



The 18th Biennial
Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith
 Family Reunion
 August 2005



By Frances Orton

Monday, August 8, The Smith family group left Provo for Salt Lake City, meeting the remainder of the group at the west side of Temple Square. After the bus was loaded, we began the journey.

Driving through Parley's Canyon the bus began to experience difficulties. The driver, Walt Kolditz was not only able to get the bus rolling again but he used his ladder to retrieve a Frisbee accidentally thrown on the roof at the rest stop pavilion. The group made it through Wyoming and into the family's first destination at the Best Western Stagecoach Inn in Ogallala, Nebraska. Arriving very late at night all really appreciated the rest.

Tuesday, August 9, we boarded the bus early and continued through Nebraska and Iowa. Today Buddy shared a DVD that Eldred and Hortense made called, *Witness the Restoration – Smith Family Artifacts and Their Story*. It was nice to view this as a family group during the traveling. Everyone also listened to a CD of Carole Mikita's radio interview of Buddy Youngreen about the history of the Smith family reunions. This interview was tapped on 8/2/05 and broadcast on 8/7/05 as part of her *People of Faith* on Utah's new AM820.

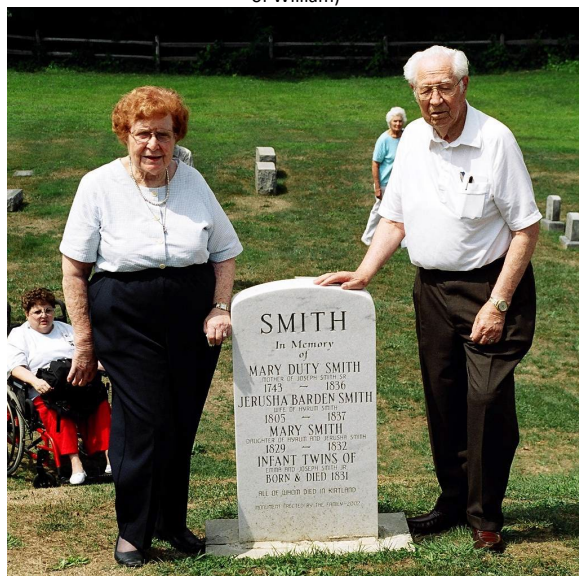
We pulled into the Davenport Fairfield Inn in Davenport, Iowa about 10:45 p.m. They allowed the pool to be open later for the bus group to go swimming.

Wednesday, August 10, we left the hotel at 8:00 a.m. Today we crossed Illinois and Indiana. We then stopped at the Cleveland airport to pick up cousins flying and driving in from various areas of the country. We drove to the Fairfield Inn in Willoughby, Ohio.

Thursday, August 11, today we visited and toured the Kirtland Temple. We also enjoyed a stop at the Whitney Store, the Morley Farm, and the temple rock query.



Steve & Frances Orton (Great-great granddaughter of Hyrum), Hortense & Eldred Smith (Great-great grandson of Hyrum Hyrum), Buddy Youngreen, Gilda & David Sundeen (Great-great granddaughter of William)



Hortense and Eldred Smith at the grave memorial of Mary Duty grandmother of the prophet, Jerusha Barden Smith - wife of Hyrum, Mary Smith - daughter of Jerusha and Hyrum, and infant twins of Joseph Jr. and Emma in the Kirtland Cemetery



Karl Anderson spoke to the family during the morning session in Kirtland



2005 family gathering in Kirtland, Ohio



Newell K. Whitney home and store



The Kirtland Temple Rock Quarry



Room in Newell Whitney Store where School of Prophets took place



The chisel marks in the rock quarry



Family gathering after tour of temple



The Kirtland School house

One highlight was going to the Kirtland Temple dressed in our best where the family filled the first floor of the temple. A brass ensemble and choir were set up and performed original music which helped set the tone. The prayers were offered by Eldred and Hortense Smith. Karl Anderson spoke about the Smith Family in Kirtland. He shared stories of the sacrifices and contributions the Smiths gave there. We learned more about the blessings, spirit, and revelations that were poured out on the Smith's and the people who attended the dedication of the House of the Lord.

