Credit, Commerce, and Conflict

The David W. Matthews–Chauncey Robison School-Fund Note and the World Around It

Illustrated reading edition with linked documentary sources • October 2026

Highlights

A precise promise with public consequences. On January 4, 1840, Matthews and Robison signed an obligation for $233⅓, payable to Benjamin F. Marsh as school commissioner for the benefit of Augusta Township. The reverse records interest payments, but no visible cancellation of principal. [1]

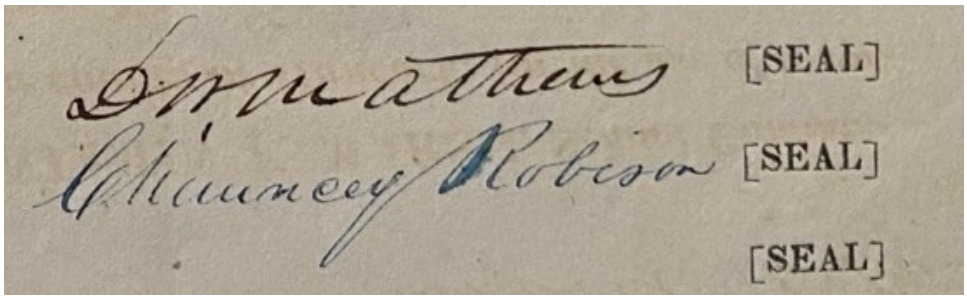
Rivals who became partners. Gregg's election returns place Matthews against Mark Aldrich in the 1836 legislative race. Four years later, the legislature authorized the two men to keep a steam ferry at Warsaw. [3, p. 448; 6]

The river connects the story. Matthews appears in the Des Moines Rapids Railroad and Warsaw University incorporations, the ferry act, and—under strongly matching initials—a June 1844 report of cannon and ammunition brought from St. Louis to Warsaw aboard the Die Vernon. [4–6, 9]

An actual Masonic encounter. A minute dated April 13, 1842 records Robison's initiation alongside J. B. Backenstos and George P. Stiles, with Joseph and Hyrum Smith present. Later that year, Robison authorized issuance of a habeas corpus writ for Joseph Smith. [12–13]

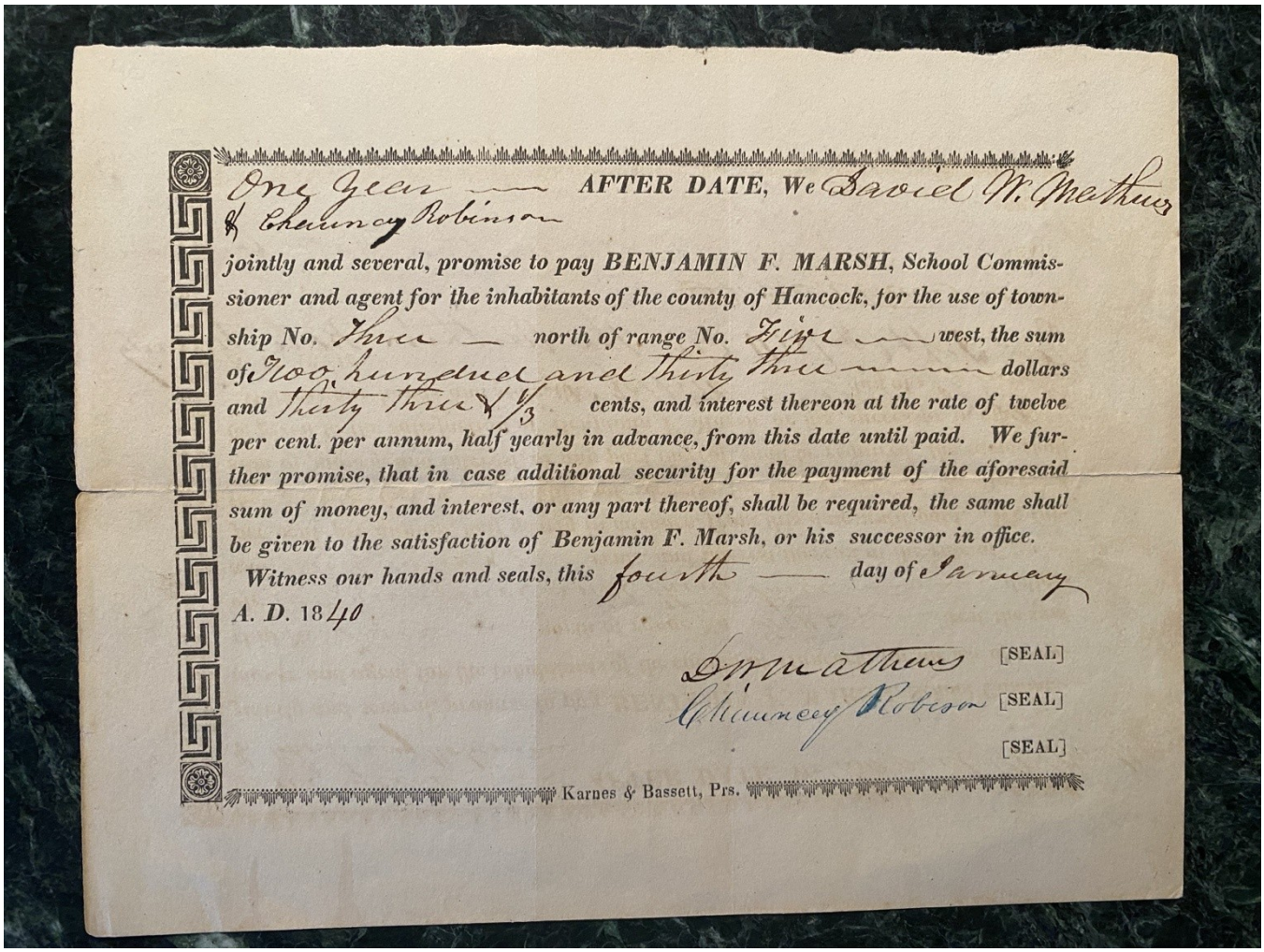
A serious later accusation, not a verdict. Backenstos subsequently named D. W. Matthews among men he accused of responsibility for the murders and described him as a merchant then in St. Louis. The accusation and the geographical lead are preserved without treating either as proof of a particular act at the jail. [10]

The account begins with the original paper, then follows the ambitions, obligations, and changing associations behind its signatures. Matthews's family and life dates remain unverified; the biography does not fill those gaps with an unrelated same-named man. Robison's more continuous record extends through his Nauvoo mayoralty and his death in Kansas in 1891. [11]



The two signatures: a cropped detail of the original, not a reconstruction. [1]

The original promise



One Year — AFTER DATE, We Daniel M. Matthews & Chauncey Robinson jointly and several, promise to pay BENJAMIN F. MARSH, School Commissioner and agent for the inhabitants of the county of Hancock, for the use of township No. Three — north of range No. Five — west, the sum of Two hundred and thirty three — dollars and thirty three 1/3 cents, and interest thereon at the rate of twelve per cent. per annum, half yearly in advance, from this date until paid. We further promise, that in case additional security for the payment of the aforesaid sum of money, and interest, or any part thereof, shall be required, the same shall be given to the satisfaction of Benjamin F. Marsh, or his successor in office.

Witness our hands and seals, this fourth — day of January A. D. 1840

D M Mathews [SEAL]

Chauncey Robison [SEAL]

[SEAL]

Karnes & Bassett, Prs.

Figure 1. Front of the original school-fund obligation, January 4, 1840. Photograph IMG_3667.jpeg supplied by David Larsen, rotated upright. No handwriting or missing paper has been reconstructed. [1]

The form names Marsh in his **official capacity**, and it names a township as beneficiary. This is not a tuition receipt, a schoolhouse construction contract, or a private note payable to Marsh without reference to his office. Both Matthews and Robison signed as obligors. The paper does not call either man a witness or expressly distinguish a principal borrower from a surety. [1]

Township 3 North, Range 5 West is Augusta Township. The description identifies the fund's beneficiary, not necessarily either signer's residence, the place of execution, or the location of collateral. No specific parcel is pledged on this sheet. [1–3]

