located about a half mile northeast and downstream from Hawn’s mill, and established a second mill. In July 1837, Jacob Myers Jr., purchased the forty-acre plot immediately west and upstream from Hawn’s property, where he and his father, Jacob Sr., built a rudimentary saw mill. Still later, the Myers’s partnered with Ellis Eames and added a gristmill operation to the saw mill. With three milling operations in the immediate area, Mormons often referred to the general locality of Hawn’s Mill simply as “the mills.”
The presence of three mills also suggests there was plenty of business to go around, and each of the enterprises likely was turning a profit. Jacob Hawn’s success may have led him to encourage his brother, James Hawn, to move to Caldwell County. In November 1837, James Hawn purchased forty acres directly southwest of Jacob Hawn’s forty-acre property. Although it cannot be precisely determined if Jacob and James were brothers, there is some evidence they were. The facts that Jacob had a brother named James, the spelling of the last name is the same, and that they lived adjacent to each other at least suggest the possibility. Little is known about James Hawn, but whereas no record exists to show that Jacob became a Mormon, apparently James did. James McBride, a Latter-day Saint (and a son of Thomas W. McBride, who was brutally killed in the massacre by Jacob Rogers, who hacked and maimed him using a corn cutter), later wrote that in June 1838, he himself, Isaac Leaney, and James Hawn were all baptized at the same time into the Church. Following the massacre, James Hawn made his way with the rest of the Saints to Quincy, Illinois, where on May 19, 1839, he wrote an affidavit against the state of Missouri for loss of property amounting to five hundred dollars. From Quincy,
his name disappears from the history of the Church. He is reported to have died in California.\textsuperscript{21}

The actual settlement of Hawn’s Mill never included more than a few families and fewer than a dozen cabins. However, another seventy to seventy-five Latter-day Saint families lived in the immediate area. When a branch of the Church was also later established, David Evans was called to preside over the members.\textsuperscript{22} Accepting the conclusion that Jacob Hawn was not a Latter-day Saint helps us understand perhaps why Evans was appointed branch president and not Hawn. Evans was a Mormon, Hawn was not.

On January 26, 1837, Harriett Hawn gave birth to the couple’s second child, Alonzo Pierson Hawn.\textsuperscript{23} Obviously, both their oldest daughter Laura, who would have been only three at the time of the massacre, and Alonzo, not quite two, were too young ever to later recall any of the events associated with the massacre.

Being a man of some means, Jacob hired a sixteen-year-old Mormon girl, Catherine McBride (nicknamed Kit), to live with family and help care for the couple’s two young children. Catherine was the daughter of Thomas W. McBride (briefly mentioned earlier as one who was brutally killed) and his wife (also named Catherine). The McBrides lived a little over a half mile east of Hawn’s Mill and the two families had become friends. It is not known when Catherine was hired on as household help, but she was at the
Jacob Hawn and the Attack at the Mill

The Mormons living at Hawn’s Mill and in the surrounding region enjoyed relative peace until the fall of 1838, when the events associated with the Mormon-Missouri War escalated, particularly after non-Mormons living in Daviess County to the north were forced from their homes and property by Mormon defenders in late October. Most of the Daviess County exiles fled to Livingston County to the east, where they combined with the citizens in that county to retaliate by striking back against the Mormons; and the Haun’s Mill settlement, situated four miles from the Livingston-Caldwell County border, became the target.

Fearing the possibility of some sort of confrontation, residents of the mill community appointed Jacob Hawn to travel to Far West to seek advice from Caldwell County militia leaders and Mormon leaders concerning whether they should continue to maintain the mill site and remain in the area. The meeting reportedly took place on October 25, five days before the massacre.²⁵ At Far
West, Hawn first approached John Killian, an officer in the Caldwell militia. Recognizing the isolated nature of the settlement and its proximity to the hostile Livingston and Daviess County forces, Killian counseled Hawn to move the families into Far West at once. The mill owner also asked Joseph Smith for his counsel concerning the situation, whereupon he was told to abandon the mill so as to not risk the lives of the citizens. “But we think we are strong enough to defend the mill and keep it in our own hands,” Hawn is reported to have replied. With that, he returned to the community and reported that Smith’s instructions were for them to stay and protect and hold the mill.26 David Lewis, a Hawn’s Mill resident, believed Hawn purposely misrepresented Joseph Smith’s position and deliberately deceived community members. He wrote that Hawn “returned and said if we thought we could maintain the mill it was Joseph’s council for us to do so . . . and not to come to Farewest [sic] and we thought from the way the thing was represented it would be like cowards to leave and not try to maintain it . . . [and] we thought to guether [gather] up all our affects and leave our houses would be useless, for we did not know that it was Joseph’s decided council for us to do so.”27 Lewis’s statement is supported by Philo Dibble, who, although not a Hawn’s Mill resident, reported to have knowledge concerning the conversation between Hawn and Smith. “While I was at Far West,” he wrote, “Brother Joseph had sent word by Haun, who owned the mill, to inform the brethren who were living there to leave and come to Far West, but Mr. Haun did not deliver the message.”28

