

**Saturday, August 3, 2013**  
**Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Reunion**  
**Talk by Elder M. Russell Ballard**  
**This Is The Place Heritage Park**

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Brigham Young said on one occasion that the Smith family had been in the eye of God from the foundation of the creation of the earth. When you contemplate who we are that we can be members of that family whom our Heavenly Father had nurtured and moved step by step until this marvelous presentation that we just had was fulfilled, it is to me a very humbling reality that we belong and can claim some connection with Joseph Smith the prophet.

I think that all of us ought to express our great love for the prophet Joseph and Hyrum and the other siblings, and especially the remarkable Father and Mother. We recognize the great faith they had, the strength and power they had, and the burdens they had to carry. I often remind those of the family and others, members of the church, of what the Smith Family paid to establish the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints upon the face of the earth, particularly what Father and Mother Smith went through. When Mother Lucy Mack Smith was looking at the bodies of her martyred sons Joseph and Hyrum in the mansion house it is recorded by Brother Hyde that she cried out, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken this family?" From a mother's heart you can understand that. Then she said she seemed to hear Joseph say, "Weep not for us mother. We have fulfilled the responsibilities that were ours to reestablish the Church, the Kingdom of God on the earth." So it's a wonderful thing to be part of this family.

I would like tonight to express appreciation to the Ortons and to all of those that served on committees. This is no small undertaking to bring this group of Smiths together. You know the Smiths are kind of like herding cats sometimes, trying to keep track of everybody and where you are and what you are doing. I would simply say on behalf of all of us: thank you to the committees for all the great work in making this family reunion possible.

I would also like to express appreciation to the personnel of This Is The Place Heritage Park. Our grandson has been running back and forth and running the sound system and he is doing a good job. We appreciate Chris.

Tonight we have Ellis and Katie Ivory here. This is a couple that has devoted the last five years of their lives to this park, constructing this building and many of the wonderful things your children have been able to see and participate in. We thank you and we thank all of the personnel.

We are a family whose roots go back to the very beginning of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have always felt that because my mother was a great-granddaughter of Hyrum, making me a great-great grandson of Hyrum, that we owe them an awful lot. We owe our forefathers our loyalty and willingness to serve in whatever capacity we may be called in the building up of the Kingdom of God. I think if Joseph, and Hyrum, and Samuel, and the others were here tonight they would want to say “thank you” to all of you who have served in many capacities and as full time missionaries. Thank you for having the courage to submit your name to the First Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve and to accept to go wherever a member of the Quorum of Twelve felt impressed to send you. I think they would want to thank us for the service you have rendered in wards and stakes, in districts and branches, and missions wherever we have lived and

wherever a call has been extended to you. And to the younger generation, you have no idea what lies ahead of you as it pertains to your responsibilities that surely will come in the building up of the Kingdom of God. We have two of our grandsons currently serving, one in London and one in Ghana, Africa. We have had all of our grandsons serve and some of our granddaughters are contemplating it. It's a wonderful thing to be the parents and the grandparents and the great-grandparents of those who are willing to accept and to fulfill callings in carrying this message to all corners of the earth.

The Lord will come again and when that day arrives the gospel will have been carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. We don't know when the second coming will be but we do know that the signs of the times would indicate that we are getting closer. When we see the sacred covenants that God has established being ignored by people who are unaware of the Restoration we then know we have much more work to do. As I talk to missionaries and ask them what their number one challenge is, they almost always answer that people are just indifferent, they are apathetic, and they are not concerned about spiritual things. So we as Smiths have the responsibility to stand as beacons, lights on the hill so to speak, and continue our labors in every way we know how to share this glorious message of the restoration with as many people as we possibly can.