In Bruce C. Hafen, *Believing Heart: Nourishing the Seed of Faith* he quotes:

One of Joseph Smith's biographers described a winter in the happy Kirtland years: "It was a season for snug fires, jolly company, and rewarding study. . . . Joseph attended several weddings and officiated at several others, enjoying the festivities. . . . As he wrote, 'Our hearts were made glad with the fruit of the vine . . . and we felt disposed to patronize all the institutions of heaven.' Parties and feasts were frequent, and Joseph was 'much blessed with company' at home. . . . [He] enjoyed the out of doors, also, and frequently noted in his journal that the weather was perfect for sleighing."

And then the angels came. Indeed, the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in March of 1836 represented what might be the greatest spiritual outpouring in all of modern Church history. Joseph wrote in his journal that, shortly after the dedicatory prayer was offered, "Frederick G. Williams arose and testified that [during the prayer] an angel entered the window and took his seat between Father Smith and himself. David Whitmer also saw angels in the house."

In a special evening meeting, the Prophet wrote that "Brother George A. Smith arose and began to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; . . . and I beheld that the Temple was filled with angels. . . . The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place." At one of the concluding meetings, Joseph wrote, "The Savior made his appearance to some, while angels ministered to others, and it was a Pentecost and an endowment indeed, long to be remembered, for the sound shall go forth from this place into all the world, and occurrences of this day shall be handed down upon the pages of sacred history, to all generations."

Scott Fullmer read portions from the Samuel, Hyrum, and Joseph Smith Jr.'s Patriarchal Blessings.

Buddy then read a portion of the dedicatory prayer from the Doctrine & Covenants Section 109: 1-13, 20-23, 26, 34-38, 43-44, 50-52, 54, 57, 59,62-80.

There was an emphasis on:

68 O Lord, remember thy servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., and all his afflictions and persecutions—how he has covenanted with Jehovah, and vowed to thee, O Mighty God of Jacob—and the commandments which thou hast given unto him, and that he hath sincerely striven to do thy will.

69 Have mercy, O Lord, upon his wife and children, that they may be exalted in thy presence, and preserved by thy fostering hand.

70 Have mercy upon all their immediate connections, that their prejudices may be broken up and swept away as with a flood; that they may be converted and redeemed with Israel, and know that thou art God.

The family stood and sang *A Spirit of God*. What an occasion as we sang the words of this song. Many felt the presence of angels, Smith family, and others from beyond the veil. There was a feeling of peace and happiness and tears were flowing. No one wanted to leave.

Friday, August 12, we left Kirtland for Hiram, Ohio by 8:00 a.m. We arrived and broke into groups to tour the John Johnson farm where Joseph received the vision of the three degrees of glory.



John Johnson Home in Hiram, Ohio



This floor was original to the John Johnson home

Touring the John Johnson Farm, the family felt a sense of gratitude for the hospitality the John Johnson family extended to Joseph Jr. and Emma's family. The significance of the events that happened here was felt by all the family.

After the tour we traveled through New York and Pennsylvania where we stopped for a lunch at *Mary Yoder's Kitchen*. We then traveled to New York where we stayed at the Rochester Marriott Airport Hotel.

Our bus broke down just off the freeway and within a mile of our hotel. Many walked on ahead while the bus had several gallons of transmission fluid poured into it.



Walt Kolditz, the bus driver, and Jared Younggreen pouring transmission fluid into the bus



K.C. Kolditz helped his bus driver father direct traffic off the freeway

Saturday, August 13, began early to make the 9:00 a.m. reunion meeting at the Palmyra LDS Stake Center. Many in the group took advantage of the opportunity to attend a session at the Palmyra Temple. The family also had the opportunity to visit the Smith Family Homes, the Sacred Grove, Hill Cumorah, the Egbert B. Grandin Printing Office, and Alvin Smith's grave.