The paper remained in use

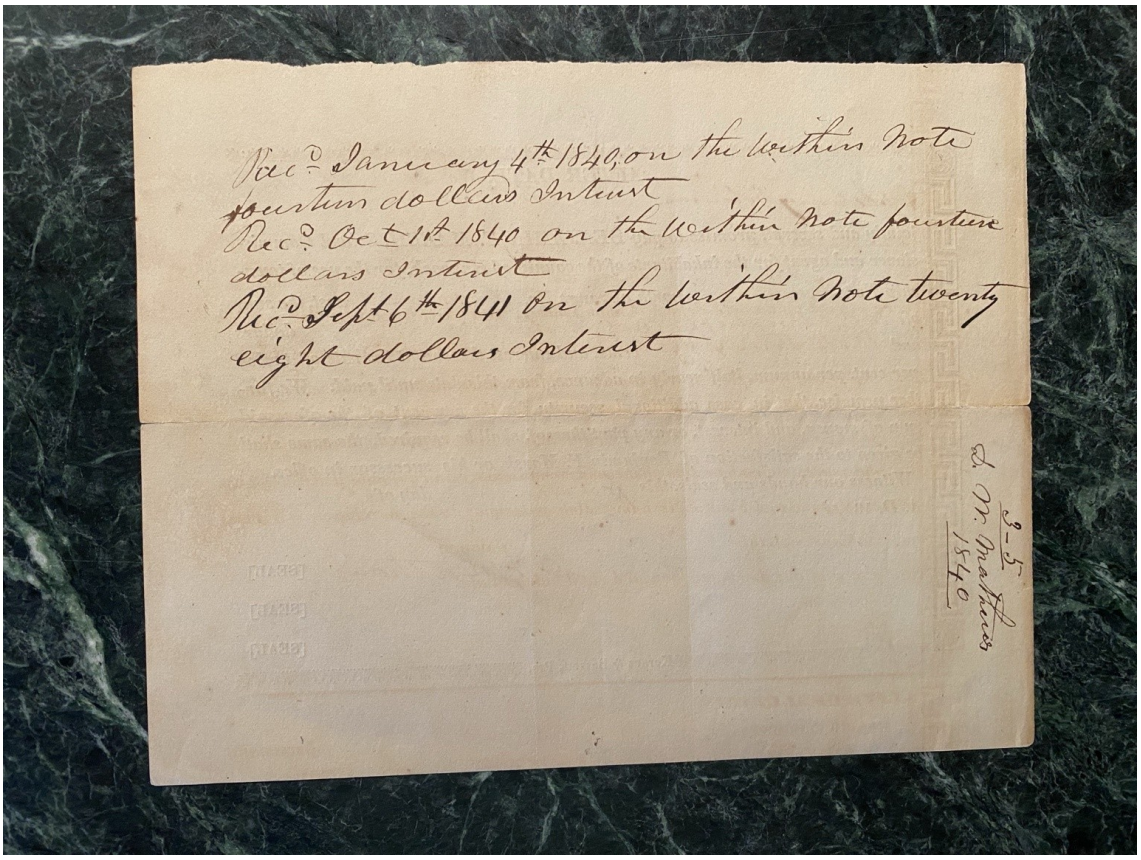


Figure 2. Reverse, IMG_3668.jpeg, rotated to make the interest receipts upright. The docket at the side remains in its original relationship to the receipts. The sheet preserves $14, $14, and $28 interest entries. [1]

The first receipt shares the note's date. The last, September 6, 1841, comes after the stated one-year maturity. All three payments are identified as **interest**. They do not show a reduction of principal, a renewal agreement, or an eventual loss to the school fund. [1]

The docket's "3–5" agrees with the township and range. Matthews's name served as an identifying label; that alone does not establish which signer received the benefit of the obligation. No evidence on the sheet identifies the writer of every endorsement. [1]

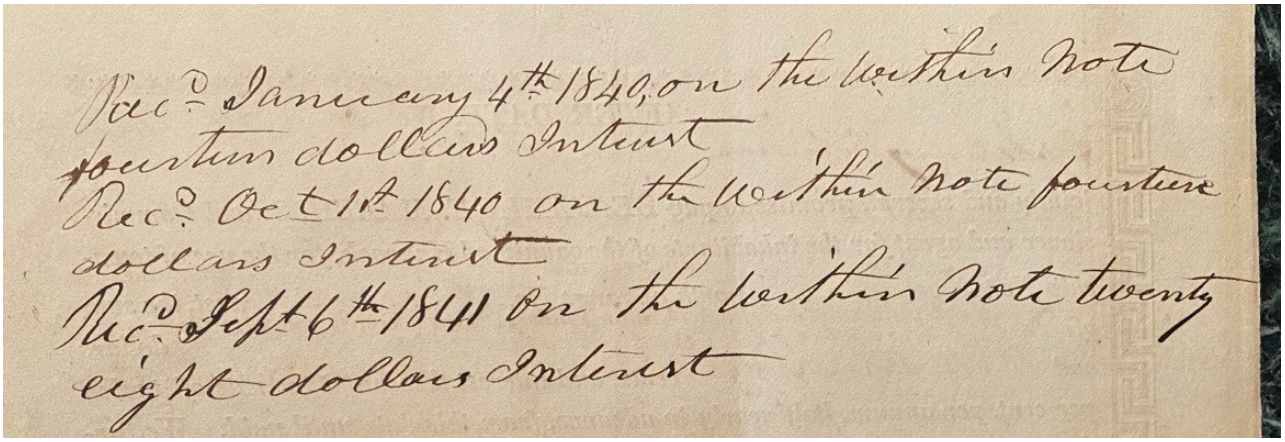


Figure 3. The three interest receipts, enlarged from the reverse. Each entry records interest; none records repayment of principal. The October day remains a provisional reading. [1]

Faithful transcription

Printed and manuscript matter are integrated below. Original wording and conspicuous spelling variants are retained; decorative strokes and exact line endings are not reproduced. Brackets mark uncertainty or explanatory labels. [1]

Front

One Year AFTER DATE, We David W. Matthews & Chauncy Robinson jointly and several, promise to pay BENJAMIN F. MARSH, School Commissioner and agent for the inhabitants of the county of Hancock, for the use of township No. Three north of range No. Five west, the sum of Two hundred and thirty three dollars and thirty three & ⅓ cents, and interest thereon at the rate of twelve per cent. per annum, half yearly in advance, from this date until paid. We further promise, that in case additional security for the payment of the aforesaid sum of money, and interest, or any part thereof, shall be required, the same shall be given to the satisfaction of Benjamin F. Marsh, or his successor in office.

Witness our hands and seals, this fourth day of January A. D. 1840.

[Signatures] D. W. Mathews [SEAL]

Chauncey Robison [SEAL]

[Unused signature position] [SEAL]

[Printer’s imprint] Karnes & Bassett, Prs.

Reverse

Rec^{d} January 4th 1840 on the within Note / fourteen dollars Interest

Rec^{d} Oct [1st?] 1840 on the within Note fourteen / dollars Interest

Rec^{d} Sept 6th 1841 on the within Note twenty / eight dollars Interest

[Docket] 3–5 / D W Matthews / 1840

The October day appears most consistent with “1st,” but remains provisional. The form prints “jointly and several”; it has not been silently corrected to “severally.” Matthews/Mathews and Chauncy/Chauncey, Robinson/Robison are preserved as document and search variants. The first signature is stylized, so its single- or double-t spelling should not be used to separate identities. [1]

The obligation in ordinary language

The men promised repayment **one year after January 4, 1840**, making January 4, 1841 the stated maturity. Interest would continue until payment. They also agreed to furnish further security if required to satisfy Marsh or his successor. The sheet does not say whether the underlying transaction was a fresh cash loan, a renewal, or another school-fund obligation. [1]

The principal was $233 plus 33⅓ cents—equivalently **$233⅓**. At twelve percent, annual interest was exactly **$28**, and half-year interest **$14**. The three receipts total **$56**, equivalent to two annual interest amounts. Because interest was payable in advance, this arithmetic does not prove that two years had elapsed by the final receipt or allocate each payment to a particular six-month period. [1]

Illinois school legislation helps explain the arrangement. Township funds could be lent, secured, entered in loan books, and made productive; interest could support teachers while principal remained an asset of the fund. The note therefore joins private credit to a public purpose. It does not establish that the money funded Matthews’s ferry or railroad. [2]

The story

1. A candidate before he was a ferry partner

The amount was exact, but the world behind it was expansive. Matthews had sought a seat in the legislature and put his name into proposals for a university and a railroad. The school commissioner's form did not need to rehearse those ambitions. It required only a sum, a date, satisfactory security, and the men's promise to pay. [1, 3–5]

Thomas Gregg's history supplies an early turning point. In its returns for the 1836 legislative election, Mark Aldrich received 379 votes and David W. Mathews 276. Matthews lost, but his name was familiar enough to attract substantial support. The return preserves neither his platform nor his party identification. It places him in the county's political life before the events for which Nauvoo would become famous. [3, p. 448]

The two candidates would later appear together in a ferry authorization. That change is a useful beginning for their relationship. They were not simply lifelong allies waiting to oppose the same people. The records show competition in one setting and cooperation in another. A reconciliation scene would be invented; the succession of election and charter is real. [3, p. 448; 6]

Gregg also remembered Matthews among Carthage's early settlers. His list places James B., Hamilton C., and David W. Mathews together, among names that include other future county officials and litigants. It supplies a promising local family cluster, but does not say that these three men were brothers. It is a recollection of settlement, not a substitute for a household record. [3, p. 688]

2. A town that disappeared, and institutions that might grow

Another of Gregg's accounts places Matthews with Robert Miller and Isaac N. Morris in the promotion of Joe Duncan, a short-lived town near the southeastern corner of Fountain Green Township. Mathews and Miller reportedly sold goods there for a brief period. The place did not become the enduring community its promoters presumably hoped to establish. Its little store gives Matthews a more concrete occupation than the general label "land speculator." [3, p. 474]

Morris reappears beside him in the Des Moines Rapids Railroad incorporation of February 19, 1839. So do Daniel S. Witter, John Montague, William D. Abernathy, Joel Catlin, Calvin A. Warren, Isaac Galland, Mark Aldrich, Joseph Duncan, and Richard F. Barrett. The act authorized a line from at or near Commerce, at the head of the rapids, toward Warsaw and a connection with the projected Peoria–Warsaw route. [4]

The company's very name directs attention to geography. These men were imagining a land corridor between points along the Mississippi, not merely another speculative town on its bank. The act provided a legal mechanism for raising capital, with an initial cash installment on shares. It expressly excluded promissory notes for that first installment—a useful reminder that a promise on paper and money available for construction were not the same thing. [4]

> *"at or near the town of Commerce"*
>
> From section 1 of the railroad act, February 19, 1839. Modern typeset excerpt. [4]
>
> Read the railroad act | View the original pages



Figure 4. Commerce in the western river country. Detail from Smith's Map of the Western States, detached sheet bearing an 1839 copyright. Commerce, Carthage, Quincy, and St. Louis provide geographic context. This is not a survey of the proposed railroad or ferry. [27]

The same day's Warsaw University act named Matthews in another corporation. Its trustees included Duncan, Warren, Witter, Barrett, John R. Wilcox, William H. Roosevelt, John Montague, and **Mark Aldrich**, among others. The university and railroad circles overlapped, although the rosters were not identical. The educational charter contemplated broad admission across Christian denominations and did not require a particular creed. That corporate provision does not, by itself, establish how each trustee later treated Latter-day Saint neighbors. [5]

