

SMITH

we are family

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20th Biennial Reunion in Nauvoo, Illinois
August 6 – 9, 2009



“Bringing the Family Back Together”

By Frances Orton

Tuesday, August 4, the bus came early. It was parked in the church parking lot at 7:30 am.

Most people getting the bus in Provo were at the Orton's home by 8:30. The bus was able to leave about 5 minutes ahead of schedule.



The second group waited to meet the bus in Salt Lake.



Frances greeting those getting on the bus in Salt Lake



Steve counting everyone on the bus

This was a very long driving day. Steve stood at the front of the bus and gave out silly awards every couple of hours. The person who traveled the farthest (Hazel Dudley from Canada) was given some Fiji water. Steve gave out a little travel bag for someone who forgot their makeup. (Kathy Ruggiero)

After dinner, we put in the **Emma Smith, My Story** movie. The bus made a wrong turn at the end of our trip, and this allowed us to finish the movie before it was time to check into the hotel.

Wednesday, August 5, the day began early. Steve arranged to

have the group meet for breakfast in a separate room. This saved much time and allowed the family to visit and get to know each other better.



The group at the buffet breakfast—bright and early



Geri Perkins, Bob Park, Michael Webster, and Dennis Perkins visit during breakfast



Left to right sitting at the table: David Isom Peterson, Matt Isom Peterson, Sharon White, Denmark Jensen, Bill & Peggy Fuller, Julie & Jerry Goodro, John & Gwen Smith, Dianna & James Isom. Standing in back: Susan Findley and Mary Call.



Left to right: Gracia Jones, Charles Olsen, Joy Ercanbrack handing out T-shirts, Kathy Ruggiero, and Margene Isom

The bus left the hotel on time at 8:00. The group traveled until 1:00 before stopping for lunch in York, Nebraska. Several food options were available at this stop.

The family was great getting to the bus on time. Steve spent some time in the afternoon going over some of the histories of the Community of Christ Church, the Temple Lot Church, and the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Gracia also took some time to explain some family

history and add more detail about some of the things Steve discussed. It was a lovely afternoon.



Gracia Jones telling family stories on the bus

The bus pulled into the parking lot at the *Winter Quarter's Visitor's Center* at 4:30. The group arrived about 30 minutes late, but the plan did not account for the road work slowdowns.



Omaha group posing for a picture at Winter Quarters

The family took a photo in front of the *Winter Quarter's Temple* before walking up to the cemetery. Then the group met in the basement of the Visitor's Center, where a meal was prepared for everyone by Omaha Bob Smith's Stake President and his wife, Dave and Jody Edwards. The meal was wonderful. They prepared an amazing fruit salad bowl. There was also a pasta salad, deviled eggs, and cooked ham.

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Winter Quarters Temple



A buffet picnic dinner was prepared for the family by Omaha - Bob Smith's good friends.



John Smith gave a presentation on Mary Fielding Smith and her experiences in Winter Quarters.



Facing camera left to right: Gwen Smith, Julie Goodro, John Smith, Bob Smith, and Steve Orton

Then the family helped clean up the tables, chairs, etc., before touring the visitor's center.

At 6:30, the group loaded the bus and drove to the *Kanesville Tabernacle* for a production and musical called, *Come Back Kanesville*. The cast of this group heard the Smith family was coming and everyone one of them asked to come back and do this show for the Smith Family.



The Kanesville Tabernacle



Come Back Kanesville was a good show following the lives of several people and their decisions. It displayed how their decisions altered their very existence. The cast was terrific. After the performance, there was a 5-minute break the group heard from Gracia Jones, and then the family had an ice cream social. The ice cream and oatmeal cookies were made from Emma Hale Smith's recipes. The cookies were wonderful. Omaha Bob Smith also brought the crystal vases and a quilt that belonged to Emma. It was nice to see these things up close.



This quilt was Emma Smith's, and Omaha - Bob Smith inherited it.

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Emma Smith's vase was used for these flowers and now belongs to Bob Smith of Omaha.

Mike Kennedy took Steve to the airport to pick up a rental car for the group. Frances made sure everyone else made it on the bus and back to the hotel.