Concerning the instruction and counsel Hawn received from Smith to abandon the mill and settlement and move into Far West, John D. Lee wrote in his memoir, “The massacre at Haughn’s Mill was the result of the brethren’s refusal to obey the wishes of the Prophet. All the brethren so considered it. It made a deep and lasting impression on my mind, for I had heard the Prophet give the counsel . . . to come into the town. They had refused, and the result was a lesson to all that there was no safety except in obeying the Prophet.”29 This same sentiment was echoed by Joseph Smith himself. In an August 1842 meeting in Nauvoo, he was reported to have said, “None had ever been killed who abode by my counsel. At Haun’s Mill the brethren went contrary to my counsel; if they had not, their lives would have been spared.”30 On the surface, one could conclude from such a statement that the Saints in the vicinity of Hawn’s Mill were essentially disobedient to the Prophet’s counsel, and they paid a tremendous price in terms of loss of life, injury, and property. For some time I thought that the descendants of the Hawn’s Mill victims must have felt some sense of sorrow and regret toward their ancestors, believing they had disregarded Joseph Smith’s counsel. However, the historical facts reveal a different story. Jacob Hawn essentially misled the Saints who were at the mill prior to the attack on the settlement, telling them that the Mormon leader
said they could remain and defend themselves if necessary. Ultimately, then, the Hawn’s Mill tragedy should not be seen as an example of disobedience, and those who were at the settlement at the time of the attack should not bear the blame for rejecting Joseph Smith’s instruction and counsel. Had Hawn reported truthfully, one could reasonably conclude that most, if not all, would have followed Smith’s directive and moved closer to Far West. Joseph Smith’s 1842 statement should also be evaluated in this same context. It seems apparent that nearly four years after the tragedy, he was simply unaware of the facts regarding what Hawn had actually reported.

It is not entirely clear if Jacob Hawn chose to assist the Mormons in their defense of the settlement at the time of the attack. None of the Mormon sources indicate that he went into the blacksmith shop with the main group of the Mormon defenders. However, a number of sources state he was wounded, but probably not seriously. He may have been shot and hit while merely trying to take cover.

After the fighting began, a few Mormons tried to escape the gunfire by making their way across the mill dam or across the stream below the dam and up the riverbank to the road which led past Hawn’s home. One of these was Isaac Leany, who made a harrowing and miraculous escape. When he and his companions left the shop they were fired upon at a range of only four to five rods. Upon making his break, he was pelted with bullets and was hit several times. In spite of his injuries, he was able to make his way to the mill, where he climbed down one of the mill’s timbers to the creek, then waded through the frosty water until he came to Jacob Hawn’s home, where his wife Harriet, Catherine McBride, and the wife of Gilmon Merrill (one of the Mormon men wounded in the attack) had gathered. The ladies quickly ushered him into the cabin and attended briefly to his wounds. However, fearing the mob might storm the house and Leany be discovered, they removed a floor board, laid Leany down in the cavity, and resecured the board. Here he remained until the vigilantes left, all the while suffering extreme discomfort as a result of his extensive wounds. After the fighting ceased, the Hawn home served as an infirmary where several of the injured were cared for, including Austin Ham-

mer, Nathan K. Knight, Isaac Leany, William Yokum, and John York. Hammer died that night, York the next day.