A charter alone does not prove that a campus opened or a completed train line carried passengers. Gregg, however, supplies a later account of a brief Warsaw University experiment: a preparatory department linked to the common school, Gideon B. Perry as president, and an inaugural address that proved more beginning than lasting institution. He placed it, with uncertainty, in summer 1840. This is evidence of a remembered attempt, not a successful university or proof of Matthews's attendance. [3, p. 436]

The railroad proposal likewise did not simply vanish from the legislative record. A supplementary act of February 27, 1841 extended the commencement deadline to May 1, 1843 and completion to May 1, 1846, and made additional provision for use of part of the state route. The undertaking still needed time. The extension is a later chapter in the plan, not evidence that its construction requirements were eventually met. [7]

Before either Warsaw charter, another educational project had already joined Matthews to Marsh and Aldrich. Gregg names all three among the incorporators of the Carthage Female High School and Teachers' Seminary, whose charter was approved February 15, 1837. In August 1841 the organization chose Marsh as president and Gregg as secretary. A later meeting in September 1842 received news that its fundraising agent, John Lawton, had died; the donations were subsequently returned. Gregg

remembered no further action. Here the county historian was also a participant in the institution he described. [3, pp. 435–436]

3. The crossing authorized two weeks after the note

The ferry bill was already before the legislature when Matthews and Robison signed their obligation. It had been introduced on January 2, 1840. The note followed on January 4; approval of the ferry act came January 18. These were developments within the same few weeks of Matthews's life, not distant events gathered only because his surname appeared in them. [1, 6]

The grant named David W. Matthews and Mark Aldrich. It authorized a crossing from Warsaw to a point at or near the mouth of the Des Moines River for ten years and required a steam-powered boat within two years. Passengers, teams, livestock, and goods were the traffic envisaged. The proposed railroad looked along the river; the ferry looked across it. [6]

> *"a good tight boat, worked by steam power"*

From section 2 of the ferry act, January 18, 1840. Modern typeset excerpt. [6]

Read the ferry act | View the original pages

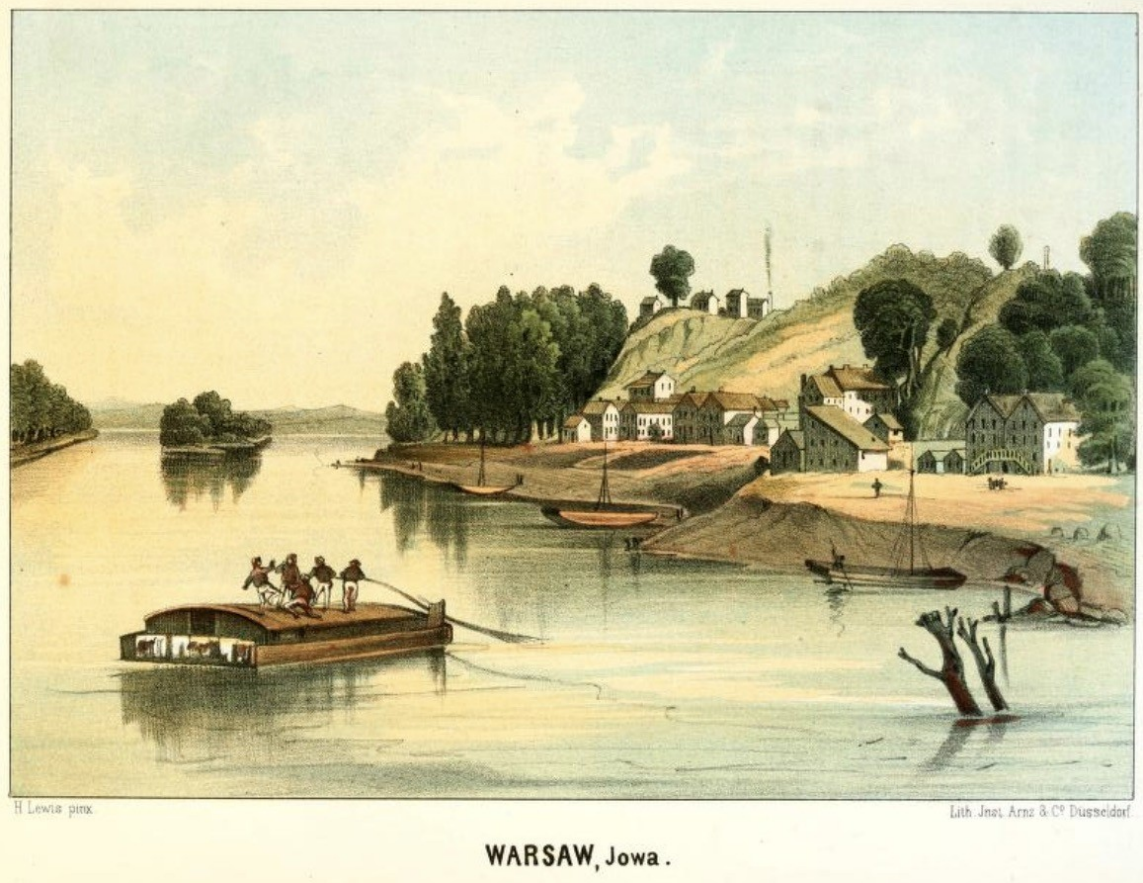


Figure 5. Henry Lewis's later view of Warsaw, published 1854–1858. Although the plate reads "Warsaw, Iowa," the established museum/project identification places the scene at Warsaw, Illinois. It illustrates the riverfront setting, not Matthews's own ferry, a particular 1840 crossing, or the Die Vernon. [28]

A steam-boat requirement was a material obligation, not simply an attractive phrase. A service would need equipment and people to operate it. No operating advertisement, account, or vessel record examined for this edition establishes that these grantees fulfilled that requirement. The correct description remains a **ferry authorization**, not an established ferry business with a known boat and schedule. [6]

Nor does the note disclose a connection between the school fund and that equipment. Robison is not named in the ferry act. No disbursement trail links the $233⅓ to a landing, a boat, or corporate shares. The association is biographical and chronological: it tells us what Matthews was pursuing when he signed. It is not proof of what he did with borrowed money. [1, 4, 6]

4. The other signature in Joseph Smith's world

Robison's connection to the Saints becomes unusually tangible in a Masonic minute. On April 13, 1842, Hyrum Smith presided pro tempore at the Nauvoo lodge; Joseph Smith was present, and John C. Bennett acted as secretary. The record names Chauncey Robison, J. B. Backenstos, and George P. Stiles—written as "George W. Stiles" in this copy—as men initiated into the Entered Apprentice degree. [12, p. 30]

This is more revealing than a general statement that Robison belonged to a lodge. It places him with the Smith brothers and two men who recur in the Hancock document collection, at a named event on a particular date. It does not establish that Masonry dictated anyone's subsequent politics. The next page records other men receiving higher degrees; that entry must not be transferred to Robison. [12, pp. 30–31]

Read the April 13 lodge minute | View manuscript page 30

Later that year he acted in a different capacity. On December 27, as master in chancery, he ordered the circuit clerk to issue a writ of habeas corpus on Joseph Smith's petition in the Missouri extradition matter. The clerk was absent, so the party could not obtain the writ there before continuing toward Springfield. Robison authorized legal process; he did not himself adjudicate the extradition or release Smith. [13]

These episodes show an actual fraternal encounter and an actual legal act. They are not evidence that one caused the other. That distinction allows Robison to remain a person exercising several kinds of responsibility rather than a character defined by a single supposed allegiance. [12–13]

5. A creditor who had creditors of his own

Robison also wrote Smith privately about money. In September 1843 he explained that he needed payment to meet demands falling upon himself. He proposed that Smith pay half and receive more time on the balance. The signer who promised money to the school commissioner in 1840 was now waiting for money from someone else. [1, 14]

The transaction concerned 160 acres approximately a mile southeast of Nauvoo, not a tract near Carthage. In November, Robison accepted the idea of a draft on the Bank of Rochester as an alternative to cash. The expected draft was unavailable when the parties' representatives met; William Clayton's account records a $150 payment on November 28. Later arrangements involved Robison's debt to Reuben H. Walworth in New York. [14–15]

The letters add a human motive without requiring an imagined conversation. Robison offered accommodation, but did not wish to injure his own position. One man's expected receipt was tied to another man's demand. These were negotiations in a chain of obligations, not simply a choice between friendship and enmity. [14–15]

6. Matthews in the circuit-court record

Matthews, meanwhile, appears in an appeal from Joseph Smith's court. A subpoena dated May 9, 1843 ordered David W. Mathews and Michael Barnes to appear in City of Nauvoo v. Davis for Assault at the defendant's request. Its return records service on Matthews on May 13. [8]

The defendant was Amos Davis. The proceeding grew out of complaints by William C. Walker and Smith's adjudication in December 1842, and raised questions about Nauvoo's procedures and the

proper route of appeal. The circuit court dismissed the assault appeal on May 23, 1843. The surviving subpoena does not say what Matthews knew or preserve testimony he gave. [8]

This brings him into a documented legal episode involving Smith, but not into a proven personal confrontation. A request to attend for Davis cannot be turned into a signed anti-Mormon declaration. Its value is more precise: a full name, a dated proceeding, and an officer's report that the man was reached. [8]

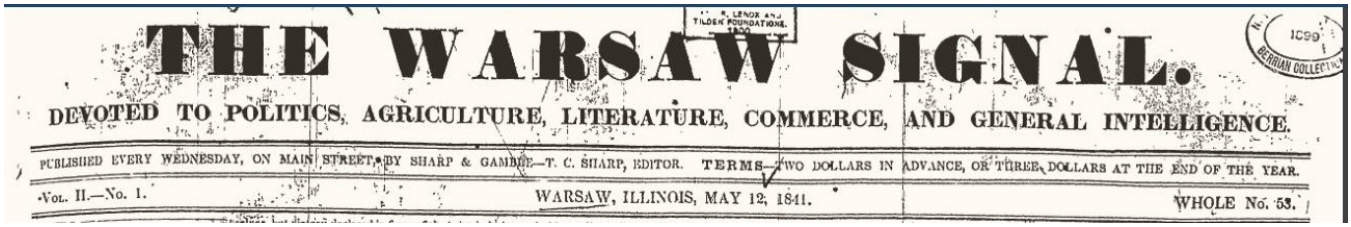
7. Cannon on the river

In June 1844, the river story changed. A Warsaw Signal extra dated June 19, reprinted by the Nauvoo Neighbor on June 26, reported that "D.W. Mathews" had returned from St. Louis aboard the Die Vernon after procuring cannon and ammunition. The matching initials and locality strongly point to the Matthews of this project. A second personal record has not yet made the identification conclusive. [9]

> *"He has succeeded in procuring cannon; and has brought up a good supply of ammunition."*

Warsaw Signal extra, June 19, 1844, as reprinted in the Nauvoo Neighbor, June 26; quotation from the BYU Studies transcription. Modern typeset excerpt, not a newspaper clipping. [9]

Read the newspaper transcription


THE WARSAW SIGNAL.