As the group arrived at the hotel, the kids were all gathered at the back of the bus. While waiting for the older people to get off and pick up luggage, Joy Ercanbrack gathered the kids and discussed what they saw and heard throughout the day. This went over well because the youth enjoyed telling what the night meant to them, and they had a chance to reflect on what they had seen.

Thursday, August 6, the group gathered early but waited for some tour guides from the Kaneshville area – Bob Sharp and Terry Latey. They shared many stories and experiences of the saints in this area while traveling.

We left at 8:30 and had extra people on board the bus. Gracia had two of her grandsons come with the tour. Mike Kennedy also rode with the bus.



Bob Sharp, an expert in the area, took the bus group on tour.



Renee Park with her some of her grandchildren: Corban Young, Sam Ercanbrack, and Cassie Young



Sharon Smith White, Denmark Jensen, Frances Orton carrying Sterling, Kellie & Michael Webster, and James Isom walking part of the trail



The family along the Mormon trail

The bus drove to where the Mormon Battalion left for the West at an original site the pioneers walked. Part of the trail has the wagon wheel ruts and plants of prairie grasses and some berries.

For most of the afternoon, people slept or visited. The bus travel was behind all day. Once at the bridge in *Fort Madison*, the group learned the bus couldn't cross the bridge. The only option for crossing the

Mississippi River was to drive down to Keokuk and cross there.

Steve and Frances both spent time on cell phones making arrangements for the registration to begin without all the supplies underneath the bus. The group didn't arrive until an hour after registration was to begin.

Dan and Kris Patrick and their family were already at the *Adventure Zone* and happily welcomed everyone. Gracia and Ivor Jones also joined in the greetings. They were a true blessing.



Adventure Zone

The kids loved the *Adventure Zone*. People were very understanding about the last-minute changes.



There were fun activities for the children during the registration at Adventure Zone.



Joy Ercanbrack was a stalwart in handling tee shirts and all kinds of events.

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Registration worked well at the Adventure Zone.



Steve Orton, Kathy Ruggiero, and Frances Orton at Registration



Celeste Bruggeman leading the pack



Jeremy Patrick taking a turn



Jason Quinn, Bryan Orton, Austin Patrick, and Anson Patrick bumper to bumper



Frances and Steve Orton going over the program and doing a roll call

Reunion Attendance Numbers 256 people attended

- 39 Youth
- 19 Primary

Arizona	9
California	10
Canada	3
Connecticut	7
Idaho	3
Iowa	2
Illinois	6
Kansas	5
Missouri	16
Minnesota	3
Michigan	10
North Carolina	2
Nebraska	19
Nevada	2
Ohio	3
Texas	22
Utah	154



Steve and Frances Orton welcoming the family to Nauvoo



Ivor and Gracia Jones stand along with Bob Smith from Omaha during introductions.



The family gathered together at Adventure Zone for a greeting meeting.



Michael Kennedy gave the family a report on the Joseph Jr. Family activities.



Utah - Bob Smith gave the family a report from Samuel's family's events



Julie and another employee of Adventure Zone scoop ice cream during our welcome meeting with the help of Kathy Ruggiero.

Friday, August 7, the morning began early. The bus gathered and traveled to the *Red Brick Store*. The Smith family arranged for and enjoyed a breakfast fixed and brought in from the *Nauvoo Inn and Suites*.



Gail Byrd and Vivian Adams visit with family

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Mary Donoho and Michael Kennedy visit



The Homestead



Corban Young eating breakfast by the Red Brick Store



After the photo was taken, Lach Mackay, Historic Sites Director for the Community of Christ and a great-great-grandson of Joseph Smith Jr, instructed the family. The weather changed the plans for painting the fence, which was moved to the next day. The family was divided into three groups. The first group helped move tables, the second group weeded the cemetery and replaced and leveled the brick pathway at the cemetery, and the third group shucked 300 corn cobs for the BBQ. The family enjoyed serving and being together in the rain. Serving together was one of the highlights of the reunion.



Family enjoying breakfast before the service project



The traditional family picture took place after breakfast in front of the Homestead. This spot allowed every face to be seen because of the slight slope (see front page).



