

JOHN SMITH

I am John Smith, oldest son of Hyrum Smith. My recollections of my father go back to when I was a small boy in Kirtland, Ohio, I was born in September of 1832. I was five years old when my mother, Jerusha, died. I don't remember her well, but the things others said of her agree with my hazy memories of youth. My grandmother, Lucy Mack Smith, said "She was a woman whom everyone loved that was acquainted with her, for she was every way worthy."

Soon after my mother died my father married Mary Fielding. My brother, three sisters and I traveled with our new mother from Kirtland, Ohio to Missouri in May of 1838 to establish a home in Far West. I remember well when we were expelled from Missouri later the same year, crossing the entire state in the dead of winter, and our relocation in Illinois. I helped drive the wagon some weeks later when my family went to visit my father in Liberty Jail. I remember his terrible condition in that jail and his encouragement to us, despite his own situation. But that was the way my father was. He was always busy encouraging and supporting others, even when he needed encouragement and support himself.

After my father escaped from Liberty Jail and returned to us, we settled in Nauvoo, Illinois. My father loved me, and I loved him with all the love a boy can have for a father. I remember walking by his side as we went to church meetings, and wanting to be just like him. We would go together to the Temple on the hill overlooking Nauvoo and the Mississippi River. My father was in charge of the construction of the temple.

One of my favorite memories is when my father let me ride his white horse in the streets of Nauvoo. I learned from his example that the best course in life is to be humble, work hard, and seek the Spirit of the Lord. My father's relationship with my Uncle Joseph was a wonderful one. While Joseph was the President and Prophet of the Church, he never spoke down to my father, but rather sought his advice and counsel on matters of importance. In fact, my father was the assistant president and patriarch over all the Church at the time of his death.

I was three months short of twelve years old when my father and Joseph were killed. I was devastated by my father's death. I remember, though, the outpouring of grief by the whole community, and the support and consolation directed toward my family on that sad occasion.

After my father died, I assumed many of the responsibilities of a man, despite my young age. We continued to live in Nauvoo for two years before leaving for Winter Quarters. I was sixteen when we arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in September of 1848. I crossed the plains seven times after that helping others to immigrate to Zion. In the 1860's I led a company of Saints from Denmark across the Atlantic on the ship Monarch of the Seas, and then led that company across the plains to the Salt Lake Valley.

I was ordained Patriarch of the Church in 1855, and continued in that position until 1911. I was privileged to serve as a General Authority together with my brother, Joseph

Fielding Smith, and for ten years we served together as President and Patriarch to the Church. Throughout my life I was faithful to the principles taught me by my father, and I bear witness of the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for which he gave his life.

At times during my life I would sign my letters, just as I end this talk: John Smith, Son of Hyrum. And I do so, in humble reverence of his life and example, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

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