

MARTHA ANN SMITH HARRIS

Given by Carole Call King
Hyrum Smith's 200th Birthday Celebration, 13 February 2000
The Assembly Hall on Temple Square, Salt Lake City, Utah

It is an honor for me to represent the many descendants of Martha Ann Smith Harris. My great grandmother Martha Ann was only three years old when her father, Hyrum, was martyred at Carthage. Even at that tender age she had some vivid memories. At age 39 Martin Ann wrote a letter to her posterity. I quote a few of her own words from that letter:

"Father was loving, kind, and affectionate, indulgent almost to a fault.

"I remember one day mother had made him a pair of pants and he was very proud of them. I saw him walk back and forth with his hands in his pockets. It was seldom that he was cheerful, he always looked anxious and sober."

"I remember well the night that he was murdered. I had the measles. I had taken cold and it had settled on my lungs. I could not speak above a whisper. ...The news spread like wildfire through the house. The anguish and sorrow that was felt can easier be felt than described. It will never be forgotten by those who were called to pass through it." Some friends wrapped her in a blanket and carried her to the Mansion House to see her dead father and uncle.

Martha Ann was eleven years old when her beloved mother died. This death was devastating to her. At this time she had a comforting vision of her parents, which has been presented for us in the handwriting of 13-year-old Joseph F. Smith. I quote a few excerpts from Martha Ann's vision:

"I saw my father and mother sitting the white horse my father used to ride, dressed in white robes with veils over their faces. The horse [was] also clothed in white. Their hands were transparent. Their feet were covered with their robes. The horse's feet looked beautiful standing on a pavement of gold, smooth like glass.

"My father asked me if we were all well. Mother then said she would like to go with him but [she] asked, "...how can I leave the children?"

"He answered, "The children will be taken care of" and that he would be with them, and watch over them as he had watched over them and her til now.

"Father then told mother she had done well by them and he was perfectly satisfied and he would be with them from this time henceforth and forever.

"Mother then said, 'Father is going and I must go along.' She then said, 'Father, let her hear.'"

"Father then commenced playing a beautiful musical instrument of pure gold and so delightful that [I] cannot describe it, during which they embraced each other and she said it was the happiest day she ever saw.

"They gave some other directions but seemed to be in great haste saying they must go. I asked mother why they wore veils. She said if they should remove them, I could not look upon them. I kissed them both through their veils. Their breath smelled like sweet ointment. Their voices sounded like sweet music...."

I have great love and gratitude for my ancestors. I feel privileged to be a member of the church for which they sacrificed so much. I know it is true.

I say these things in the holy name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Carole C. King