DEVOTED TO POLITICS, AGRICULTURE, LITERATURE, COMMERCE, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY, ON MAIN STREET, BY SHARP & GAMBLE.—T. C. SHARP, EDITOR. TERMS—TWO DOLLARS IN ADVANCE, OR THREE DOLLARS AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

VOL. II.—No. 1. WARSAW, ILLINOIS, MAY 12, 1841. WHOLE No. 53.

Figure 6. The Warsaw Signal, represented by its May 12, 1841 masthead. This is an identifying illustration of the newspaper—not the June 19, 1844 extra and not a reproduction of the cannon notice. [29]

The surrounding report described drilling, interrupted business, expected reinforcements, and determination to act against Smith. The passage thus places the shipment within armed mobilization, not ordinary river commerce. It supplies no commission, enlistment, company assignment, or precise role at the jail for Mathews. Nor does it identify who paid for his reported purchases. [9]

The two newspapers supply different voices. The Signal presented Warsaw's preparations; the Neighbor reproduced the account as evidence of hostility and answered it from Nauvoo's perspective. This edition uses the institutional transcription of that reprint. It does not claim a fresh collation of the original Signal extra or the Neighbor page image. [9]

The ferry authorization and the cannon report belong in the same narrative, but one does not predict the other. In 1840 the records show transport proposals and a financial obligation. In 1844 they show a reported procurement mission amid an escalating conflict. Later hostility cannot be inserted into the earlier note as its hidden purpose. [1, 6, 9]

8. The later accusation and a St. Louis lead

A second source must not be overlooked. In the later letter attributed to Sheriff Jacob B. Backenstos, printed in History of the Church, D. W. Matthews appears among men accused of leadership or active participation in the murders. The entry describes him as a merchant **then in St. Louis**; J. B. Matthews appears immediately afterward with the same location and occupation. [10]

This strengthens the case for investigating Matthews's anti-Mormon connections and gives a post-Hancock location to pursue. It is not an itemized eyewitness description of his conduct. The letter's references to later violence show that it postdates events of 1845, despite its placement within a

narrative of June 1844. Its separate guard and company lists must not be confused with the broader accusation containing Matthews. [10]

A contemporary report of procurement and a later accusation are different kinds of evidence. Neither should be hidden, and neither supplies a proved shot or a particular position at Carthage Jail. The recorded St. Louis description likewise remains an attributed identification until a household or business record completes the personal chain. [9–10]

9. Robison, the mail, and the unsettled aftermath

Willard Richards's entry for June 25, 1844 contains another possible connection. "Robinson P. M" said he had stopped the mail after hearing of martial law and had notified postal authorities. Joseph Smith Papers editors identify this man as probably Chauncey Robison, Carthage's postmaster, while preserving George W. Robinson as an alternative. [17]

That qualification belongs in the story. The note does not securely place this signer in every reported conversation, and it does not establish that the postal action was an endorsement of violence. A question about the mail resurfaced in George A. Smith's 1856 effort to clarify the final days; a later request for information is not independent proof of the answer. [17, 30]

Joseph and Hyrum Smith were killed on June 27, 1844. Mark Aldrich, Matthews's earlier opponent and later ferry partner, was one of the defendants in the ensuing prosecution; the trial ended with a not-guilty verdict on May 30, 1845. His association with Matthews makes the proceedings relevant, but does not transfer guilt—or an acquittal—to the other man. [21]

Robison's later papers supply a different continuity. A tax-redemption receipt dated June 14, 1845 records seventy dollars in his entry. A separate 1842 Smith–Robison note was canceled in August 1846 through surrender of the land bond. Neither transaction settles the owner's 1840 school note. Robison then moved to Nauvoo in 1847 and became its mayor in 1849–1850. [11, 16, 19]

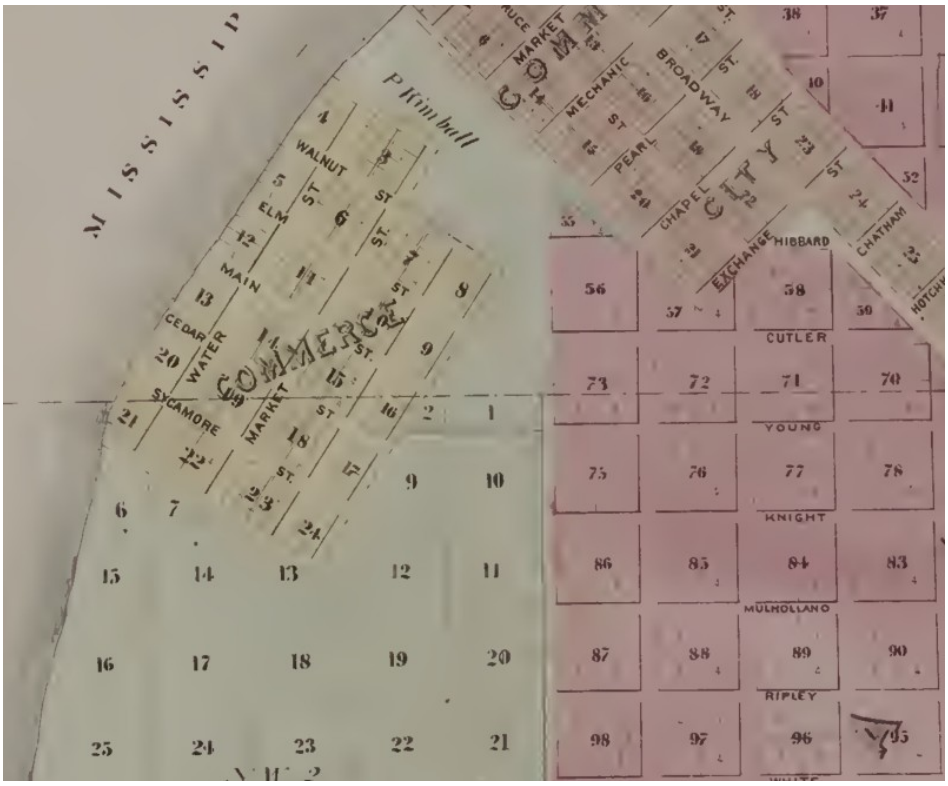


Figure 7. The old Commerce grid within the later city. Detail from Andreas's 1874 Nauvoo map, printed pp. 136–137. It makes the earlier river town visible within Nauvoo's later geography. It does not locate Matthews's home or depict the railroad as built. [27]

The signatures lead to uneven endings. Robison can be followed into old age. Matthews's later family and personal chronology remain elusive, although the St. Louis reference is a concrete lead. The note holds them together at a moment before the later crisis, when their immediate undertaking was not to defend a city or oppose one, but to satisfy a public creditor. [1, 10–11]

David W. Matthews

An extended documentary biography

The man we can identify

Matthews's public record is firmer than his private one. Full-name references place him in a Hancock County election, two corporate acts, the ferry authorization, and a served subpoena. His autograph survives on the owner's school note. The arms procurer and the later St. Louis merchant are identified by initials and locality in sources that strongly fit this man, but do not provide a complete genealogical bridge. [1, 3–6, 8–10]

His birth date, parents, marriage, children, and death have not been securely established in this edition. The names James B. and Hamilton C. Mathews in Gregg's Carthage settler list deserve attention precisely because they are local, not because a shared surname automatically makes them relatives. The later appearance of both D. W. and J. B. Matthews as St. Louis merchants gives that cluster a second setting to investigate. [3, p. 688; 10]

For future reuse, the safest identifying description is **David W. Matthews or Mathews, Hancock County candidate and promoter active in the later 1830s and early 1840s, associated with Carthage and Warsaw**. A household found under that name should be accepted only after its dates, places, relationships, or signature connect it with these records.