Following the attack, the marauders spent about an hour plundering some of the Mormon homes, but only those on the north side of Shoal Creek, and ransacking the tents of those in Joseph Young’s wagon company who had arrived at the settlement only two days earlier. The spoils included furniture, bedding, household articles, clothing, tools, guns, farm animals, wagons, horses, and any money they could find. “Haun’s house escaped their ravages,” Nathan K. Knight reported, “but his horses were taken from the stable.”
Life at the mill never returned to normal. On November 1, Mormon leaders at Far West surrendered to state authorities and signed an agreement that the entire Mormon population would evacuate the state. Soon after the surrender, a contingent of Livingston militia occupied the Hawn’s Mill settlement for nearly three weeks. Life during the winter of 1838–39 became essentially day-to-day survival. Most of the families banded together until they could make arrangements to move along with the rest of the Latter-day Saints to the more welcome hospices of Illinois. By the end of February 1839, most, if not all of the Mormons had gone.

Given the nature of the hostilities, it is not surprising that Jacob and Harriett Hawn decided to pull up stakes and sell out. Hawn sold his property to a Missourian by the name of Jacob Gudgill. Hawn took some of the mill’s machinery, but left the mill standing. Gudgill leased the property to Charles R. Ross, who took occupation in February 1839, evidence that by this time, the Hawns had left.35

**Oregon Pioneers**

For the next four years, Jacob, Harriett, and their family were on the move. They first went east to New York, and upon their hearing of glowing reports about the Oregon region, the call of the frontier beckoned Jacob once again. When the ship *Lausanne* returned to New York harbor carrying a group of Methodist missionaries returning from Oregon Territory, Jacob hoped to sail on the ship’s return trip to Pacific coast. However, when he learned the vessel would not leave for six months, he went to Galveston, Texas (probably first by ship to New Orleans, then to Galveston), where he built another mill, perhaps using some of the mechanical gear he had taken with him when he left Caldwell County.36 While the Hawns were in Texas, another child, Jasper Columbus Hawn, was born, February 8, 1840.37 The climate conditions proving unhealthy for Harriett, the family moved once again to Missouri, only this time to Franklin County, west of St. Louis, where Jacob built a gristmill and sawmill.38

By the early 1840s, Oregon fever was at a pitch, spawned by Marcus Whitman, a Presbyterian missionary and physician who in 1836 had established the Whitman Mission on the west side of the Blue Mountains near present-day Walla Walla in southeastern Washington. In 1842–43, Whitman came east to promote emigration to the Oregon region. When Jacob Hawn learned that plans were being made to organize a large overland emigrant party to travel from Missouri to Oregon, he signed on, probably thinking that his knowledge of mill construction and skill as a miller would prove to be a valuable asset in the region.
When Jacob and Harriett Hawn left Franklin County, Missouri, on May 10, 1843, to join the main body of overland immigrants assembling at the Missouri border, their children numbered four—Laura (7), Alonzo (6), Jasper (3), and Newton Watson Hawn, a three-week old infant born April 20, 1843. From Franklin County, the family went by boat on the Missouri River to Independence, where they purchased oxen for the journey. On May 18, they rendezvoused with the pioneer company just over the Missouri border, twelve miles west of Independence on the Kansas River (present-day Kansas City) and made last-minute preparations. On May 22, an estimated seven hundred company members (some sources give the figure as high as one thousand), including the Hawns, began the two thousand-mile overland journey on the Oregon Trail in what became known as “the Great Migration of 1843.” Peter Hardeman Burnett was selected captain of the company. Significantly, historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, in his History of Oregon, gives the name of Jacob Hawn as a company member.

Marcus Whitman did not join the wagon company until the Platte River in central Nebraska. At Fort Hall near present-day Pocatello, Idaho, Whitman went ahead of the group, charting a course by paralleling the Snake River then crossing the arduous Blue Mountains before their arrival at his mission, located thirty miles east of the Columbia River where it takes a sharp bend west to the Pacific. While at the Whitman mission, the company rested for four days. During their stay, Jacob repaired the mission’s mill—a horse sweep. Reaching the Columbia, the company made the rest of the journey in canoes and rafts (for the wagons), while staying close to the Washington side of the river. The Hawns arrived at Fort Vancouver, headquarters for the British Hudson Bay Company, on November 18, 1843. Here they met Dr. John McLoughlin (called “the Great White Eagle” by the Indians, and later to be called the “Father of Oregon”), head of the company. McLoughlin had been apprised of Jacob’s coming by an Indian messenger from Whitman’s mission and immediately employed him to build a grist mill at Oregon City, twenty-five miles south of the fort, the first mill erected in the Willamette valley, and probably the first mill constructed in Oregon.