Shucking corn in front of the Nauvoo House



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Carol Quinn above pulling weeds

Joy Ercanbrack, Renee Park, and Steve Orton pulling weeds

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Charles Olsen on his knees, working.



Kris Patrick weeding in the rain



During this same time, Vivian Adams shared stories from the Smith family that happened on Water and Main Streets in Nauvoo. What a blessing and opportunity to share these stories right in the area where they took place.



Back: Steve Quinn. Front: Erich and Anna Mueller, still smiling in the rain



Even the small children enjoyed being with the family.



Vivian Adams, the family history and historical outreach representative



Melanie Moore, Ed and Carolyn Glade, and Charity Williams and her daughter, Lauren Williams



Vivian Adams helped the group learn and love family history.

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Children's activities included touring some family history sites and hearing their stories, playing games from that era, and a mini-parade. Julie Maddox, Julie Rabe, and Jeannine Savage helped pull these together and make a difference for the smaller family members.



Part of the children's activities out by the Red Brick Store



Jeannine Savage leading the children's parade



More fun children's activities by the Red Brick Store



The Samuel family spent a great deal of their time providing, preparing, and serving the barbecued pig with all the fixings. Everyone enjoyed the food and the Samuel family's hospitality.



They brought all their supplies from Utah for this event.



The barbeque trailer is a WWII veteran tool trailer.



L to R: Eric Lauck and Justin Peterson. River guides on loan from Eagle Outdoor Sports in Bountiful, Utah.



This yummy "Wilbur" the pig fed the whole group under the expertise of master barbecue chef Boyd Nebecker from Bear River, Utah, assisted by Eric Lauck of Bountiful, Utah.



The family begins to gather and wait anxiously for the wonderful-smelling food.



L to R: Provo Bob Smith, Harrison Bailey Smith of Bountiful, UT, Josh Smith of St. Louis, and Doug Smith of Bountiful, UT who is explaining how the food will be served

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Doug Smith giving the family a warm welcome and some directions



Renee & Bob Parks



BYU - Bob Smith explains how to move through the lines



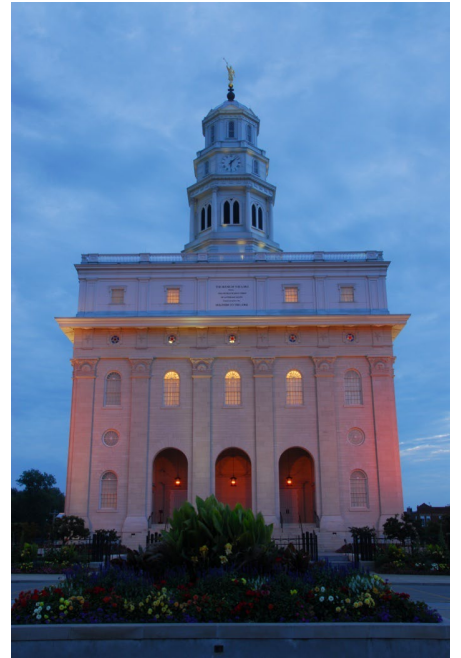
Frances Orton visiting with Daniel and Kris Patrick, who provided the new tarp they brought with them from Michigan. Their tarp and preparedness kept the rain off the food.



Doug Smith and his hard-working family through Samuel's line



In the evening, the family attended *Sunset by the Mississippi* by the Nauvoo Outdoor Stage (East of the Historic Nauvoo Visitors' Center).



Saturday, August 8, another early morning began with breakfast and loading the bus before 8:30. The bus group drove to Carthage, Illinois, to see the Carthage Jail.

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After the bus group returned from Carthage, several were able to help paint the fence. Another group was painting and working on the fence at 9:30.



John Smith, Dianna Isom, David Isom, and James Isom



Steve and Bryan Orton, John Smith, David and Matthew Peterson, and Frances Orton working on the cemetery fence

While painting on the fence, Lach Mackay walked by and mentioned that the group Vocal Point was trying to reach Steve Orton. Lach called Vocal Point and let Frances talk with

them on his cell phone. The group was able to arrange a private performance for the family during the Saturday night dinner. They were able to bring and set up their sound system. Then they let the group use their sound system.