Standing in the county

Matthews's 1836 candidacy shows him seeking an institutional place in the county before the ferry and railroad acts. The scale of the vote recorded by Gregg suggests standing beyond an isolated land transaction. It does not establish whether he was a persuasive speaker, a party organizer, a lawyer, or a long-established resident. Those conventional biographical ornaments should not be supplied merely because he ran for office. [3, p. 448]

Gregg also lists Matthews among Warsaw residents who had arrived before 1840. His appearances in the Carthage and Warsaw lists support a regional career, but do not establish the precise sequence or duration of his residences. [3, pp. 638, 688]

The Carthage list and the Joe Duncan story add two different kinds of experience. One places him among settlers at the county seat. The other describes a mercantile venture in a town that failed to endure. Together they suggest a man whose opportunities were regional rather than confined to one shopfront. His interests reached the county's interior as well as its river settlements. [3, pp. 474, 688]

The unsuccessful town is worth retaining in the biography. A list of successful offices can make a frontier career appear inevitable. Joe Duncan supplies a more uncertain setting: plans, a briefly remembered business, and a place that did not become what its promoters hoped. Gregg's account is retrospective, but it preserves an episode that the later charters alone would conceal. [3, p. 474]

The developer's associates

The Carthage seminary is a particularly important connection because it places Matthews beside the very commissioner named on his note. The 1837 incorporation, 1841 organization, and 1842 setback

form a story of educational ambition that Gregg knew as its secretary. It gives Marsh and Matthews a shared institutional setting independent of the debt, though it does not explain why Robison signed with Matthews. [3, pp. 435–436]

Several of Matthews's associates recur across projects. Morris appears in the town-promotion account and the railroad act. Aldrich appears as electoral rival, railroad and university participant, and joint ferry grantee. Warren, Witter, Duncan, Barrett, and Montague help link the railroad and university lists. These repetitions give substance to a development circle rather than merely decorating the biography with famous names. [3–6]

The institutions also reveal the limits of what a charter can tell us about a life. Matthews was a named incorporator or trustee; he has not thereby been identified as an engineer, professor, company president, or operating manager. The records establish willingness to join legally constituted enterprises. They do not quantify the capital he eventually supplied or the decisions he personally made. [4–5]

The railroad's 1841 extension adds another stage to that world of expectation. Its deadlines reached into the years that would become the height of the Nauvoo conflict. At least legislatively, the project still had a future. The act's support for possible use of the state line and iron illustrates the importance of public authority to private development, without proving that the state delivered the material or that Matthews supervised construction. [7]

A ferry with an old opponent

The ferry is his clearest two-person venture. A reader can see the exact partners and the contemplated crossing without having to interpret a long roster. That clarity makes the unproved operational history more noticeable, but not less interesting. What the act demonstrates is an effort to turn a particular river location into an authorized service. [6]

The former rivalry with Aldrich should remain chronological. Neither the 1836 result nor the 1840 act says how they felt about one another. What changed between the records was the role each occupied in relation to the other. In one they sought the same seat; in the other they were named together to hold the same franchise. The relationship had more than one setting. [3, p. 448; 6]

A signature that carried risk

The school note supplies the clearest evidence of Matthews's individual financial responsibility. Whatever ambitions occupied him, he agreed to an exact payment obligation and to the provision of additional security if demanded. The named beneficiary was a township fund, and the creditor's authority continued through successors in office. This was not an indefinite subscription to an attractive idea. [1]

Robison's signature gives the biography a financial associate different from the ferry partner. The docket uses Matthews's name, but that is not enough to identify Robison as surety or Matthews as sole recipient. It is more useful to preserve the question than to turn indexing practice into a contractual term the men did not write. The note securely establishes shared responsibility. [1]

Law, mobilization, and responsibility

The served 1843 subpoena gives another full-name local reference. It places Matthews within a case questioning proceedings that had passed through Joseph Smith's court, but it does not preserve his view of Smith. The evidence should remain in the legal portion of the biography, not automatically in a catalogue of hostility. [8]

The later arms report is different. Assuming the strong identification is correct, Matthews performed a task supplying the Warsaw mobilization. Procurement could be important without a commission or a

place in a firing line. This finding is consequential enough to stand without attaching a guessed rank or an undocumented act at Carthage. [9]

Backenstos's accusation adds a hostile assessment of responsibility from after the crisis. It cannot be treated as a conviction, but neither should it be minimized to a vague statement that Matthews knew hostile men. Backenstos named him. The biography therefore preserves both the reported procurement and the later accusation, while separating them from proven physical conduct at the jail. [9–10]

Toward St. Louis, with the personal story still open

The description of D. W. Matthews as a merchant "now" in St. Louis is the clearest later-location lead. Its pairing with J. B. Matthews may help future work follow the Carthage cluster into the city's business records. The word "now" belongs to the letter's later date, not automatically to June 1844. [10]

Gregg's 1880 account says that only four of the seminary's named corporators and replacement trustees were then living; Matthews is not among them. Taken literally, this implies that Gregg believed Matthews had died by publication. It is a retrospective collective statement, not an obituary or a secure death date, and is retained as a qualified upper-bound lead. [3, p. 436]

No verified Masonic entry, militia commission, personal reaction to the murders, obituary, or portrait closes the account. A separate Nauvoo land bond to **David Mathews**, dated March 11, 1840, lacks the middle initial and must remain a separate identity problem until signatures or a property and household chain establish a match. It is not evidence of this man's church membership. [26]

Matthews's surviving biography is thus a record of public commitments and reported actions rather than a full domestic portrait. It includes defeat, commercial experiment, institutional ambition, a shared debt, a legal summons, and a serious connection to the county's armed conflict. Its strength lies in the sequence those records actually support—not in a borrowed family tree or a dramatic ending at the jail.

Chauncey Robison

An expanded biography, 1805–1891

From Oneida County to Hancock County

Chauncey Robison was born in Oneida County, New York, on March 27, 1805, to Charles Robison and Jerusha Rebecca Kellogg. The established biographical chronology places him in Hancock County in 1829, in work at the Quincy land office, and at Carthage from 1837. He became county recorder in 1839 and held that office through 1847. [11]

Gregg adds a family migration story. He remembered Charles Robison coming west through the Wabash country and Sangamon County before settling near Larry's Creek in Hancock County in 1829, and later moving to West Point, Iowa. Gregg believed Charles was a Baptist minister and said that one or more of his sons joined the Saints and went to Salt Lake. He did not name those sons in that passage; it cannot be used to make Chauncey a convert. [3, p. 224]

His public responsibilities did not prevent private obligations. The school note is a particularly direct reminder: the recorder also signed promises that another official would have to administer. Subsequent letters place him on the creditor's side of a transaction, while still needing money to pay debts of his own. His administrative and private capacities were different, but they belonged to one life. [1, 14–16]

He married Hannah D. Hughes at Carthage on September 5, 1841. The last interest receipt on the owner's note is dated the following day. There is no evidence that marriage and payment were connected, or that Robison personally handed over the money. Their proximity simply locates the paper within a substantial moment in his adult life. [1, 11]

The recorder and the people whose papers he kept

The numerous Robison references in the Joseph Smith Papers arise partly from his office. Recording a deed did not establish personal friendship with every party, approval of a religious belief, or a private investment in the property. It provided a public record that could matter to people who distrusted one another. His work therefore crossed boundaries that later political accounts can make appear absolute. [11, 25]



Figure 8. Hancock County courthouse at Carthage, from Andreas's 1874 atlas, p. 10. This later view includes the building's enlargement and is not its exact 1840 appearance. [31]

The February 4, 1843 deed from Daniel H. and Eliza Robison Wells to Joseph Smith gives that world a family connection. Gregg later identified Eliza as Chauncey's sister and quoted him as a source concerning her marriage. The deed is a contemporary property instrument; the later family account supplies a different perspective. They should be read together without pretending that one documents everything in the other. [3, p. 372; 25]

Robison's Masonic world

The April 13, 1842 lodge minute is the strongest individual fraternal episode located for this biography. Robison entered as an **Entered Apprentice**, alongside Backenstos and Stiles. The record names the Smith brothers and Bennett in the proceedings. It provides a concrete connection to men whose later relationships became sharply divided. [12]

By 1843, the published biographical registry identifies him as secretary of Hancock Lodge at Carthage. That later office extends his Masonic life beyond the Nauvoo initiation, though this edition does not reconstruct all of his degrees or every lodge controversy. No baptism or ecclesiastical office has been established for him from the evidence used here. Lodge membership must not be made church membership. [11–12]

Bennett's presence as secretary is particularly worth dating correctly. The minute belongs to the period before Bennett's departure from Nauvoo. It does not show that Robison followed his later accusations or that the two pursued a common political course. A dated encounter is useful historical evidence without becoming a permanent alliance. [12]

The December 1842 legal act

Robison's master-in-chancery office gave him a role in Smith's attempt to obtain habeas corpus review during the Missouri extradition proceedings. The petition is dated December 26; his order to the circuit clerk is dated December 27. The clerk's absence prevented the immediate delivery of the writ. [13]

This is neither a general compliment to Robison's fairness nor a claim that he decided the case. It is a particular exercise of authority on Smith's application. The contemporaneous paper is stronger than a later statement that Robison was sympathetic, because it tells the reader what he actually did. No source examined explains the decision by reference to Masonry, friendship, or private financial interest. [13]

A man waiting for payment

The September 20, 1843 letter allows Robison to speak for himself. He was under pressure from demands due upon him and needed part of what Smith owed. He offered time on the balance, but warned that he could not accommodate at his own injury. The letter shows the boundary between willingness to negotiate and an inability to carry another person's obligation indefinitely. [14]

The November letter and its associated account describe a proposed Rochester draft, its unavailability, and a later part payment. Robison's debt to Walworth then entered the arrangements. The editorial date range for that later adjustment spans February to November 1844; it should not be reduced to an invented day or meeting. [15]

This correspondence is best understood as the management of a specific property obligation. It is not a sufficient basis for describing Robison as hostile to every Saint or as disinterestedly financing the church. His own words make the immediate concern clear: he wished to receive enough to meet claims against himself. [14–15]

The crisis years and the limits of the record

Robison's published biography identifies school-commissioner service in 1844–1845, and Gregg's election table records his election in 1845. The sources support service across the crisis without supplying a single fully reconciled tenure chronology here. That office returned him to the institution named in the 1840 note, now on its administrative side. The earlier debt does not prove improper handling of public funds. Such a finding would require an account or official act showing what happened to the obligation. [1, 3, p. 450; 11]