The Hawns remained in Oregon City until 1846, when Jacob traded his property for a cabin and land claim on the Yamhill River in an area known as Moore’s Valley, located west of present-day Yamhill, where he built a sawmill that year. While here, another child, Melissa Jane Hawn, was born June 20, 1846. Hawn’s stay in the area was not long. That fall he sold out once again, moving this time to the Yamhill Falls, a small town that shortly became Lafayette.

In Lafayette, Hawn built a hotel sometime in 1848, which came to be known as the Lafayette House, although the locals called it Hawn’s tavern.
Being the most prominent structure in town, it was also the first post office in the county, with Jacob Hawn as postmaster. The hotel also served as a temporary courthouse, school, and church. In July 1848, news of gold being discovered in northern California reached the Willamette Valley. Hoping to strike it rich, Jacob left for the gold fields in the spring of 1849, leaving the responsibility of managing the hotel to Harriett and the children. He returned the following spring without much to show for his time and labor.

After returning to Lafayette, Jacob Hawn spent most of the rest of his life building mills—something he could never get out of his blood. The geography, topography, and rainfall of the northern Willamette region provided the ideal place for milling, placing his services in high demand. Many of the names of the locations where he erected the mills have changed over the years, but his construction résumé is extensive—about a dozen in number.

Interestingly, on January 27, 1860, at the age fifty-six, Jacob Hawn died of a hemorrhage while building the Happy Valley mill. The year after his death Harriett and the younger children moved to The Dalles, where she spent the rest of her life. She died on April 17, 1883. The two are buried side by side in the Pike Cemetery northwest of Yamhill, Oregon.
Conclusion

To historians and writers of the Mormon experience in northern Missouri in the 1830s, Jacob Hawn has been an enigma and mystery—a missing piece of the historical puzzle of early Mormonism. Who was he, and what became of him? It’s almost as if he emerged from nowhere, and then disappeared. I was fortunate enough to have someone like Sherrie Clement provide the clue I needed to track him down.

Jacob Hawn lived an adventurous life as an enterprising nineteenth-century millwright. But his life was certainly not by most standards extraordinary. He would probably be surprised to learn that today his name, and the mill operation he established in a relatively isolated part of northern Missouri in the mid-1830s, has become widely known in Mormon circles (particularly among the historical community) because of his association with the greatest Mormon misfortune in Mormon history that resulted from religious persecution against the Latter-day Saints.

Notes


2. See Appendices I and J in Baugh, *A Call to Arms*, 203–21


6. Laura’s gives her own birth date in Laura Aurvilla Hawn Perkins Patterson, Recollections, typescript, 1, Yamhill County Historical Society, Lafayette, Oregon, copy in possession of the author. Another Hawn family history was prepared by Leviaette (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson, also a daughter of Jacob and Harriett Hawn. See Leviaette (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson, History, typescript, Yamhill County Historical Society, Lafayette, Oregon, copy in possession of the author. Note: Both Laura and Leviaette (Levia) shared the same married name. Hereafter, Laura Aurvilla Hawn Perkins Patterson’s narrative will be referenced as Patterson, Recollections; and Leviaette (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson’s narrative will be referenced as Patterson, History. The author acknowledges the assistance of Nancy Thornton of Yamhill, Oregon, who provided information about these and other Hawn family sources.

7. See Record #252, Original Entries for Lands in Caldwell County, Caldwell County Records Office, Kingston, Missouri, NW ¼ of NE ¼ of Section 17; also Clark V. Johnson and Ronald E. Romig, with revisions by Annette W. Curtis, *An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records* (Independence, MO: Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation, 2005), 81; and Jeffrey N. Walker, “Mormon Land Rights in Caldwell and Daviess Counties and the Mormon Conflict of 1838,” *BYU Studies* 47, no. 1 (2008): 25, note 57. The forty-acre property later became part of Fairview Township in Caldwell County. See John Hamer, *Northeast of Eden: A Historical Atlas of Missouri’s Mormon County* (n. p.: Far West Cultural Center, 2004), 24. The History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri, has Jacob Hawn establishing his mill on Shoal Creek in 1834. See *History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri* (St. Louis, MO: National Historical Company, 1986), 100. However, this could not be the case. As noted in the text, the Hawn’s first daughter Laura was born in Wisconsin in September 1835, so they could not have been living in Missouri in 1834.

