

John Killian and Haun's Mill from Daniel Tyler "Recollections," (1892), p 94

Everyone has probably heard or read of the terrible martyrdom at Haun's Mill [October 30, 1838]. At this late date some may be led to inquire why did not the Prophet foresee this and avert the terrible calamity. . . . This is not strange, as the history of the Church shows that the man of God was in Far West, only about twenty miles distant.

Well, my young brethren and sisters, the following are a few of the facts. Brother Haun owned the mill, a grist mill, which took his name. From two to four days prior to the massacre the citizens of the little settlement assembled in a mass meeting, and appointed Brother Haun a committee of one to go to the city for advice to know what to do. The whole country was under arms and excitement. The Apostle David W. Patten, with Brothers Gideon Carter and O'Banion, had already sealed their testimony with their blood. Under these circumstances it was quite natural that small settlements should begin to inquire what was best for them to do.

Brother Haun repaired to the city, and as the Prophet was but a private citizen and minister of the gospel, in the legal sense, he first went to Captain John Killian, of the Caldwell County militia, informed him of his appointment, and inquired what he and his brethren should do.

"Move into the city" was the prompt reply.

Brother H.--"What! and leave the mill?"

Captain K.--"Yes, and leave the mill."

Brother H.--"What! to the mob?"

Captain K.--"Yes, to the mob."

Brother Haun then left the Captain and went to "Brother Joseph," as the Prophet was familiarly called. He asked him the same questions, and received the same answers, word for word.

"But," responded the selfish mill-owner, "Brother Joseph, we think we are strong enough to defend the mill and keep it in our own hands."

"Oh, well," replied he, "if you think you are strong enough to hold the mill you can do as you think best."

What more could he say? His method had always been when his counsel was asked to give it freely and leave parties to receive or reject it. He could not, nor would not if he could, take away people's agency.

Brother Haun returned and reported that Brother Joseph's counsel was for them to stay and protect or hold the mill. The rest the reader knows, or can become acquainted with by reading the published account of the terrible tragedy. The foregoing facts I had from the late Captain Killian in person.