Joy Ercanbrack taught the youth stories of the family as they put together bags of Smith Family Trail Mix which represented each of the eleven children of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith.

Joy Ercanbrack put together this fun mix
Smith Trail Mix included:

Alvin ♥ Candy Corn

As the oldest brother, Alvin took the lead in clearing land for the Smith farm, then planting and harvesting the crops.

Hyrum ♥ Root-beer Barrel

A cooper is a barrel maker, and Hyrum learned this art from his father. The Smiths peddled rootbeers and other confectionaries and home articles to earn money to support their family.

Sophronia ♥ Cashews

Achoo! Dear Sophronia suffered from a severe typhoid fever that nearly took her life at the age of nine. Father and Mother Smith prayed by her bedside, and miraculously she was healed.

Joseph Jr. ♥ Pretzel Twists

This treat is symbolic of arms folded together in prayer. Joseph's humble prayer in the Sacred Grove began the events of the Restoration. The family has united in their belief that Joseph was a prophet of God and sacrificed together for the gospel cause.

Samuel ♥ Building Block Candy

Samuel was one of twenty elders selected to officiate in laying the cornerstones for the Kirtland Temple and then continued to assist with the temple construction.

William ♥ W&W's (M&M's when read upside down)

W is for William, which means protector. Once when Mother Smith and Lucy were home alone, a mob surrounded and began to plunder the house. William bounded inside and upstairs, yelling and swinging a handspike. Just nineteen and alone in his defense, his strength scared the mob who "fled in every direction."

Katharine ♥ Hershey's Nugget

This gold-wrapped brick of chocolate represents the Golden Plates which Katharine hid under the quilt on her bed for Joseph; then pretended to sleep while the mob searched their home. The men did not disturb Katharine or sister Sophronia who slept beside her. Katharine rippled her fingers along the edges of the covered plates another time while dusting in the room Joseph used as a study.

Don Carlos ♥ Sweetarts

Father Smith referred to his youngest son as "the joy of my heart." Don Carlos had sweet compassion for all his siblings and a deep, heartfelt conviction for the gospel. A member wrote that at one meeting, Don Carlos, who was just fifteen, "arose and bore as strong a testimony as I ever heard, of the truth of the work."

Lucy ♥ Red Raspberries

A prominent visitor to the Smith home recalled being invited for

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dinner with the family and that bare-footed Lucy had just finished picking a tin bucket of red raspberries, which were served with brown bread and milk.

**Ephraim and unnamed Son ♥
Baby Gummy Bears**

The Smith Posterity ♥ Peanuts



Cassie Young holds up one of the Smith Family Trail Mix bags the youth put together for each person to have Saturday night.



The family banquet Saturday night



Steve and Frances introduce Jonathan Benware, who helped pick the tickets to choose the table order to go through the food lines.



Dan Larsen offering an official greeting to the family



Vocal Point wowed the Smith Family.



BYU's Vocal Point



The family choir



Family choir practicing under the direction of Margaret Smith Penfield with piano by Lindsey Orton



Frances and Steve Orton with Alice and David Turley before the program



Steve Orton



David Turley introduced his wife, Alice.



Alice Turley



The group listening to family stories



A family musical number from left to right: Rebecca Maddox, Margaret Smith Penfield, Julie Rabe, Susanna Rabe, Elizabeth Rabe Nixon, Chalice Maddox, Jeannine Maddox Withers, Jake Rabe, Dan Rabe, Cord Rabe, Ryan Nixon, Ryan Withers, Matthew Maddox Jr.

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Gracia Jones



Wayne Brickey

Sunday, August 9, the bus left at 7:45 to attend an 8:00 am Nauvoo Sacrament Meeting. Part of the group met in the Red Brick Store for a meeting under the direction of The Community of Christ Church. The family gathered at 10:00 am at the cemetery for a closing wreath memorial. Sam Isom gave some remarks and shared information in memory of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith. He also referred to the 15 people Smiths descend through that tie into the Mayflower through Lucy's line.