8. The name was probably anglicized by Henry Hawn, Jacob Hawn’s father from the German H-a-h-n, to H-a-w-n.

9. For example, Susan Easton Black did not find evidence to include the Hawn’s as Church members in her comprehensive listing of early Mormons. See volume 21 (Har-Hay) in Susan Easton Black, comp., *Membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1848*, 50 vols. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young
University. 1989).

10. Berrett makes brief mention of this discovery in LaMar C. Berrett, *Sacred Places Volume Four: Missouri* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 347. Hawn’s cabin location is shown on the map in Berrett’s book. See Berrett, *Sacred Places Volume Four: Missouri*, 338. The other three members of the archaeological team were Charles Allen, John Eldridge, and Randy Olsen.


12. Mormon land purchases were made on the following dates: May 3, 1836 (80 acres), purchased in the name of Hyrum Smith; June 3, 1836 (320 acres), purchased in the name of Hyrum Smith; June 22, 1836 (880 acres), purchased in the names of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery; and August 8, 1836 (960 acres), purchased in the names of W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer—2,240 acres total.


14. *History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties*, 104. Although not every non-Mormon left, most probably did. Furthermore, it is safe to say that a few non-Mormons later moved in. That said, the county was clearly dominated by Mormons. “By the summer of 1838, the population of the county was about 5,000, of whom, it is safe to say, 4,900 were Mormons.” *History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties*, 118.

15. The property purchased by Robert White for his mill consisted of eighty acres of the W ½ of the SW ¼ of Section 9. Original Entries for Lands in Caldwell County, Record #2590; see also Clark and Romig, *An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records*, 216. On this same date (August 2, 1836), White purchased two additional forty-acre tracts nearby, but not on Shoal Creek. See Original Entries for Lands in Caldwell County, Record #202 and #257; also Clark and Romig, *An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records*, 217. The *History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties* states that White purchased his mill property in 1834, but this is an error. See *History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties*, 100, 476. White added two forty-acre parcels in 1837 and 1838. See Original Entries for Lands in Caldwell County, Record #208 and #249; also Clark and Romig, *An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records*, 217. By late October 1838, on becoming disillusioned with Mormonism, he moved to Livingston County. Ironically, a number of Mormons later wrote that he was a member of the vigilante party that attacked the mill.

16. The property purchased by Jacob Myers Jr. for his mill, transacted on July 29, 1837, consisted of forty acres of the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 17. Original Entries for Lands in Caldwell County, Record #251; see also Clark and Romig, *An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records*, 124. Both Jacob Myers Jr. and Jacob Myers Sr. purchased two hundred additional acres in the immediate area—a total of 240 acres. See Original Entries for Lands in Caldwell County, Record #2595, #222, and #203; see also Clark and Romig, *An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records*, 124–25.

17. Ellis Eames, Reminiscence, in *Journal History of the Church*, October 30, 1838, 11, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Eames states the modified mill was completed the following spring, namely 1838. He was somehow misidentified in the *Journal History* as Ellis Eamut.
18. The forty acre property purchased by James Hawn included the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 17. Original Entries for Lands in Caldwell County, Record #248; also Clark and Romig, An Index to Early Caldwell County, Missouri Land Records, 81.

19. James McBride, Autobiography of James McBride, typescript, 10, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. James (b. May 9, 1818; d. January 18, 1881) would have been twenty years-old at the time.


