

# Missouri State Archives: Finding Aid 3.7

## Thomas Reynolds, 1840-1844

[ Full-text transcription of: Letter from George Miller, St. Louis, Mo to Governor Reynolds, Jefferson City, Mo. ]

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St. Louis Mo. Sept 4<sup>th</sup> 1842  
To His Excellency Thos Reynolds  
Dr Sir

I hope you will not think it a persecution, my writing you on the subject of the late requisition by yourself, on the Executive of Illinois (upon the affidavit of ex Gov. L W Boggs against O P Rockwell as principal, & Joseph ^ Smith as accessory before the fact for an attempt to commit murder upon the body of Said Boggs in the county of Jackson State of Missouri)

First I will briefly sate the sircumstances of the arrest of said Smith & Rockwell by the officers Mr. King & Pitman of Adams County Ill. We had heard a rumour that a writ had been issued upon your demand for Rockwell & Smith, as fugitives having fled the justice of your State and taken shelter in Illinois, but did not believe it, it being a notorious fact that said Smith has not been in Mo. within the last three and a half years past. Therefore could not have been guilty of the charges alledged, and further, on the day the deed was committed he attended an officer drill, and the day after reviewed the Militia in the City of Nauvoo. Now that he could have fled the justice of your State is a matter impossible, the distance being about 300 miles, And with these facts before him, he sued out a writ of Habeas Corpus, under a provision of the City Charter, and an ordinance growing out of the same, passed by the City Council. The officers that apprehended them (Smith & Rockwell) preemtorilly refused to acknowledge the validity of any city ordinance in the case—but however left the prisoners in charge of the City Marshall until they could return to Quincy for Legal advise. The Marshall having no authority to hold the prisoners let them go. And having learned that Gov. Carlin was determined to have them delivered to your agent regardless of habeas corpus. The counsel for the prisoners

advised them not to be found on the return of the officers from Quincy (which they observed) believing the prisoners would fall victims to the fury of the populace of Illinois or Missouri, and that the arm of the Law would not

be able to protect them, or could they get an impartial trial by due course of Law, prejudice running so high, on account of our peculiar religious tenets, which my dear sir you are very well aware of.—The above is an unvarnished account of the facts in the case. It is now rumoured that the agents you sent to receive Smith & Rockwell have again returned to Ill. having a new demand upon the Executive of Ill. [letters crossed out] & Iowa

^ The illegalities of the former being amended, whether it be true or not, I can not tell. I now beg the patience of your Excellency whilst I indulge my feeling in stating things as they are, and I will do so more freely knowing who you are, and I feel assured you will believe me. I have known Joseph Smith intimately for near three & a half years, having been a great portion of that time in his society every day, there being an intimacy between us like that of Brothers, he having frequently unbosomed himself to me, and I unhesitatingly aver that in every Sense of the terms, a more generous, liberal, honorable, high toned virtuous man, never existed on the footsool of the great Jehovah, than Joseph Smith. And why let me ask you, should innocence be hunted and sacrificed to the caprice of popular prejudice & phrenzy, and we as a religious community denied the liberty of conscience and the common constitutional rights of citizens.

I make this appeal to your Excellency, having learned from good sources that you are a learned jurist, a good man, & honorable patriot, therefore I am the more free to speak my sentiments.—Now in regard to our peculiar religious Tenets, we believe and teach nothing other than the doctrine, the Prophets, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles taught, and should that, in the nineteenth century, be esteemed criminal, Surely

your Excellency will say with me, it can not, but if those Tenets be wrong, then we as religionists are guilty of error. I do hope that your Excellency will not permit your mind to be prejudiced by the foul slanders of those amongst us, as also those who are opposed to us, on account of our religious notions but that you will rather exert an influence to avert the growing prejudice, and also the daily persecutions that are continually heaped upon our religious community.—I have seen forty nine winters, and have no recollection of any religious body in these United States having been so cruelly persecuted as we have been; and not a [person], [illegible] in our behalf, nor an influence exerted. Should such a state of things be allowed in a Government where the liberty of conscience is guaranteed to all its citizens and

all religions said to be tolerated, It nevertheless  
is so, And will you, exert an influence against  
such a State of things.

In haste  
Most Respectfully &c  
George Miller

Geo. Miller  
The Mormon about  
Smith & Rockwell  
1842

St. Louis  
Sep  
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Mo.

His Excellency  
Thos. Reynolds Gov. Mo  
Jefferson City  
Missouri

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