

Rise & Fall of a Mormon Power Broker: The John C. Bennett Story

John C. Bennett, a convert to Mormonism, amassed immense civil, military, and religious power in Nauvoo in less than two years. His story reveals the volatile power dynamics, moral conflicts, and internal politics of the era, culminating in a scandalous excommunication.

The Meteoric Rise (1840-1841)



From Convert to Second-in-Command in 18 Months

Bennett was given immense trust and authority, holding numerous key leadership roles simultaneously.



Religious Role

- Assistant President of the Church
- Grand Secretary, Masonic Lodge

Military Role

- Major General, Nauvoo Legion
- Quartermaster General

Civil Role

- Mayor of Nauvoo
- University of Nauvoo Chancellor

The Scandalous Fall (1842)



Accused of "Spiritual Wifery"

Multiple women testified he tried to seduce them, calling illicit intercourse a "mystery of God."

Linked to a Brothel in Nauvoo

An eyewitness claimed Bennett built a brothel, which the city council later ordered torn down.

Publicly Excommunicated & Replaced

After being forced to resign as mayor, Joseph Smith took the position himself.