23. Alonzo P. Hawn’s birth date is incorrectly given in several sources, but January 26, 1837, appears to be the correct date. The history of the Hawn family by Leviaette (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson gives the date of Alonzo’s birth as January 26, 1836, but the typescript was corrected to read 1837. Patterson, History, 1. The 1836 date could not be correct, since the eldest daughter, Laura, was born on September 1, 1835, and Alonzo’s birth could not have occurred only five months later. In the 1850 U. S. Federal Census, Alonzo’s age is listed as thirteen, an age that would correspond with the 1837 date. Hawn family descendants give Alonzo’s birth date as January 26, 1837, in Caldwell County, Missouri. Nancy Thornton to Eleanor Mitchell, February 8, 2004, copy in possession of the author. The LDS Church’s International Genealogical Index correctly gives Alonzo’s birth date as January 26, but gives the incorrect year of 1838.

The birthplace information in the 1850 U. S. Federal Census for Harriett, Laura, Alonzo, and Newton Hawn is also incorrect, but it is a line error. Harriett’s birthplace is given as Wisconsin, when it should be New Jersey. Laura’s is given as Missouri when it should be Wisconsin, Alonzo’s is given as Texas when it should be Missouri, and Newton’s is given as Oregon Territory when it should be Missouri.


25. See Reburn I. Holcombe, “The Haun’s Mill Massacre: An Incident of the ‘Mormon War’ in Missouri,” written September 27, 1887, published in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, October 6, 1887; also published in Joseph Smith III, and Heman C. Smith, The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 4 vols. (Independence: Herald House, 1951), 2:226. Holcombe, who wrote this narrative under the pen name of Burr Joyce, was a late nineteenth and early twentieth century historian who wrote several county and local histories of communities and locales in Kansas, Missouri, and Minnesota. Walter B. Stevens, a noted Missouri state historian, later stated that Holcombe was the most noted researcher and writer of the Mormon experience in Missouri. See Walter B. Stevens, Centennial History of Missouri: One hundred Years in the Union, 1820–1921, 6 vols. (St. Louis, MO: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 115–16.

26. Daniel Tyler, “Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” Juvenile Instructor 27, no. 3 (February 1, 1892): 94–95. Very little is known concerning the militia officer named John Killian, as mentioned by Tyler. Parley P. Pratt stated that when Hinkle was not in Far West, Killian was the officer in charge of the Mormon forces. See Pratt, History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri Upon the Mormons, in which Ten Thousand American Citizens Were Robbed, Plundered, and Driven From the State, and Many Others Imprisoned, Martyred, &C. for Their Religion, and All This by Military Force, by Order of the Executive (Detroit, MI: Dawson and Bates, Printers, 1839), 33; also in Johnson Mor-
mon Redress Petitions, 78. Sidney Rigdon also makes brief mention of Killian in connection with the Far West forces. See Rigdon petition in Johnson, Mormon Redress Petitions, 672–73. Tyler, Pratt, and Rigdon all indicate Killian held the rank of captain.

Readers of Tyler’s “Recollections” will note that in the narrative he refers to Hawn as “Brother Haun,” suggesting Hawn was a Church member. In addition, Tyler records Hawn as referring to Joseph Smith as “Brother Joseph,” again suggesting Hawn referred to the Prophet as “Brother” because of a church association or affiliation. However, it is important to note that Tyler was not a Hawn’s Mill resident and probably did not even personally know Hawn. Furthermore, Tyler stated he received the information about the conversations Hawn had with Killian and Smith from Killian, so it was second-hand. All this illustrates that in writing his recollection, Tyler assumed Hawn was a Church member, which I argue was not the case.

27. David Lewis, Autobiography, typescript, 11–12, Church History Library.

28. Philo Dibble, “Philo Dibble’s Narrative,” in Early Scenes in Church History: Eighth Book of the Faith-Promoting Series (Salt Lake City, UT: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 90, reprinted in Four Faith Promoting Classics, Part 4 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 90. In an address given by Brigham Young in 1866, he indicated that Joseph Smith instructed David Evans, the branch president at Hawn’s Mill, to instruct the people in the vicinity of the settlement to move to Far West. Young was reported to have said: “Now let me make an application taking the circumstances of Haun’s Mill[,] that is the massacre there[,] if Brother David Evans . . . had have taken Joseph’s counsel there would no person been hurt[,] I heard Joseph talk with him[,] he said gather up that people and bring them to this place [Far West] where [they would] be safe[,] Brother Evans said we are strong enough to defend ourselves and made a compromise with the mob and we are safe.” Brigham Young, Remarks given at Salt Lake City, Utah, May 20, 1866, George D. Watt Papers, Church History Library, shorthand transcription by LaJean Purcell Carruth. So the question could be raised, did Joseph Smith instruct Jacob Hawn to tell the Saints living in the vicinity of Hawn’s Mill to move to Far West, or was it David Evans, the branch president? I conclude that it was Hawn, primarily because all the other sources state it was him, the most important source being that of David Lewis, who actually lived there (his property was directly adjacent to Hawn’s), and who specifically indicated it was Hawn. See note 26. Evans probably came at some time to Far West to counsel with Joseph Smith, which may be why Young remembered the Prophet conversing with Evans. Significantly, Watt’s original longhand transcription of Young’s remarks does not include any reference to David Evans.