The June 25 postal reference is less certain than the December writ. Richards's "Robinson P. M" is probably Robison, according to the Joseph Smith Papers editors, but another man remains possible. Even accepting the probable identity, the statement concerns interruption of mail after a report of martial law. It does not securely identify a military role or a position on the impending violence. [17]

Nor has a personal response to the killings been recovered here. Later correspondence seeking to clarify the mail episode shows that the event remained a question for the church's historians; it does not provide Robison's missing explanation. A later memory or an editorial identification must not silently replace a contemporary statement. [17, 30]

Accounts after Joseph Smith's death

The 1845 tax-redemption receipt connects Robison with a substantial transaction. His own entry totals **$70.00**. The **$74.74** figure at the top of the sheet is a combined total including other men's receipts; treating it all as his would distort the record. Whether he acted for his own portfolio or in an agency capacity is not completely resolved by the receipt alone. [19]

A separate note given on Smith's behalf in October 1842 supplies a documented financial endpoint. Its August 14, 1846 notation records cancellation through surrender of the land bond, in James

Whitehead's handwriting. This was a settlement after Smith's death, not an interest receipt on the school note. The two papers must retain their separate histories. [16]

Mayor in the city that remained

Robison moved to Nauvoo in spring 1847 and served as mayor in 1849–1850. The revised James Brooks project also identifies him as the issuing justice on the August 1849 subpoena. These records place him within the administration of post-exodus Nauvoo, not merely as an outsider commenting upon it. [11, 20]

That move does not prove a change in religious belief or a complete reconciliation of county divisions. It establishes residence and work. The ordinary business of governing continued after the violent rupture, and Robison's signature is one of the traces by which it can be followed. [20]

Eliza Wells: the westward movement within his own family

Gregg's history identifies Chauncey as an informant about his sister Eliza's separation from Daniel H. Wells. According to that later account, she refused to go west unless her husband agreed to confine himself to one wife. Gregg says she had never joined the church and was living in Burlington when he wrote. [3, p. 372]

The source deserves both attention and restraint. Chauncey's identification as informant gives the account a family basis. But Gregg wrote decades later in a polemical discussion of Mormon polygamy; the passage is not Eliza's letter, a divorce decree, or a contemporary transcript of a private conversation. It preserves a recollection attributed to her brother. [3, p. 372]

The story nevertheless changes the scale of the biography. Migration and plural marriage were not only public controversies in the neighboring city. They affected Robison's family. His testimony to Gregg gives him a later voice in how that history was remembered, without establishing what he believed on every earlier date. [3, p. 372]

Appanoose, Topeka, and a long afterlife

Robison moved to Appanoose Township in 1850, then to Topeka in 1888. He died there on November 4, 1891. His life thus extended nearly half a century beyond the killings at Carthage. [11]

A later mayor and elderly family informant had once been the younger man who signed the school note, joined the lodge, authorized legal process, and waited for payment. Those roles do not collapse into a simple friend-or-enemy label. They show how one life could link public records, private credit, fraternity, family, and the continued administration of a changed community. [1, 3, 12–20]

The wider circle

Benjamin Franklin Marsh Sr.: the school commissioner

The payee was the elder Benjamin F. Marsh, not his son, the later soldier and congressman. The revised Marsh biography places his life in 1792–1864, identifies his 1813 marriage to Ruth Wetmore, and follows the family to Wythe Township. Ruth died in Hancock County in 1837. [18]

His interest in education extended beyond the school fund. He was a trustee of the Carthage Female High School and Teachers' Seminary in 1837, alongside Cyrus Felt, Samuel Marshall, Mark Aldrich, Sidney H. Little, Thomas Gregg, and others. Matthews was also a corporator of this seminary, an important direct connection between the commissioner and the signer. Gregg's account of its organization and failure supplements the earlier Marsh biography. [3, pp. 435–436; 18]

Marsh's daughter Martha Sophia married Cyrus Felt in 1836. Their later presence among defense witnesses in Marsh's suit against Sheriff Abernathy complicates any simple division of that case into friends and enemies. The revised narrative preserves that distinction. Here the earlier work supplies an established identity and family setting for the commissioner whose printed name dominates the note. [18]

Marsh did not sign this sheet. His office is the payee; the manuscript receipts have not been securely attributed to his hand. His legal responsibility for the fund explains the form without requiring every pen stroke to be his. [1]

Mark Aldrich: recurring associate, separately judged

Aldrich connects the election, railroad, university, ferry, and later prosecution. The sequence is unusually dense, but its significance depends on keeping the roles distinct. A rival could become a partner; a corporate associate could later face a criminal accusation; a not-guilty verdict resolved the prosecution without explaining every earlier business relationship. [3–6, 21]

The later history of his move to Tucson belongs to his own biography. It cannot fill the gap in Matthews's life by assuming that the two moved together. Backenstos also describes a Warsaw company under Aldrich in a separate part of his letter; that military reference does not make everyone in Aldrich's business circle a member of his company. [10, 21]

Duncan, Galland, and the danger of a single political label

Former governor Joseph Duncan appears in both the railroad and university acts. He campaigned against the Mormons in the 1842 gubernatorial contest and had earlier military experience. He died January 15, 1844, before the murders. The date prevents a familiar name in the development circle from being placed among the actors of June 27. [4–5, 22]

Isaac Galland supplies a different trajectory. A railroad incorporator and important participant in land transactions with the Saints, he was baptized and ordained an elder by Joseph Smith on July 3, 1839. His record also includes a colonel's role in the Black Hawk War and later withdrawal from church activity. The business circle was not uniformly anti-Mormon when its charters were obtained. [4, 23]

Warren, Abernathy, and overlapping kinds of evidence

Calvin A. Warren was a railroad and university participant and later a legal adviser to Smith and other Saints. William D. Abernathy was a railroad incorporator and the sheriff named in Marsh's separate lawsuit. Their appearances in development and legal records are meaningful associations. [4–5, 18, 24]

Both also appear in Backenstos's broad hostile accusation—Warren at Quincy and Abernathy at Augusta. Those allegations should not be concealed simply because the men previously had other kinds of connections to the Saints. Neither should the accusation be substituted for a particular proved act. The same standard used for Matthews applies to his associates. [10]

Backenstos, Stiles, and Bennett

Robison's Masonic initiation supplies a dated connection to Backenstos and Stiles as fellow initiates, with Bennett acting as secretary. Backenstos later became the accuser whose letter named Matthews. The documents thus create an unexpected link: one of Robison's fraternal companions later accused the man beside whom Robison had signed the school obligation. There is no evidence that the earlier note caused or shaped that accusation. The interest lies in the encounter of the records, not an imagined conspiracy. [1, 10, 12]

A final return to the paper

The note's printed border still encloses a modest, exact promise. It does not record the ferry proposal, the university's brief beginning, the railroad's extension, the lodge meeting, or the reported shipment of arms. Those connections come from other surviving records and must carry their own evidence with them.

What makes the paper valuable is not that it explains everything. It fixes Matthews and Robison in a shared obligation before the later events divided the county's memories. Following the signatures outward reveals ambition, institutional work, financial pressure, family choices, and accusation. Returning to them keeps the larger history attached to something the two men actually signed. [1]

Chronology and evidence register

Date	Event
1836	Matthews loses the legislative contest to Aldrich in Gregg's returns. [3]
February 15, 1837	Carthage seminary incorporation includes Matthews, Marsh, and Aldrich, according to Gregg. [3]
February 19, 1839	Railroad and Warsaw University acts name Matthews and overlapping associates. [4–5]
January 4–18, 1840	School note dated January 4; ferry authorization approved January 18. [1, 6]
October 1840–September 1841	Further interest receipts recorded on the owner's note. [1]
February 27, 1841	Railroad deadlines extended to May 1843 and May 1846. [7]
April 13, 1842	Robison initiated an Entered Apprentice in Nauvoo. [12]
December 27, 1842	Robison directs issuance of habeas corpus process for Smith. [13]
May 9–23, 1843	Matthews subpoenaed and served; Davis assault appeal dismissed. [8]
September–November 1843	Robison negotiates payment with Smith. [14–15]
June 19–26, 1844	Signal arms report dated June 19; Neighbor reprint June 26. [9]
June 25–27, 1844	Probable Robison postal reference June 25; Smith brothers killed June 27. [17, 21]
After the 1845 violence	Backenstos's retrospective letter names D. W. Matthews and describes him at St. Louis; exact date unresolved. [10]
May–June 1845	Aldrich acquitted May 30; Robison's tax receipt dated June 14. [19, 21]
August 14, 1846	Separate Smith–Robison land obligation canceled, not the school note. [16]
1847–1850	Robison moves to Nauvoo, serves as mayor, then moves to Appanoose. [11]
1880	Gregg publishes local and family recollections; his seminary survivor statement implies Matthews was believed dead by publication. [3]
1888–1891	Robison moves to Topeka; dies November 4, 1891. [11]

What the surviving evidence does—and does not—establish

Issue	Finding
School-note roles	Two obligors. Recipient of proceeds, principal/surety division, and specific collateral are not stated. [1]
Principal settlement	No payoff or cancellation visible on this note. The 1846 cancellation belongs to another obligation. [1, 16]
Transport ventures	Ferry and railroad authorizations established; actual operation of this ferry and construction of this line not proved. [4, 6–7]
Matthews and armed opposition	Strong identification in a contemporary procurement report; explicitly named in a later accusation. No proved rank, company, shot, or jail position. [9–10]
Masonry	Robison's initiation and later secretaryship established. Matthews's membership not established. [11–12]
Robison and the final days	June 25 postal reference is probable, with an alternative identity retained. No personal post-murder reaction recovered. [17]
Matthews's later identity	St. Louis merchant description is an attributed lead; exact family and life dates remain unresolved. Gregg implies death by 1880, without providing a date. [3, 10]
Family recollections	Eliza Wells account attributed to Chauncey in Gregg, not treated as a contemporary private transcript. [3, 25]

