

# Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Reunion Miracle Run - History

By Frances Orton

Tender mercies and miracles brought several things together for the Race and Reunion Planning Committees. Planning for this event began at a family organization meeting trying to figure out how to earn funds clear back on March 10, 2011 under the direction of Daniel Adams. During this meeting the committee discussed possible activities the family could participate in that might correlate with family history events.

From an excerpt from Steve Orton's journal: "On Saturday, March 12, 2011, I woke up at 5:00 AM and couldn't get back to sleep. I became determined to complete an ebook assignment for work. I connected with Provo Public Library where I was disappointed with the small ebook collection. I tried several times to checkout a book on my iPhone, my wife's iPad, and my computer. I wasn't having any success and I was quite frustrated. I then connected with the library at Brigham Young University and starting looking for items. I was thinking about Joseph Smith and found some interesting research by Dr. LeRoy Wirthlin, a surgeon at Harvard who wrote about the miracle of the surgery performed on Joseph Smith's leg. Joseph was seven-years-old at the time of his surgery. The practice with that disease was amputation to save his life. I believe that Nathan Smith was the only one in the area who had the knowledge and skills to attempt the experimental surgery to avoid amputation.

In 1813, Nathan Smith, the founder of Dartmouth Medical School, Yale Medical School (and two other medical schools) performed an experimental leg-saving surgery on Joseph Smith Jr. who is revered by our family and millions as a religious founder and Prophet of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At the time Lucy Mack Smith wrote that the Smith family was destitute. We don't know how much the family paid for that surgery or if the family was destitute because of the medical bills. That morning I came up with the idea that

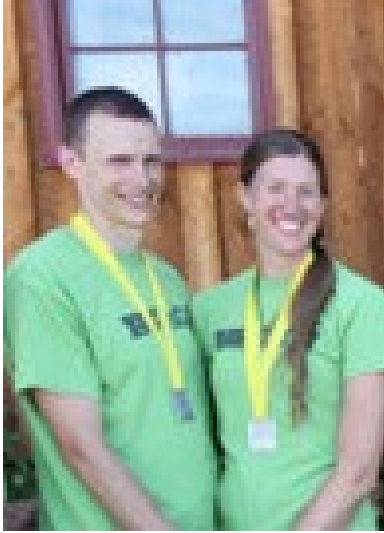
we as a family will provide a gift of gratitude to Dartmouth Medical School in honor of Dr. Nathan Smith. I believe we will be inviting anyone to donate who would like to share appreciation for that miracle surgery. It will be an exciting project! I sent an email to Richard Peck, who said, "Yes, we can use some more money."

Steve and I discussed some upcoming event ideas. The main focus was on the year 2013 which was being the celebratory year of Joseph's leg surgery 200 years ago. Steve suggested inviting someone from Dartmouth Medical School to come and accept a donation for a scholarship in honor of the surgery Joseph Jr. had and highlight the service given by Dr. Nathan Smith who founded the medical school there. This was seen as an opportunity to not only reach out and find our family wishing to be part of the race but to excite them about their heritage and to proclaim Joseph's name for good.

The 5K race idea was suggested by several people at a couple different times and locations including Joy Ercanbrack and David Adams with enthusiastic support and encouragement from Julie Maddox and the family organization committee. The idea grew.

Weekly Thursday gatherings started with official race meetings beginning in the summer of 2012. During the first documented meeting on Thursday, August 2, 2012 and at the request of Vivian Adams, the committee heard from and recruited the help of McCall Fagan an orthopedic physician's assistant. McCall presented a paper at a Church History Fair in American Fork titled, "The Miracle of 1813, Dr. Nathan Smith and the impact of Joseph Smith's leg operation." Her presentation was motivational and inspiring.

Race Coordinators were found within the Smith Family with the experience of Sarah and Preston Gudmunson, who had masterminded and carried out three successful races from beginning to end...for the deaf and friends of the deaf.



Sarah and Preston Gudmunson

The committee brainstormed for a race name and eventually decided upon Joseph's Miracle Run. The logo was developed by Smith Descendent, Tyler Allan, whose experience as a graphic designer with Rocketship Design and input from various family committee members gave a professional image.



