Haun’s Mill was named after Jacob Haun, a member of the Church, who built a mill on Shoal Creek between 1835 and 1836. In October 1838, there were an estimated 75 families living there, although there were only perhaps a dozen or so houses along with a blacksmith shop and a mill.

In the afternoon of October 30, 1838 a mob consisting of more than 200 men descended upon the settlement. Many of the Saints ran into the blacksmith shop where members of the mob placed their rifles in the cracks between the logs and opened fire.

At least fifteen LDS men were killed during the attack or died shortly thereafter because of wounds inflicted by the attack. After the massacre, the mob looted the houses and tents and drove off horses and wagons.

Joseph Young, Brigham Young’s older brother gave an account of the events at Haun’s Mill in response to Joseph Smith, Jr.’s request to gather information about the atrocities that they endured while in Missouri. After being driven out of Missouri, the Saints then fled to Quincy, Illinois before settling the city of Nauvoo.

**Sources**

2. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
either party.

At this time, however, there was another mob collecting on Grand river, at William Mann's, who were threatening us, consequently we remained under arms.

Monday passed away without molestation from any quarter.

On Tuesday, the 30th, that bloody tragedy was acted, the scene of which I shall never forget. More than three-fourths of the day had passed in tranquility, as smiling as the preceding one. I think there was no individual of our company that was apprised of the sudden and awful fate that hung over our heads like an overwhelming torrent, which was to change the prospects, the feelings and the circumstances of about thirty families. The banks of Shoal creek on either side teemed with children sporting and playing, while their mothers were engaged in domestic employments, and their fathers employed in guarding the mills and other property, while others were engaged in gathering in their crops for their winter consumption. The weather was very pleasant, the sun shone clear, all was tranquil, and no one expressed any apprehension of the awful crisis that was near us—even at our doors.

It was about four o'clock, while sitting in my cabin with my babe in my arms, and my wife standing by my side, the door being open, I cast my eyes on the opposite bank of Shoal creek and saw a large company of armed men, on horses, directing their course towards the mills with all possible speed. As they advanced through the scattering trees that stood on the edge of the prairie they seemed to form themselves into a three square position, forming a vanguard in front.

At this moment, David Evans, seeing the superiority of their numbers, (there being two hundred and forty of them, according to their own account), swung his hat, and cried for peace. This not being heeded, they continued to advance, and their leader, Mr. Nehemiah Comstock, fired a gun, which was followed by a solemn pause of ten or twelve seconds, when, all at once, they discharged about one hundred rifles, aiming at a blacksmith shop into which our friends had fled for safety; and charged up to the shop, the cracks of which between the logs were sufficiently large to enable them to aim directly at the bodies of those who had there fled for refuge from the fire of their murderers. There were several families tented in the rear of the shop, whose lives were exposed, and amidst a shower of bullets fled to the woods in different directions.

After standing and gazing on this bloody scene for a few minutes, and finding myself in the uttermost danger, the bullets having reached the house where I was living, I committed my family to the protection of heaven, and leaving the house on the opposite side, I took a path which led up the hill, following in the trail of three of my brethren that had fled from the shop. While ascending the hill we were discovered by the mob, who immediately fired at us, and continued so to do till we reached the summit. In descending the hill, I secreted myself in a thicket of bushes, where I lay till eight o'clock in the evening, at which time I heard a female voice calling my name in an under tone, telling me that the mob had gone and there was no danger. I immediately left the thicket, and went to the house of Benjamin Lewis, where I found my family (who had fled there) in safety, and two of my friends mortally wounded, one of whom died before morning. Here we passed the painful night in deep and awful reflections on the scenes of the preceding evening.

After daylight appeared, some four or five men, who with myself, had escaped with our lives from the horrid massacre, and who repaired as soon as possible to the mills, to learn the condition of our friends, whose fate we had but too truly anticipated. When we arrived at the house of Mr. Haun, we found Mr. Merrick's body lying in the rear of the house, Mr. McBride's in front, literally mangled from head to foot. We were informed by Miss Rebecca Judd, who was an eye
witness, that he was shot with his own gun, after he had given it up, and then cut to pieces with a corn cutter by a Mr. Rogers of Daviess county, who keeps a ferry on Grand river, and who has since repeatedly boasted of this act of savage barbarity. Mr. York’s body we found in the house, and after viewing these corpses, we immediately went to the blacksmith’s shop, where we found nine of our friends, eight of whom were already dead; the other, Mr. Cox, of Indiana, struggling in the agonies of death and soon expired. We immediately prepared and carried them to the place of interment. The last office of kindness due to the remains of departed friends, was not attended with the customary ceremonies or decency, for we were in jeopardy, every moment expecting to be fired upon by the mob, who, we supposed, were lying in ambush, waiting for the first opportunity to despatch the remaining few who were providentially preserved from the slaughter of the preceding day. However, we accomplished without molestation this painful task. The place of burying was a vault in the ground, formerly intended for a well, into which we threw the bodies of our friends promiscuously. Among those slain I will mention Sardius Smith, son of Warren Smith, about nine years old, who, through fear, had crawled under the bellows in the shop, where he remained till the massacre was over, when he was discovered by a Mr. Glaze, of Carroll county, who presented his rifle near the boy’s head, and literally blew off the upper part of it. Mr. Stanley, of Carroll, told me afterwards that Glaze boasted of this fiend-like murder and heroic deed all over the country.