Singing a hymn during the meeting in Palmyra



Emily Knapp and Sara Wolfgramm during dedication of first vision statue in Palmyra, New York



Eldred G. Smith just before the dedication of the statue of the first vision at the visitor's center



Statue of first vision and sculptor, Dee Jay Bawden



Smith Family home in Palmyra, New York



On top of the Hill Cumorah



Margene and Samuel Isom, and David Huefner just outside the Sacred Grove in Palmyra, New York



Carole Mikita interviewed Joy Stoddard, Gracia Jones, and Darcy Kennedy from the Joseph Smith Jr. Family



Carol Mikita interviewed Buddy during this reunion event

Sunday, August 14, the group left for Albany stopping to attend Sacrament meeting in Fayette, New York. This gave the family the opportunity to commemorate the 175th year of the formal organization of the Church.



Susquehanna River visit



Group standing on banks of Susquehanna River



Carol Olsen and Steve and Frances Orton family in Fayette

We traveled through Harmony, Pennsylvania, and then through Colesville and South Bainbridge, New York. The group had the chance to walk to the banks of the Susquehanna River.

The family stayed at the Red Roof Inn in Albany, New York for the next couple of nights.

Monday, August 15, another early start to make our family meeting in Sharon, Vermont at the LDS Ward Meetinghouse. What an experience to be right next to where Joseph Jr. was born 200 years ago. This third reunion meeting was to celebrate that birthday.

During this meeting we benefited from two sisters, Emily Knapp and Sara Wolfram singing. We enjoyed the information presented by Buddy Youngreen. To end this meeting Steve Orton took several minutes to talk about the reunion in Salt Lake City in 2007. I took several minutes to present a plaque Hortense Smith arranged to honor Buddy for his 33 years of service and sacrifice for the Smith family.



Buddy speaking to family in Sharon LDS Meeting house and giving a farewell address



Family gathering in Sharon, Vermont



Buddy Younggreen and sculptor Dee Jay Bawden



Sharon, Vermont Joseph Smith Monument



The Orton's and Buddy Younggreen in Sharon, Vermont

Traveling back to New York from Vermont we stopped by the store where Lucy Mack and Joseph Sr. first met in Tunbridge, Vermont. The bus needed a couple of stops for transmission fluid.



The store where Lucy Mack and Joseph Sr. first met in Tunbridge, Vermont

Tuesday, August 16, began with delays. Buddy took the rented van back to Cleveland with those trying to make flights. While waiting for the bus repairs, Steve Orton walked up and down the street finding items and fixing glasses for members of the tour group. Then at 1:00 p.m. when it was clear we would not be returning on our original bus Steve and Rosie Kolditz went to the airport and rented a van. Steve drove the van to where the bus was being repaired to load the remaining luggage and return it to our group. Rosie was using a cell phone and Steve's laptop in the front seat of the van trying to make flight plans. At this point our group had checked out of the Albany Red Roof Inn and we were all standing and visiting out on the lawn.



Rosie Kolditz and Steve Orton spoke with group before they left to rent a van from the airport and pick up everyone's luggage



Sharing experiences and family stories left to right front: Joy Stoddard, Darcy Kennedy, Pam Loveland, Karen Checketts. Back: Sam Isom, Ivor Jones, Mark Williams, Julie Goodro, Suzanne King Ware, and Louise Smith Spencer



Tired travelers made the best of an awkward situation and enjoyed being together.



During the bus repairs there was a little time for Jerry Goodro to catch up on reading



Carol Dudley Quinn, Wynlee Sue Call, and A Bowen Call enjoyed some leisure time to visit and get to know each other

It began to rain hard. Three rooms had been kept for those with physical challenges to have a place to rest.



It began to rain and our group stood outside under the walkways with all the luggage

While Steve Orton was gone to retrieve the luggage from the broken-down bus, our group received word that we should find a hotel to check into for the night. I tried arranging rooms in the Albany Red Roof Hotel to find only a few rooms were available.

Darcy Kennedy and several others were praying in one of the rooms for a miracle. Darcy had one of her son's getting married on Saturday, August 20. We were now one day behind and an answer to prayers was definitely needed.