Identity and access notes

The strongest remaining personal lead is St. Louis. The Backenstos letter names D. W. and J. B. Matthews there as merchants. That pairing should be compared with the Mathews cluster in Gregg's Carthage list. It does not yet establish a family relationship, a street address, or either man's death. [3, p. 688; 10]

A loan book could answer the central financial question. The school legislation prescribed records of loans and securities. A surviving commissioner's account or Augusta township register might identify a principal borrower, collateral, renewal, or payoff. This edition has not located the entry for the owner's note in such a register. The interest endorsements remain the direct evidence of its treatment. [1–2]

The newspaper finding remains a layered source. The arms account is a Warsaw claim preserved in a Nauvoo reprint, consulted through a modern institutional transcription. The broader accusation is a later Backenstos letter as printed in History of the Church. Neither source has been converted into an itemized eyewitness account of Matthews's movements. [9–10]

Later recollections are part of the story, with their dates attached. Gregg participated in the seminary organization, compiled election returns, and named Chauncey as his source concerning Eliza Wells. Those forms of knowledge are not interchangeable. The text identifies whether it is using a charter, an account of institutional participation, a compiled return, or a reported family recollection. [3]

No archive or private family was contacted on the user's behalf, and no special-access manuscript is represented as inspected. Unverified vital dates, a named operating ferry, a Matthews military commission, a Matthews lodge membership, and the school note's principal settlement have not been supplied by inference. The report is a completed presentation of the documented findings, with these boundaries retained.

Illustrations for this story

Nine numbered figures and the opening signature detail are embedded in this edition: both sides of the original note, enlarged interest receipts, the regional map, the Warsaw view, the newspaper masthead, the Commerce detail, the Carthage courthouse, and the complete Andreas Nauvoo map. Later views and maps retain their dates and do not purport to show specific events in 1840 or 1844. [1, 27–29, 31]

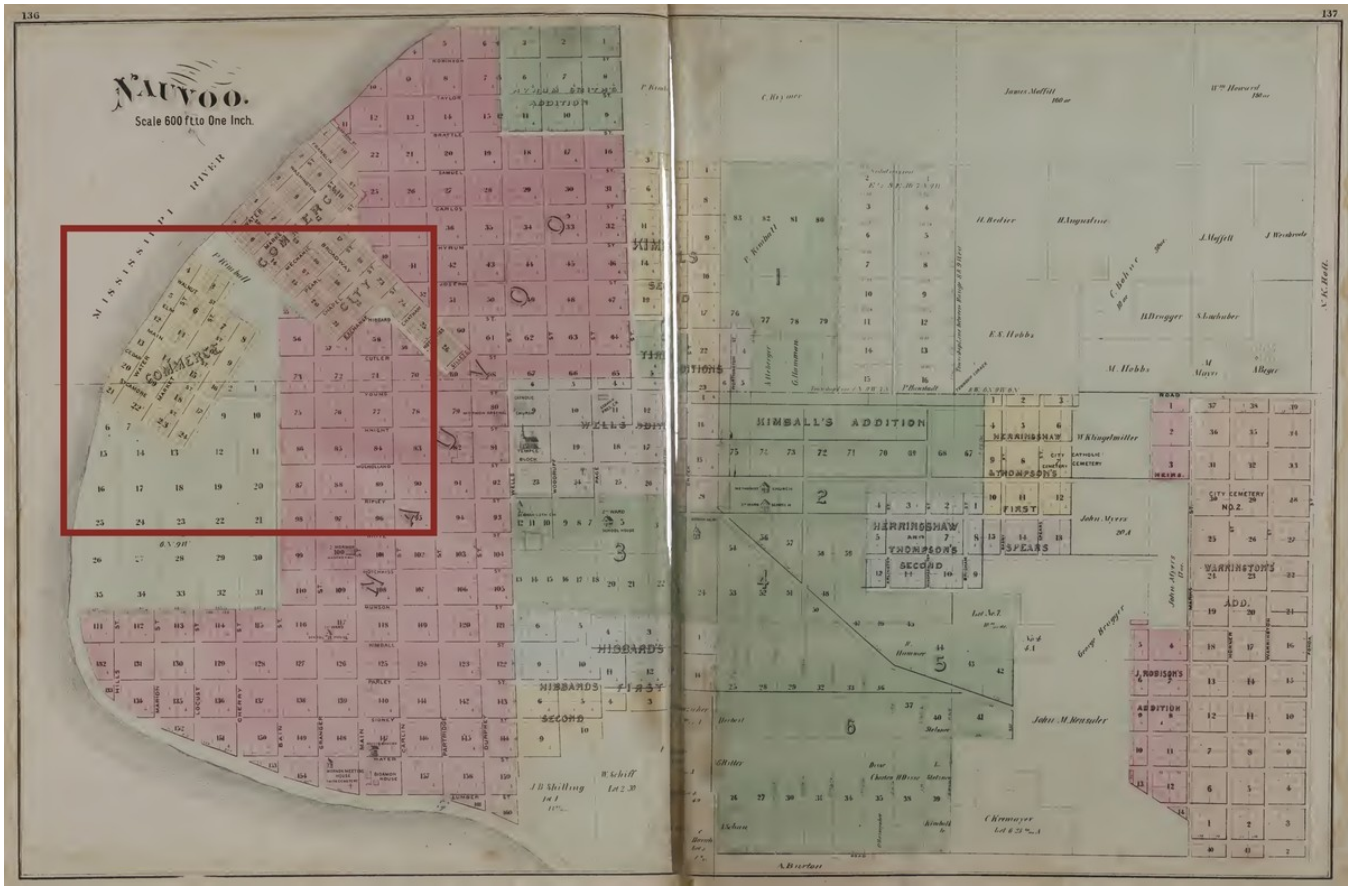


Figure 9. Complete Nauvoo map from Andreas's 1874 atlas, printed pp. 136–137, reused from the Commerce project. The red outline is a modern locator for the enlarged Commerce grid shown earlier; it is not an 1840 boundary, a Matthews parcel, or a railroad route. [27]

Linked documentary facsimiles

The ferry act (1840, pp. 47–48), the railroad act (1839, pp. 75–79), and the April 13, 1842 lodge minute (p. 30) are linked beside the relevant narrative passages and in the source notes. Their page-image downloads could not be imported for this edition. They are linked sources, not embedded illustrations. The short quotations in the narrative are labeled modern typeset excerpts. [4, 6, 12]

The 1841 railroad extension remains available through its source entry. The legislation documents authorization and additional time, not proof of an operating railroad. [7]

The lodge photograph is a copy of the minutes in William Clayton's handwriting. The April 13 entry occupies the lower portion of page 30; the upper portion continues the previous meeting. Its initiation is an Entered Apprentice proceeding, not Robison's raising as a Master Mason. [12]

The Church History Library page-image addresses for the June 26, 1844 Neighbor are preserved below. The reprint heading lies on the first page and the Mathews paragraph on the second, according to the issue transcription. The newspaper images could not be imported or collated word by word in this edition; the report continues to distinguish the transcription from a checked clipping. [9]

Neighbor: first-page image | Neighbor: second-page image

Gregg's election and educational passages are cited rather than reproduced as additional book-page images. Their relevance is retained in the story and biographies. [3]

Illustration boundaries

No authenticated portrait of Matthews has been established. A Robison portrait should be used only with dependable provenance, not a name attached to an unrelated face. A generic steam ferry should not be labeled Matthews's boat; a later locomotive should not be made evidence that his railroad ran. Likewise, a modern photograph of a surviving Carthage college building would illustrate a different institution unless the caption carefully explains the distinction.

This reading edition is complete with the images available in the working files. The proposed ferry, railroad, lodge, and newspaper facsimile insertions remain uncompleted; no generated or reconstructed document has been substituted for them.

Sources and image credits

Bracketed numbers identify the sources below. Original documents, modern editorial identifications, later historical recollections, and reused project research are distinguished. Links lead to digital texts, scans, or repository records. Sources were checked during the project in October 2026; a link's presence does not imply that every item cited by the source's editor was independently inspected.

[1] The original school-fund note, January 4, 1840. David Larsen's original, front and reverse, photographed as IMG_3667.jpeg and IMG_3668.jpeg. Images visually examined after rotation. October receipt day provisional; signatures retain spelling variants. Calculations of maturity and interest are derived from this document. No principal settlement or purpose for the underlying proceeds is written on the sheet.