The number killed and mortally wounded in this wanton slaughter was eighteen or nineteen, whose names as far as I recollect were as follows: Thomas McBride, Levi N. Merrick, Elias Benner, Josiah Fuller, Benjamin Lewis, Alexander Campbell, Warren Smith, Sardius Smith, George S. Richards, Mr. William Napier, Augustine Harmer, Simon Cox, Mr. [Hiram] Abbott, John York, Charles Merrick, (a boy eight or nine years old), [John Lee, John Byers], and three or four others, whose names I do not recollect, as they were strangers, to me. Among the wounded who recovered were Isaac Laney, Nathan K. Knight, Mr. [William] Yokum, two brothers by the name of [Jacob and George] Myers, Tarlton Lewis, Mr. [Jacob] Haun, and several others, [Jacob Foutz, Jacob Potts, Charles Jimison, John Walker, Alma Smith, aged about nine years]. Miss Mary Stedwell, while fleeing, was shot through the hand, and, fainting, fell over a log, into which they shot upwards of twenty balls.

To finish their work of destruction, this band of murderers, composed of men from Daviess, Livingston, Ray, Carroll, and Chariton counties, led by some of the principal men of that section of the upper country, (among whom I am informed were Mr. Ashby, of Chariton, member of the state legislature; Colonel Jennings, of Livingston county, Thomas O. Bryon, clerk of Livingston county; Mr. Whitney, Dr. Randall, and many others), proceeded to rob the houses, wagons, and tents, of bedding and clothing; drove off horses and wagons, leaving widows and orphans destitute of the necessaries of life; and even stripped the clothing from the bodies of the slain. According to their own account, they fired seven rounds in this awful butchery, making upwards of sixteen hundred shots at a little company of men, about thirty in number. I hereby certify the above to be a true statement of facts, according to the best of my knowledge.”

Joseph Young.
State of Illinois, ss.
County Of Adams.

The Healing of Alma Smith

“Flesh, hip bone, joint and all had been ploughed out… We laid little Alma on a bed in our tent and I examined the wound. It was a ghastly sight. I knew not what to do…yet was I there, all that long, dreadful night, with my dead and my wounded, and none but God as our physician and help. ‘Oh my Heavenly Father,’ I cried,
‘what shall I do? Thou seest my poor wounded boy and knowest my inexperience. Oh, Heavenly Father, direct me what to do!’ And then I was directed as by a voice speaking to me.

…Our fire was still smouldering…I was directed to take…ashes and make a lye and put a cloth saturated with it right into the wound…again and again I saturated the cloth and put it into the hole…, and each time mashed flesh and splinters of bone came away with the cloth; and the wound became as white as chicken’s flesh.

Having done as directed I again prayed to the Lord and was again instructed as distinctly as though a physician had been standing by speaking to me. Near by was a slippery-elm tree. From this I was told to make a … poultice and fill the wound with it…the poultice was made, and the wound, which took fully a quarter of a yard of linen to cover…was properly dressed…

I removed the wounded boy to a house…and dressed his hip; the Lord directing me as before. I was reminded that in my husband’s trunk there was a bottle of balsam. This I poured into the wound, greatly soothing Alma’s pain.

‘Alma my child,’ I said, ‘you believe that the Lord made your hip?’

‘Yes, mother.’

‘Well, the Lord can make something there in the place of your hip, don’t you believe he can, Alma?’

‘Do you think that the Lord can, mother?’ inquired the child, in his simplicity.

‘Yes, my son,’ I replied, ‘he has showed it all to me in a vision.’

Then I laid him comfortably on his face, and said: ‘Now you lay like that, and don’t move, and the Lord will make you another hip.’

So Alma laid on his face for five weeks, until he was entirely recovered—a flexible gristle having grown in place of the missing joint and socket, which remains to this day a marvel to physicians…

It is now nearly forty years ago, but Alma has never been the least crippled during his life, and he has traveled quite a long period of the time as a missionary of the gospel and [is] a living miracle of the power of God.”

SOURCES

1 Joseph Smith, History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951), 3: 183-186.


FURTHER READING RESOURCES

John P. Greene, Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints from the State of Missouri, under the “Exterminating Order,” 1839.
Paul W. Hodson, Never Forsake: The Story of Aman-