Renee Park, Laura Eichorn, Steve Orton, Sam Isom, Kellie Webster, Brent Rabe, Austin Patrick holding the mike



Estle and Cecel Neff (Estle provided the flowers)



Carrying the flowers into the cemetery: Amy Orton and Mary Quinn



Estel Neff shared some words with the family before laying the wreath by the graves of Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith. He gave a wonderful tribute that was a perfect ending.



Steve and Frances Orton with Dan Larsen, Dan's son Eric, and Eric's two sons

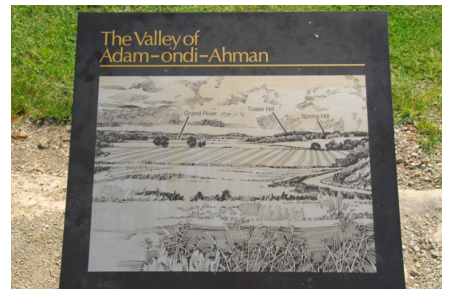


Steven and Frances Orton with Sheri Osbourne and Bob Smith (Omaha)

The bus headed for Adam-ondi-Ahman. The family stopped to eat picnic lunches that were ordered and arranged for through Bob Smith (BYU) that he made the day before.



Assembling the boxed lunches



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Wayne Brickey spoke to the family about the many events that happened in Adam-ondi-Ahman and Far West.

Words of Wayne Brickey:

Before the early Mormons ever began speaking of "the far west" as a place in the Rocky Mountains, the term referred in a general way to wherever they might be headed next in their frequent migrations.

In reading ancient scripture, they may have wondered what it was like for a prophet in some bygone time to travel afar on some sort of mission.

But this was not a bygone time. And they weren't just going away for a while, soon to resume their everyday lives.

To Eastern born-and-bred folks, it must have seemed strange to keep uprooting themselves, pushing farther and farther from everything they had known, never to return -- all as an expression of their faith in Christ.

They left their polite and streeted cities to gather at rough settlements on the fringe of civilization and later plunged onward to an unmarked wilderness.

The Missouri wilderness was about as "far west" as one could go in the United States -- the westernmost part of a westernmost state.

In the fall of 1836, church members were gathering on a remote, rolling prairie in northwestern Missouri. It had a striking beauty -- sometimes placid,

sometimes wild -- as most places in that region did, and many still do.

But some of the Saints sensed something special at this spot in particular. One of them wrote:

To the writer of these lines, this land seemed to be a heaven. ... Everything seemed to smile with blessings too numerous for my pen to describe or my tongue to express. ... I rejoiced exceedingly ... and felt to give God the praise and to bow before him on my bended knees and to call on his great name for his blessing and to thank him for the light of the gospel and for the many great blessings which he was blessing on us within that goodly land. (George W.G. Averett Autobiography, p. 4, in BYU Special Collections).

Those who felt the area was sacred were right. The Lord himself would later call it "a holy and consecrated land unto me," declaring to those who came there, "the ground upon which thou standest is holy" (Doctrine and Covenants 115:7).

As far as we know, not many places on earth have been given the distinction of "holy" by the voice of deity, but here was one of them. The term "far west" -- the description that had been used for other stops along the way -- finally stuck. Far West, appointed to be a holy land, in due time became church headquarters.

We may notice a special theme that unfolded with the Far West and subsequent settlements. After "the keys of the gathering" were restored at the Kirtland Temple in April 1836, the gathering places had a new distinction. They were not, as Kirtland had been or as Independence had been, communities that existed before the Saints arrived and went on existing after the Saints left.

Instead, a settlement or city would be created out of essentially nothing! It would blossom like a rose, as it were. And then, should the Saints find it

necessary to move on, taking their revealed religion and those sacred priesthood keys with them, the place would shrink back to near-vacancy again.

That miracle calls to mind another one -- more important, personal, and magnificent to us: If the keys that gather are that decisive and powerful, so must be the keys that seal. As Far West was a gem for a time, so may the faithful family be a gem for all eternity. (See Doctrine and Covenants 110:11-16)

More Words of Wayne Brickey:

Jackson County, Mo.: scene of ancient beginnings, scene of joys and sorrows in early church history, and scene of incalculable influence and glory in a future still distant.