Both these images were part of his work



Daniel N. Adams masterfully helped do the fundraising. He was instrumental in putting together a letter to go with family members as they reached out to their communities and neighborhoods to earn funds for the scholarship and race. As part of this effort he organized a Youth Donation Campaign where he involved the Family Association youth in the Miracle Run and to raise funds. The objective

was to get as many youth involved as possible. This worked.



**Miracle Run Chairs**

Steve & Frances Orton  
Hyson

**Committee Members**

Vicent M. Adams  
Hyson

Mary & Ben Donoho  
Hyson

Craig R. Fragley  
Hyson

Craig N. Jones  
Joseph

Michael A. Kennedy  
Joseph

James Livley  
Cochran

Julie A. Macklox  
Hyson

Robert A. Smith  
Seward

Race Directors  
Preston &  
Sarah Gudmunson  
Hyson

Technical Consultant  
McCall Pagano

Fundraising  
Daniel N. Adams  
Hyson

Joseph's Miracle Run

Dear Friends,

I invite you to join with us in celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first miracle in the life of Joseph Smith. The surgery on young Joseph's leg saved his life and gave him the fortitude to endure the unbelievably difficult trials and challenges of the restoration. That work would have been insurmountable had Joseph lost his leg.

This surgery was truly miraculous; knowing the dire condition of the disease-infested bone, the surgeons' recommended immediate amputation. But his mother Lucy prevailed on Dr. Nathan Smith—who as it just happened, was the only surgeon in America who could have performed that surgery—to try one last attempt to save Joseph's leg. Considered a highly risky experiment 200 years ago, this surgery wasn't accepted as standard practice until 100 years later; truly amazing.

Those legs that bore up the restoration endowed thousands with the strength to also endure hardships and walk the great distance to this valley. Now millions are bearing this ministry to the inhabitants of the earth. Since the days of Joseph, it has always been the same; we reach out individually by walking, running and lifting each other.

This is why we're celebrating that miracle with the Joseph's Miracle Run; to remember Joseph and the great legacy he began. Joseph's Miracle Run is a 5K run that will be held August 3, 2013 at This is the Place Heritage Park in Salt Lake City UT.

Please join us in supporting this remarkable event. We expect thousands to participate; and like Joseph, we won't be able to do it all without your help. Come run, volunteer, or lend whatever help you can to make this one of the most memorable celebrations of Joseph's life and sacrifice.

Yours truly,

M. Russell Ballard

Brook Williams gave some guidance with t-shirts and medals. Marianna Allen handled ordering and picking up the shirts and medals.

During the planning meetings Gracia Jones had been talking with the Director of the *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* movie, Gary Cook. He thought about our efforts and remembered some clips cut from the movie. He went to work collecting all he could find that would correlate with this project. Gary Cook contacted Frances Orton and suggested she bring some of the committee to his home to see some things he had put together. Steve & I and Daniel Adams met with Gary Cook on several occasions piecing the clips together in an order that worked for the race efforts. Gary Cook put us in touch with Glen Willardson who helped us do the final edits.

Clips from *Joseph Smith: Prophet of the Restoration* helped us have a great trailer for our event. These clips also helped with printed materials used to advertise. Jared Glade posted the video clips to the YouTube Channel and then linked it to the Joseph's Miracle Run website. Jared was also great to keep the online portion of the race and the reunion working.



You can view the video clip here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8yDfg5jXiw>

Gary Cook also sent us in the right direction with his contact Ken Smaellie who is part of the Church Publishing Services Department. I was shown the proper steps to fill out the paperwork and clear copyright permissions with Berne S. Broadbent, Director of the Intellectual Property Division.

Something I worked on was obtaining copyright permissions from each picture source we used. Joseph's Miracle Run and The Joseph Smith Sr. Family Reunion were given permission to use art work from each source requested for the use of the race.



Riding with Nathan Smith, 2004, Oil on Canvas, 72" x 96" by Sara Dykstra and Joseph Dwaihy (DMS '06) used by permission



Picture of Dr. Nathan Smith supplied by the Hood Museum of Art



If Father Will Hold Me,  
Used by permission of artist Liz Lemon Swindle



Joseph's First Trial, by Ken Corbett used with approval

Other permissions were obtained for using the below photos.