I would like to share with you an experience that occurred in the life of Joseph F. Smith. This is rather tender and I hope I can share it without losing my emotions. Joseph F. Smith had never visited Carthage until 1906. In 1906 he found himself in Nauvoo with Charles and Preston Nibley. Charles Nibley was one of Joseph F. Smith's dearest friends. He was the

Presiding Bishop of the Church. They were there and they stood in a place in Nauvoo where Joseph F said to Preston Nibley, “This is the exact spot where I stood when the brethren came riding up on their way to Carthage. Without getting off his horse father leaned over in his saddle and picked me up off the ground. He kissed me goodbye and put me down again and I saw him ride away.”

They then went to Carthage Jail and went up the stairs. Many of you have been there, and if you haven't I would hope you would find an opportunity some time. As their group walked into the room where Joseph and Hyrum, John Taylor, and Brother Richards were, the host that was showing them through the jail said this, “That stain [on the floor] is the blood of Hyrum Smith.” President Nibley then recorded that Joseph F. Smith went over and sat on the bed and put his hands over his face and wept. So much so that the tears were bouncing off of the floor. Finally the President then said to Brother Nibley, “Charlie, take me out of here.”

That was perhaps the greatest blood spilt in this dispensation. It was spilt by our forefathers freely given as a witness and a testimony of the restoration of the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So I want to encourage you young men and young women to prepare yourselves to carry on this great family crusade. We have the responsibility to be anxiously engaged in this great cause.

I ask our Father in Heaven to watch over each and every one of you. We know that you all have some burdens. You're probably struggling with things and that is the way life is supposed to be. We are coming here to learn how to deal with adversity and to come here to separate and to determine what is true and what is not true, what is important and what is not important. We are here making decisions that are essential, not only for

this life but for the life that lies ahead. In the process of that, there will be those of you who are here tonight who are carrying some burdens. I wish I could take them away from you but I can't. But I can ask our Heavenly Father to bless you that His Spirit and the power of the Holy Ghost and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ will be with you and give you the strength and the courage of our forefathers. May your testimonies of the gospel of Jesus Christ burn brightly within your hearts and in your minds so much so that you will have the strength and the courage to take whatever challenges you are facing in life and move forward and carry on and remain true and faithful.

Ask our Father in Heaven to bless you individually and collectively in your family associations that you may have the peace, the joy, the ultimate happiness that living the gospel gives to anyone whether they are Smiths or whatever their names may be. May that happiness be your blessing. May the peace of the Lord go with you. May you be able to travel back to your homes in safety. May this two or three days which you have spent together ever be one of those treasures that you are grateful that you have taken the time to participate in.

I know this has been a long day for you. Some of you that ran in the 5K this morning and the little ones that ran this morning are probably pretty tired now. I want you to know this, that I know that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Son of God. This is His Church. Joseph Smith is the prophet of the dispensation of the fullness of times. He did restore through the power of the Holy Priesthood the fullness of the Gospel. That power and authority is vested in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The priesthood and authority to act in the name of God is upon the earth.

President Monson is our prophet. The Twelve and the First Presidency are Apostles. We bear witness to the world that Jesus is the Son of God, that He lives, that He is the resurrected Lord, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. Let us all hail His name and when that day comes that He returns again, may our testimonies of this Church burn brightly.

The one thing we know that is eternal is the family. I am not prepared to tell you how the Church is organized on the other side of the veil. I don't know that. But I do know that families are eternal and can be together forever. May God grant the blessing to our family, that we will all be together in that great day when we join hand with hand and love one another not only here but on the other side of the veil. For this blessing and my testimony I leave with you very humbly tonight and do so in the sacred and beloved name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

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#### Participants during the Fireside - The Legs that Bore up the Restoration



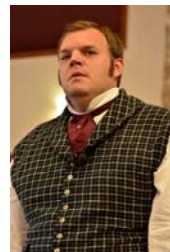
Steve Orton



Joy Ercanbrack



Scot Proctor



Joseph & Hyrum Presentation  
This Is The Place Heritage Park Cast



Kim Smith and Bryan Davis



Elder M. Russell Ballard