[2] Illinois school legislation, March 4, 1837. School-fund legislation presented as D254397b by the Papers of Abraham Lincoln. Relevant provisions address township funds, loans, securities, loan records, and the use of income for schooling. The statute supplies context; it does not identify this note's account entry. School-law text

[3] Thomas Gregg, History of Hancock County, Illinois (Chicago: Chas. C. Chapman & Co., 1880). Especially pp. 224 (Charles Robison and his family), 372 (Eliza Wells, with Chauncey named as informant), 435–436 (Carthage seminary and Warsaw University), 448–450 (elections), 474 (Joe Duncan), 638 (early Warsaw residents), and 688 (Carthage settlers). The searchable text was consulted. Election totals are given as printed, without adopting inconsistent majority columns. Later recollections are attributed, not converted into contemporary personal statements. Gregg's seminary account is especially valuable because he identifies himself as its secretary. Book and page images • Searchable text

[4] Des Moines Rapids Railroad incorporation, February 19, 1839. "An Act to Incorporate the Des Moines Rapids Railroad Company," Laws of Illinois, 1839, pp. 75–79; Papers of Abraham Lincoln, D275370. Names the incorporators, route, capital arrangements, and construction limits. The prohibition on notes concerns initial share installments, not every transaction of the company. The original opening-page link is retained; its facsimile could not be imported into this edition. Act and original scan

[5] Warsaw University incorporation, February 19, 1839. "An Act to Incorporate the Warsaw University," Laws of Illinois, 1839, pp. 73–75; Papers of Abraham Lincoln, D271375b. Original trustees include David W. Mathews, John Montague, and Mark Aldrich. The roster corrects any claim that Aldrich was absent. Corporate admission provisions do not establish each trustee's later personal politics. Act • Original pages

[6] Matthews–Aldrich ferry authorization, January 18, 1840. Illinois act authorizing David W. Matthews and Mark Aldrich to keep the Warsaw crossing; Laws of Illinois, 1840, pp. 47–48; Papers of Abraham Lincoln, D271637b. Introduced January 2. Ten-year term, steam-boat requirement within two years, and contemplated traffic are supported by the act. Operation of this particular ferry is not established. Original-page links are retained; the facsimile downloads could not be imported into this edition. Act • Original pages

[7] Supplemental railroad act, February 27, 1841. Supplement to the Des Moines Rapids Railroad incorporation, Laws of Illinois, 1841, p. 197; Papers of Abraham Lincoln, D283961b. Extends commencement to May 1, 1843 and completion to May 1, 1846; makes further provision for use of the state route and iron. The act proves extension of authority, not completed work. Supplement

[8] City of Nauvoo v. Davis for Assault: subpoena and case introduction. Subpoena of May 9, 1843 and return recording service on David W. Mathews on May 13; Joseph Smith Papers. Companion Michael Barnes is named in the subpoena, but not thereby shown served. Editorial case introduction identifies Amos Davis, the earlier proceedings before Smith, and dismissal of the circuit appeal on May 23. Matthews's testimony is not preserved here. Subpoena • Return • Case introduction

[9] "Warsaw News," Nauvoo Neighbor, June 26, 1844. BYU Studies institutional transcription of the issue, reproducing a Warsaw Signal extra dated June 19. Reports D.W. Mathews's St. Louis mission and return aboard Die Vernon with cannon and ammunition. The full personal identity is strongly indicated, not independently closed. The original Signal extra and the Neighbor page image were not collated in this edition. Other artillery references in the surrounding article are not assigned to his procurement. Issue and transcription The two Church History Library image addresses are listed in the illustration notes; download failure prevented final image collation.

[10] Backenstos's retrospective accusation. History of the Church, vol. 7, pp. 142–145, letter attributed to Jacob B. Backenstos, in chapter 12. Names D. W. Matthews and J. B. Matthews as merchants then at St. Louis within a broad accusation concerning the murders. The separate Carthage guard and Warsaw company lists are not the Matthews entry. Internal references to later violence place the letter after 1845 events; exact original date and recipient remain unverified. Its allegations are not convictions or descriptions of individual shots. Chapter and letter

[11] Joseph Smith Papers, "Robison, Chauncey." Editorial biographical registry: family, life dates, county arrival, offices, marriage, lodge connections, and later migration. Its school-commissioner dates (1844–1845) are retained alongside Gregg's 1845 election entry rather than expanded into an unverified complete tenure. References generated by Robison's recording office do not necessarily identify private dealings. Biographical registry

[12] Nauvoo Masonic Lodge minutes, April 13, 1842. Copied version in Nauvoo Masonic Lodge Minute Book, pp. 30–31, Church History Library, through Joseph Smith Papers. Page 30 visually examined: Hyrum Smith presides pro tempore, Joseph Smith is present, John C. Bennett is secretary, and Robison, J. B. Backenstos, and George P. Stiles (entered as "George W. Stiles" in this copy) are initiated Entered Apprentices. Page 31's raising of other men is not Robison's raising. The copied minute is in William Clayton's handwriting, not necessarily the handwriting of the officer named as secretary. Minute and transcript • Page 30 image The identification of Stiles follows the corrected George P. Stiles project [32].

[13] Petition to Chauncey Robison, December 26, 1842. Joseph Smith Papers, Extradition of JS for Accessory to Assault, petition and December 27 order on page 3; editorial introduction explains the clerk's absence and inability to obtain the writ at Carthage. Robison ordered issuance; he did not determine the extradition merits. Petition and order

[14] Chauncey Robison to Joseph Smith, September 20, 1843. Joseph Smith Papers, letter and historical introduction. Robison's request for part payment, demands on himself, and proposed extension are his own expressed concerns. The introduction identifies the associated 160 acres near Nauvoo; it corrects the project's earlier Carthage-area description. Letter

[15] Chauncey Robison to Joseph Smith, November 2, 1843. Joseph Smith Papers, letter, editorial account, and notes. The Rochester draft, failed availability, November 28 payment, and later Walworth debt arrangement are differentiated. The later arrangement's broad date range is not replaced with an invented exact date. Letter and context

[16] Promissory note to Chauncey Robison, October 22, 1842–B. Joseph Smith Papers, separate $960 obligation and August 14, 1846 cancellation by surrender of the related land bond, in James Whitehead's handwriting. This is not the owner's January 1840 school-fund note. Note and cancellation

[17] Willard Richards's journal, June 25, 1844. Joseph Smith Papers, Appendix 3: Journal Excerpt, June 23–27, page 4. "Robinson P. M" is identified as probably Chauncey Robison, with George W. Robinson an alternative. The entry concerns the stopping of mail and notice to postal authorities, not a proved militia role or endorsement of the murders. Journal and identification

[18] Reused project: Marsh v. Abernathy, Illustrated Narrative Edition. Established David Larsen collection report, October 2026, especially the Benjamin Franklin Marsh Sr. biography and corrected witness discussion. Reused for Marsh's family, dates, educational associations, and the distinction between plaintiff and later congressman. Earlier uncorrected versions of the case report are not controlling. Gregg's educational chapter adds Matthews to the direct seminary connection.

[19] Reused project: Hancock County 1845 Tax Redemptions, revised Foster-certificate edition. The verified Robison section identifies his June 14, 1845 receipt as $70.00; $74.74 is the combined sheet total. Used for the particular receipt and its interpretation, not as a new independently inspected tax ledger.

[20] Reused project: People v. James Brooks, Illustrated Narrative Edition. Revised October 2026 report identifies the subpoena as August 1849 and the justice's signature as Chauncey Robison. The earlier 1845 dating and unrelated proposed witness biographies are not imported into this study.

[21] Mark Aldrich: biography and murder-trial verdict. Joseph Smith Papers biographical entry and the May 30, 1845 jury verdict in State of Illinois v. Williams et al. Aldrich was a defendant and was acquitted. His later geographical history is not Matthews's migration history. Aldrich registry • Case overview

[22] Joseph Duncan: biographical registry. Joseph Smith Papers entry, used for military background, governorship, 1842 campaign opposition, and January 15, 1844 death. Death before the June crisis is a consequential chronological boundary. Duncan registry

[23] Isaac Galland: biographical registry. Joseph Smith Papers entry, used for the July 3, 1839 baptism and ordination, military and land associations, and later withdrawal. Membership in the development circle did not entail a single religious or political trajectory. Galland registry

[24] Calvin A. Warren and the earlier property/legal network. The revised Marsh v. Abernathy project and its cited Warren correspondence supply the legal and bankruptcy background. The charter references are independently documented in sources 4–5. Later accusations in source 10 are retained separately from this earlier professional association.

[25] Deed from Daniel H. and Eliza Robison Wells, February 4, 1843. Joseph Smith Papers, contemporary instrument. Read with Gregg's explicit identification of Eliza as Chauncey's sister; the deed itself does not narrate the couple's later separation. Deed

[26] Bond to David Mathews, March 11, 1840. Joseph Smith Papers, lots 1 and 2 in block 46, Nauvoo. Retained as an unresolved identity lead, not assigned to David W. Matthews and not used to infer his church membership. Separate identity lead

[27] Maps reused from Commerce: Two Map Close-ups. Smith's Map of the Western States Designed to Accompany Smith's Geography for Schools: detached sheet cataloged with an 1839 copyright; Paulus Swaen lot 46614, current listing linked below. The atlas title page is unverified. Andreas, An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hancock County, Illinois (1874), Nauvoo map, printed pp. 136–137; BYU/Internet Archive copy. Local project reproductions supply the images. Modern locator outlines are identified as modern. Smith map source • Andreas atlas copy

[28] Henry Lewis, Warsaw, 1854–1858. Color lithograph, Arnz & Co., Düsseldorf; Saint Louis Art Museum, object 37455, Museum Purchase 145:1949, public domain. Image reused from the completed George Rockwell biography and earlier collection projects. The plate's "Iowa" is retained and explained. No actual Matthews ferry, store, landing, or 1844 shipment is identified from the view. Museum record

[29] Warsaw Signal masthead, May 12, 1841. Image reused from the completed George Rockwell biography. Used only to identify the newspaper visually. It is not the June 19, 1844 extra. The linked newspaper archive is the repository reference from that project, not a claim that the needed 1844 clipping was downloaded. Warsaw newspaper archive

[30] George A. Smith's historical inquiry, June 30, 1856, to John Taylor. Letter in the Wilford Woodruff Papers project, including a question about the timing of the mail stoppage during the final days. Its presence in that project does not make Woodruff its author. It records a request for clarification, not an independent answer or contemporary statement by Robison. Letter page

[31] Carthage courthouse illustration. A. T. Andreas, An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Hancock County, Illinois (Chicago, 1874), p. 10. Detail reused from the earlier Credit, Commerce, and Conflict illustrated report and its Bagby–Bettisworth source image. The view includes later enlargement, including the 1868 addition; it is not an exact view of the courthouse in 1840. Digitized atlas

[32] Stiles's identity in the lodge record. George P. Stiles, Final Illustrated Report, October 12, 2026, pp. 3–4, existing Larsen project. Distinguishes the copied minute's "George W. Stiles" from the identified attorney George Philander Stiles. The literal reading is retained when describing the manuscript; the narrative uses George P. Stiles. Read alongside source 12. Stiles biographical registry