

# *Smith Family Heir-Blooms*

## *"Love of the Lilacs"*

### Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Lilac History

The lilac bush has always been a special plant to the Smith families. Lucy Mack Smith, Emma Hale Smith, Jerusha Barden Smith, and Mary Fielding Smith among others, planted lilacs. For generations Smith family descendants have nurtured lilac bushes grown from cuttings from Kirtland, Ohio, the Smith Family Cemetery in Nauvoo, Illinois and Utah.

Hyrum and his first wife, Jerusha, planted lilacs at their home in Kirtland. After Jerusha's death, Hyrum married Mary Fielding, who also nurtured and cared for the lilacs.

In 1838 their home was purchased by Charles Dixon, who had been converted to the Church in Canada and moved to Kirtland in 1837. Shortly after the purchase, he left for Missouri, however, most of his family lived in the house until 1862. The Dixon family left for the Salt Lake Valley in the spring of that year. Christopher Dixon, son of Charles Dixon, brought with him on the journey a starting root of the Persian Lilac Tree from Hyrum Smith's home. One of his daughters told how it was her job to water and care for the lilac root every day as she crossed the plains. He planted the lilac root at his little home in Payson, Utah. The lilac planted in front of Mary Fielding Smith's cottage at This Is The Place Heritage Park in Salt Lake City, Utah, comes from this bush.

Emma Smith planted a lilac bush over the graves of Joseph and Hyrum as a marker for their location.

The journal of Samuel H. Smith's daughter, Mary Bailey Norman, gives an account of Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith's grave being buried at the larger lilac bush. It was also mentioned that Samuel and Mary Bailey Smith are at the two smaller ones. Mary Bailey Norman said, "Joseph, Hyrum, and Samuel put the lilac bush that Father Smith loved so well at the head of his grave."

For the Smith family reunion in Kirtland in 2011, we had a discussion regarding the lilac bushes planted in various places the Smith families had lived. We talked about "reuniting" some of the plants to where the Smiths had lived.

Don and Laura Blanchard, Frances and Steve Orton, Joy Ercanbrack, Debbie and Kimberly Nelson (descendants of Hyrum Smith), got starts from the lilac bush in front of Mary Fielding Smith's cottage. On the way to Kirtland, one of these starts was planted at Winter Quarters Visitors Center, Mary Fielding Smith and her family lived there two years waiting to go west.

Dan and Rosemarie Larsen and Amanda and Troy Oney (descendants of Joseph Smith), went to the Smith Family Cemetery in Nauvoo to get lilac starts.

On August 6, 2011, at the Pioneer Trail Girl's Camp in Hiram, Ohio, by the John Johnson Farm, the lilac starts from Salt Lake City and Nauvoo were planted side by side.

"This was a wonderful opportunity to bring two plants together, cared for by family members, to honor Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, who had a love for the lilac. After the lilacs were together, a sweet feeling overcame all involved to see the lilacs standing by each other. Our roots again joined together."

David and Gilda Sundeen (descendant of William Smith), brought some lilacs from Michigan, along with other family members, planted a Bloomerang Purple Lilac, which blooms twice a year at the Kirtland Cemetery by the marker for Mary Duty Smith, Jerusha Barden Smith, Mary Smith, and the infant twins of Joseph and Emma Smith. The family offered a prayer and then sang a song.

The lilacs in our Smith Family Heir-blooms come from Smith Family gardens, including Nauvoo and the Cottage bushes. We hope you feel the "Love of the Lilacs."