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# John Alexander Hicks

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1801–1897

D&C 124:137

In his youth, John studied medicine in Dublin, Ireland. As a student, he helped care for the wounded at the Battle of Waterloo. John migrated with his family from Ireland to Canada in 1825, settling near Quebec. In Canada, John was introduced to the message of the Restoration. After entering baptismal waters, he gathered with the Saints to Nauvoo, Illinois.

John's experience in Nauvoo was difficult on many fronts. The Nauvoo High Council charged him with lying and slandering the reputation of long-time member John P. Greene. On May 2, 1840, he confessed his wrongs and solemnly promised to make restitution to Brother Greene. About seven months later, on January 19, 1841, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation naming John Hicks as the presiding officer of the elders quorum in Nauvoo (D&C 124:137).

In March 1841 John wrote an "Epistle to the Elders Scattered Abroad," wanting to "know how many are on the Lord's side, how many there are laboring in the vineyard, ... [for] it is necessary that everyone should render an account of his stewardship."<sup>1</sup> On April 8, 1841, John's own stewardship was publicly questioned at the general conference of the Church held in Nauvoo. A vote was taken to determine if John should continue his leadership role in the elders quorum. The congregation voted to reject his leadership.

Six months later, at the October 1841 general conference, it was decided that "Elder John A. Hicks be cut off from the Church."<sup>2</sup> Angered by the decision and by what he saw as faults of Church leaders, John leagued himself with apostates. On June 24, 1844, three days before the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, John paid for a room in the Hamilton

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<sup>1</sup> *Times and Seasons* 2 (March 1, 1841), 340.

<sup>2</sup> Minutes and Discourse, 1–5 October 1841, 579. Joseph Smith Papers.

Hotel at Carthage, Illinois. He told Brother Cyrus H. Wheelock that he was “determined to shed the blood of Joseph Smith, ... whether he was cleared by the law or not.” Cyrus Wheelock told Governor Thomas Ford of Illinois what “[John] Hicks had said, but [Governor Ford] treated it with perfect indifference, and suffered Hicks and his associates to run at liberty and mature their murderous plans.”<sup>3</sup>

In fall of 1847, John moved from Illinois to Chippewa Valley, Wisconsin. He enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War, serving for six months as a private in Company G of the Wisconsin 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. He was discharged due to poor health following the siege at Corinth, Mississippi. In December 1888 John ventured west, settling in Oregon. At the time of his death, he was unable to walk. He died sitting in a chair at age ninety-six.

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<sup>3</sup> Historian’s Office, Martyrdom Account, 10. Joseph Smith Papers.