This farm in Norwich in Lebanon, New Hampshire as Lucy Mack Smith indicates, "Belonging to one Esquire Moredock" was rented by Joseph Smith Sr. at time of the surgery. (Photo by George E. Anderson)



In 1811 the Smiths rented a farm in West Lebanon, New Hampshire. This home was identified as the Smiths' residence. It was torn down in 1967.

(Photograph courtesy of Russell R. Rich via Karl Anderson.)

The committee put together a letter and documentation to be used in the fundraising efforts. It was decided the committee should have all the material for this letter be reviewed by Dr. Kim Bertin an orthopedic surgeon in Salt Lake City. McCall Fagen and I met in Bountiful, Utah at his home on Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Dr. Bertin was very interested in this project. He substantiated everything that LeRoy "Roy" Wirthlin had in his reports that we have been using. A few suggestions were made and guidance given. McCall's experience and medical training along with her study of the surgery on Joseph's leg added to the benefit of this meeting.



Frances Orton, McCall Fagan, and Dr. Kim Bertin in Bountiful, Utah

One amazing opportunity opened up and gave our Historical and Educational Outreach Committee Chair, Vivian Adams, a chance to write an article on Dr. Nathan Smith for the June 2013 Ensign. This article commemorated and honored the surgery on Joseph Smith's leg 200 years before. This article, "Joseph Smith's Boyhood Surgery: Mercy during a "Desperate Siege" can be read by going to: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2013/06/joseph-smiths-boyhood-surgery-mercy-during-a-desperate-siege?lang=eng>.

During a committee meeting, Steve and I discussed a book they picked up at Dartmouth with Nathan Smith's descendants listed - who also happened to be doctors. I spent some investigative time on the

internet and tracked down information on one of Nathan Smith’s descendants who lives in Denver. Communication was opened up between Steve Orton and Dr. David Longcope. An invitation was extended for the Longcope’s to attend Joseph’s Miracle Run and the family reunion. The invitation was accepted and a friendship began.



Nathan Smith descendants – Stephanie & David Longcope from Colorado participated in Joseph’s Miracle Run



Stephanie & David Longcope



David & Stephanie Longcope with children: Nathan and Grace

Also during one of the planning meetings it was suggested by Mary Donoho that we put together the family history of the Nathan Smith descendants. What an amazing and generous heart Mary had as she took on this assignment. One of the greatest memories from the reunion was the presentation of these histories to Dr. David Longcope and his family. Mary became sick right before these histories were gifted to the Longcope Family and she asked Steve and I to present them for her.



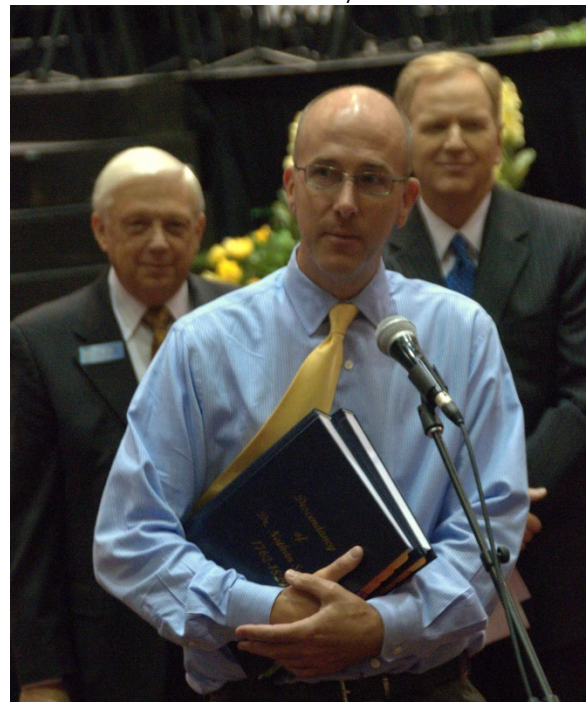
Picture by Craig Frogley

On behalf of the Smith family, Frances Orton presents the genealogy of Nathan Smith to descendant, Dr. David Longcope



Picture by Craig Frogley

Stephanie, little Nathan, Grace, and David Longcope thanking the Smith Family



Picture by Michael Kennedy

Craig Jessop who directed the choir, David Longcope (Nathan Smith Descendent) expressing his gratitude at the microphone, and Lloyd Newell voice of Music and the Spoken Word