



Greetings

We are pleased to share with you our latest newsletter. This issue highlights new web content published in March, including a general introduction to the Legal Records series and documents related to two steamboats partly owned by Joseph Smith. Also featured is an article by a Joseph Smith Papers historian highlighting five interesting events from [Documents, Volume 15](#).

Sincerely,

Matthew C. Godfrey, R. Eric Smith, and Ronald K. Esplin
General Editors



Dates of Interest

Spring 2024: Joseph Smith Legal Records ebook published; legal content released on JSP website.



Historic Transfer of Kirtland Temple, Other Artifacts

As you have no doubt heard, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Community of Christ have announced the transfer of the significant historical artifacts, including the Kirtland Temple, Smith family properties

in Nauvoo, and notable nineteenth-century manuscripts, from the Community of Christ to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We are grateful to the Community of Christ for their stewardship of these sites and artifacts, as well as their wonderful partnership with The Joseph Smith Papers and the Church History Department over many years. We look forward to continued partnership and cooperation. Learn more in statements by the [Community of Christ](#) and [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#).



New Content on the Joseph Smith Papers Website

The Joseph Smith Papers is pleased to announce its latest web publication, available now. This release features introductions and documents related to two [steamboats](#) partly owned by Joseph Smith. It also includes a [general introduction](#) to the Legal Records series of the Joseph Smith Papers and an [introduction and documents](#) pertaining to a legal case about Joseph Smith's estate. Finally, this release adds hundreds of new links to the project's [calendar of documents](#).

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Contextualizing the Martyrdom: The Final Print Volume of the Joseph Smith Papers Project

by J. Chase Kirkham, Volume Editor

On June 27, 2023, the Church Historian's Press published [Documents, Volume 15](#), the final volume in the print series of the Joseph Smith Papers. The featured documents in this volume contain valuable insights into the final weeks of Joseph Smith's life and the events that led to his death on June 27, 1844, in Carthage, Illinois. Here are five highlights from this volume:

1. The Jeremiah Smith Case

In late May 1844, Joseph Smith, as chief justice over the Nauvoo, Illinois, municipal court, presided over an [unusual case](#). Before him stood Jeremiah Smith, a man from Iowa Territory accused of committing fraud against the United States. Claiming payment for work he completed on behalf of the federal government, Jeremiah traveled to Washington DC in 1843 and collected \$4,000 from the United States Treasury. These funds, however,

were earmarked for another resident of Iowa Territory also named Jeremiah Smith. Federal authorities soon learned of Jeremiah's visit to the treasury, and a grand jury indicted him for fraud. To evade prosecution, Jeremiah fled Iowa, making his way to Nauvoo. In May 1844, two federal officers located Jeremiah in Nauvoo and arrested him. Jeremiah, in turn, [petitioned](#) the Nauvoo Municipal Court to review the legality of his arrests. With Joseph Smith presiding, the court convened on May 30 and ruled to discharge the prisoner. The arresting officers disregarded the court's decision, and one of the two officers conveyed Jeremiah to Springfield, Illinois, to appear before a federal judge. Jeremiah Smith's presence in Nauvoo and the municipal court's handling of this case fueled the mob spirit in Hancock County, Illinois, causing Joseph's enemies to claim that "Nauvoo will become a sink of refuge for every offender."

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