I decided that a group prayer would be beneficial. She asked Sam Isom being through the Patriarchal line and a member of the Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mach Smith Foundation to offer that prayer.

Then I borrowed a cell phone from Pam Loveland and started walking up and down the street talking with the various hotels. After explaining our situation most hotels wanted to help but they had no room. A few chain hotels had one room here or

three there or they had a few smoking rooms. Finally refuge from the rain was found at a Holiday Inn where I began calling in the lobby using one of the Holiday Inn phone books.

One additional problem in procuring a hotel for our group was the payment arrangements. Most hotels have policies and will not give out rooms without proper authorization for the group. Buddy was not with us. He was on his way to Cleveland. This made proper authorization a challenge. We had the credit card number and expiration date but not the authorization.

Discouragement was setting in. How would it be possible to find 28 rooms? Then many prayers were answered when a Marriott Courtyard Employee mentioned we might want to check with a place called, The Desmond. When I looked up their number and phoned The Desmond's front desk and explained the family's situation they came to our aid. The Desmond is a hotel that also operates as a Convention Center.

The Desmond brought over two vans and started transporting everyone and their luggage to the Desmond hotel. I was able to provide a list and check everyone in before they arrived for their room keys. After I arrived at the hotel I met with the Sales Department and arranged for a room to put all the retrieved luggage from the broken-down bus so people could come and claim their belongings. I arranged for a group continental breakfast the following morning to announce final travel plans.

The cheapest room rate I could find was \$169.00 a night. The Desmond let us stay for \$109.00 a night. They didn't charge us for the room to store the luggage, hold our group meetings, and enjoy our continental breakfast. They also sent out flyers under the door of each family member's room to announce our group meetings and they put up a poster at the front desk.

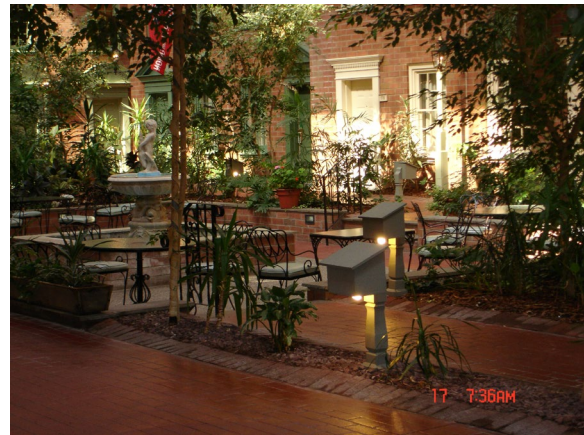
One thought expressed by the people at the Desmond really struck the group. They said, "When a neighbor is in need, that's what you do, you help."

In the meantime, while everyone was settling in their rooms, Steve Orton and Rosie Kolditz were arranging travel plans home. Rosie had to use a cell phone while trying to read Steve's laptop while Steve drove the bumpy van as they were bringing back the bus luggage. This was quite a job. The bus company could not find another bus so they decided

to fly everyone home. Rosie read and spelled names to the travel agency. The travel agency spent most of the day attempting to find flights home. Flight plans had several problems associated with them. The bus company did not have everyone's correct and full name for the ticket. We also had one family member without their driver's license or any other form of picture ID.

At 9:00 p.m. Steve and Walt called a family gathering to hand out travel plans. The group gathered in a circle and awaited the "call." Each travel plan involved several airline changes and lay-overs. It was fun to hear how everyone would make it home. Albany – Detroit – Houston – Salt Lake or Albany – Detroit – St. Paul – Salt Lake, etc.

It is interesting to note that several miracles came about from the flight trips home. One family had a four hour stop over in Houston. Their daughter who lived in Houston came and picked them up and brought them home for dinner. She was having surgery the next morning and was able to have her father give her a blessing.



A distant view of one of the two swimming pools available



This is an in-door courtyard at the Desmond



Inside this room we stored our luggage, held our meetings, and had breakfast to say good-byes





Our family had a nice night's rest and a great send off