29. John D. Lee, Mormonism Unveiled; Including the Remarkable Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee; and Complete Life of Brigham Young, Embracing a History of Mormonism From Its Inception Down to the Present Time, With an Exposition of the Secret History, Signs, Symbols, and Crimes of the Mormon Church. Also the True Story of the Horrible Butchery Known as the Mountain Meadows Massacre (St. Louis, MO: Moffatt Publishing Co., 1881), 81.


35. Charles R. Ross came to Missouri from Tennessee, arriving only nine days after the massacre. At first, he settled in Utica in Livingston County, but as noted in the text, he leased the property from Jacob Gudgill and then moved there in February 1839. In 1845, Ross tore down the abandoned mill and the blacksmith shop. See History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, 100, 148 note 1, 151; 501–02; and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, T. Jeffery Cottle, and Ted D. Stoddard, eds., Church History in Black and White: George Edward Anderson’s Photographic Mission to Latter-day Saint Historical Sites, 1907 Diary and 1907–08 Photographs (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995), 101, 103.


37. Jasper C. Hawn’s date of birth is given by his sister Leviattle (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson in Patterson, History, 1.

38. Laura Aurvilla Hawn Perkins Patterson, Recollections, 1; History of the Willamette Valley Oregon, 3:634; The Centennial History of Oregon, 2:1036; and Pioneer Families of Yamhill County, Oregon, 2:300.


40. Laura Aurvilla Hawn Perkins Patterson, Recollections, 1. Laura’s sister incorrectly wrote that the family left for Independence from Far West, Missouri. See Leviattle (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson, History, 1.


42. Peter Hardeman Burnett, formerly of Clay County, Missouri, had served as legal counsel to Joseph Smith during the Prophet’s final hearing at Gallatin in April 1839. See Alexander L. Baugh, “‘We Took Our Change of Venue to the State of Illinois’: The Gallatin Hearing and the Escape of Joseph Smith and the Mormon Prisoners from Missouri, 1939,” Mormon Historical Studies 2, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 59–82. After arriving in Oregon, Burnett served for four years in Oregon’s provisional legislature and Supreme Court (1844–1848). After the discovery of gold in California, he left Oregon and moved to Sacramento, where in 1849 he went on to be elected as California’s first civilian governor. Burnett’s account of the overland journey is found in Burnett, An Old California Pioneer, 61–78.


44. See Laura Aurvilla Hawn Perkins Patterson, Recollections, 3. Leviattle (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson wrote that her father, Jacob Hawn, built the mill. See Patterson, History, 4.


46. Centennial History of Oregon, 2:1036. Leviattle (Levia) S. Hawn Patterson, also states it was the first mill built in the Willamette valley and that it stood until 1875 or 1880. See Patterson, History, 6. Another source states that Hawn repaired an existing mill which had never been properly installed by members of the Hudson Bay Company. See Addison Bennett, “Death of Mrs. Laura Hawn Recalls Great 1843 Train,” McMinnville Telephone-
Register (McMinnville Oregon), 1921, month and day of the publication of the newspaper is not known.


49. Stoller, Old Yamhill, 35.

50. Historical sources list numerous mills built by Hawn in Oregon, but no attempt has been made by the author to list or quantify them. Most of the mills he constructed went by early geographic names of the rivers or creeks on which they were built, or by the individuals who hired Hawn to build them. For an example of the names of some of the mills built by Hawn see, Jim Lockett, Oregon needed millwright’s skill; pioneer Jacob Hawn filled the bill,” News-Register (McMinnville, Oregon), March 8, 2005, B4.