These scenes are a bit difficult to imagine when visiting the urbanized Jackson County of today. The area resembles countless other cities of North America, sprinkled with typical businesses and neighborhoods, the earth sealed off in many places with asphalt and concrete, towers of brick and glass huddled here and there.

However, there are eyewitness descriptions from pre-metropolis days. One of these was astonished at the fertility of the soil, which he said was "like that of a garden." He added, "the luxuriance and beauty of the forests exceed any that I have seen" ("Life and Letters: The Works of Washington Irving," 2:249).

Another firsthand account comes from the Prophet Joseph Smith. With an eye trained by years of farming, he, too, was impressed with the soil, which he said was "from three to ten feet deep, and generally composed of a rich black mold, intermingled with clay and sand. It yields in abundance wheat, corn, sweet potatoes, cotton, and many other common agricultural products."

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But Joseph was more especially moved by the natural landscape. "As far as the eye can reach, the beautiful rolling prairies lie spread out like a sea of meadows; and are decorated with a growth of flowers so gorgeous and grand as to exceed description. ... The forests are a mixture of oak, hickory, black walnut, elm, ash, cherry, honey locust, mulberry, coffee bean, hackberry, box elder, and basswood; with the addition of cottonwood, butter wood, pecan, and soft and hard maple upon the bottoms. The shrubbery is beautiful and consists of plums, grapes, crab apple, and persimmons."

Nor did the prospects for animal life escape his notice: "Horses, cattle, and hogs ... seem nearly to raise themselves by grazing in the vast prairie range in summer, and feeding upon the bottoms in winter. ... Buffalo, elk, deer, bear, wolves, beaver and many smaller animals here roam at pleasure. Turkeys, geese, swans, ducks, yea a variety of the feathered tribe, are among the rich abundance that graces the delightful regions of this goodly land."

He concluded that "the land of Zion ... bids fair ... to become one of the most blessed places on the globe." However, he did add this little stipulation: "when the curse is taken from the land" (History of The Church, 1:196-199). Whatever that curse may be, Joseph soon took the first steps in a long, ongoing process of removing it.

Of course, the area needed faithful church members. Joseph saw to it that these were organized and more invited.

In addition, a priesthood dedication of the land was needed. In fact, two official blessings were invoked.

In one of these, on Aug. 2, 1831, the region was consecrated and dedicated for the gathering of the Saints. On the next day, Aug. 3, Joseph dedicated a spot of land some

63 acres in size for the building of a temple at some future time. Though only a few were on hand for these momentous blessings, Joseph commented that "the scene was solemn and impressive" (History of The Church, 1).

At the birth of a child, we cannot imagine the adult. We don't need to. The infant is charming (and demanding) enough for the time being. Similarly, we need not, for now, understand what lies ahead for this peculiar area Joseph called "the land of Zion."

But God, who began something there long ago, always finishes what he starts.



Listening to stories from Wayne Brickey



Far West Temple Site



Far West Group Family Photo

Monday, August 10, the bus loaded and left the hotel at 8:35. The family met at Liberty Jail for a tour and family gathering. Craig Frogley spoke to the group just before a sister Missionary gave a presentation.

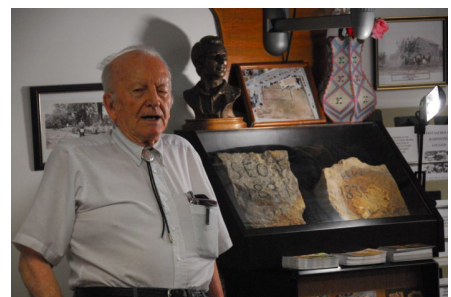
Then when the sister missionary found out this group was the family of the prophet and Hyrum, she cried. It was a touching moment.



Part of those gathered inside Liberty jail for a family meeting



Inside Liberty Jail



Temple Lot Apostle and family member William A. Sheldon addressing the bus group

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Steve Orton and President Frederick N. Larsen speaking to the group at the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Frederick N. Larsen, president and prophet of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, not only spoke to the family but provided and hosted a luncheon for the group at his church



The day's tours ended by walking through the Community of Christ Temple.



The last stop was the LDS Visitor's Center.

All the travels back home were filled with fun family stories, songs, and new friendships. What a blessing.