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Sons of the Martyrs' Nauvoo Reunion—1860

Buddy Younggreen

O God let the residue of my father’s house... ever come up in remembrance before thee and stand virtuous and pure in thy presence, that thou mayest save them from the hand of the oppressor, and establish their feet upon the rock of ages, that they may have place in thy house and be saved in thy kingdom, even where God, and Christ is, and let all these things be as I have said, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

Joseph Smith, Jr.
December 18, 1833

That the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother, Patriarch Hyrum Smith, were martyred by a mob at Carthage Jail in June 1844 is a well-known fact. A lesser-known fact is that their brother Samuel Harrison Smith, first missionary for the Church, also died a martyr’s death as a direct result of his attempts to aid his brothers while in Carthage. The Joseph Smith, Sr., family had always stood together in their efforts to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. In her writings, Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Martyrs, clearly demonstrates that members of the Smith family not only possessed close family ties, strengthened by the gospel, but they also recognized in themselves a divine destiny.

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1Prayer by Joseph Smith, Jr., 18 December 1833, Kirtland, Ohio, as recorded by Oliver Cowdery. 1 October 1835, in Patriarchal Blessing Book, 2:18, Library–Archives of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives. See also Joseph Smith Diary, 27 November 1832–5 December 1834, entry for 18 December 1833.


3See Lucy Mack Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations (Liverpool: For Orson Pratt by S. W. Richards, 1853). A summary of Lucy's opinions concerning family solidarity for the "Cause of Zion" is made clear in her application for copyright of her book in 1845: "an account of the many persecutions, trials and afflictions which I and my family have endured in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, and establishing the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" ("Copyright Records, Illinois, Vol. 18. August 1821–September 1848"; copy in possession of the author). This same view is expressed by William Smith, brother of the Martyrs, in "Patriarchal," Times and Seasons, 15 May 1845, pp. 904–905.

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Sharing his mother’s perspective, the Prophet Joseph Smith viewed the Smith family as the nucleus of latter-day Israel and perceived his family solidarity as an essential supporting pillar of the Restoration. Joseph despaired at the notion of disunity. A family disagreement in 1835 prompted him to declare:

My heart is pained within me because of the difficulty that exists in my fathers family… The powers of darkness… cast a gloomy shade over the minds of my brothers and sisters, which prevents them from seeing things as they really are, and the powers of Earth & hell seem combined to overthrow us and the church by causing a division in the family.4

The Prophet’s fear concerning a family division proved prophetic, when the deaths of the Martyrs removed the essential stabilizing element from the flock.

The western exodus of the Mormons in 1846 resulted in a physical separation of members of the Smith family. The wives and children of Hyrum and Samuel Smith went west under the direction of Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles. The Prophet’s family, his brother William, and his sisters Sophronia, Katherine, and Lucy, and their families, chose to remain behind. Because of ill health, his mother also decided against joining the western migration, remaining in nearly deserted Nauvoo, Illinois.

Following this 1846 physical separation of the Smiths, a theological split made itself manifest in the family—chiefly among the sons of the Martyrs. The reality of this split would come into sharp focus in 1860.

In many ways 1860 was a critical year. Up to that year, the primary reason for the division in the Smith families had been the eastern Smiths’ refusal to join the western movement. But in 1860 Joseph Smith III assumed the presidency of the “Reorganized” Church, and this involvement in the Reorganization sealed the separation of the Smith families for more than a century.

The year 1860 also brought about temporary reuniting of the east and west branches of the Smith family. In 1860 the seven living sons of the Martyrs met each other in Nauvoo. In February, John (Hyrum’s eldest son) went to Nauvoo and met with his cousins Joseph III, Alexander Hale, Frederick Granger Williams, and David Hyrum (the sons of Joseph, Jr.). Then in June, Joseph F. (Hyrum’s youngest son) and Samuel Harrison Bailey (Samuel H.’s only son) stopped at Nauvoo on their way to England and met with these same cousins.

>Joseph Smith Diary, 22 September 1835–3 April 1836, entry for 1 January 1836, pp. 94-95, Church Archives.

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SONS OF THE MARTYRS
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Samuel H. B. Smith  
(1838–1914)

John Smith  
(1832–1911)

Joseph F. Smith  
(1838–1918)

David H. Smith  
(1844–1904)

Alexander H. Smith  
(1838–1909)

Frederick G. W. Smith  
(1836–1862)

Joseph Smith III  
(1832–1914)
It is the purpose of this article to show how these seven sons of the Martyrs reacted to meeting each other again after a fourteen-year separation.

NAUVOO REUNION OF 1860

Hyrum Smith's eldest son, John, left Salt Lake Valley 16 September 1859, with intentions of bringing his sister Lovina Walker, her husband Lorin, and their children to Florence, Nebraska. After his arrival in Florence, the young Presiding Patriarch of the Church proceeded to Nauvoo and vicinity in February 1860 to visit other family members. How long he remained and the particulars of that visit are not known.

But from memoirs we do know that Joseph III made his cousin welcome at his Nauvoo residence, the Prophet Joseph Smith's "Old Homestead." Their conversation undoubtedly centered around the Saints in Utah, the Reorganization, and plural marriage. Remembering the occasion, young Joseph said:

I recall clearly a conversation which took place between us in 1860 on the day before he started back West.... In sobriety of spirit that day, he invited me to come out to Utah and make them a visit. I was cutting wood in my yard at the time he made this request, he standing nearby and chatting with me.

For a while we talked rather idly about the possibilities of such a visit, and then I asked him if he thought I should be safe in making it. He answered that he thought I would be, and that I would be courteously treated by the leaders out there. Then I asked him if I would be free to express my opinions to the people, to which he replied that he thought that would depend largely upon the circumstances and places. Then I put this direct query:

"Cousin John, suppose I should visit Salt Lake City and should be invited to speak from a public stand. Would I be safe in expressing my opposition to the doctrine and practice of polygamy and plural marriage, and in freely stating my opinions in reference to them and their origin?"

"Well, Cousin Joseph, I do not think you would be so foolish as to speak against the doctrine in so public a place and manner as that, and in the presence of those who would be likely to be on the platform with you."

I dropped the axe I was using, and with all the force and fire, and love of freedom which I had inherited from my New England ancestors, at once awake and alert in my soul, I exclaimed: "Cousin John, I am a free man—was born free—and my opinions and my tongue are my own, and I am telling you that if I should be asked my opinion about polygamy and stood in a pulpit along with Brigham Young himself I
should speak it out, plainly and unmistakably, as I would to you here and now!'"

He looked at me steadily and thoughtfully a moment, and then said, soberly: "I think you had best not go out to Utah yet!'"5

As he made his way back across Iowa, John heard rumors of plans to place his cousin, Joseph III, at the head of the Reorganization. After a few days of meditation, John was filled with forebodings concerning the step Joseph was about to take. He sensed that profit-making designs had motivated the advocates of the Reorganization and that these ambitious promoters were using his cousin for unrighteous purposes. Cousin John wrote this warning to young Joseph on 3 April 1860:

I have learned something about that matter which we talked about while I was there; it is in the mouth of every body all most and I have seen some of the parties and by what I can learn it is all a speculation and they do not [care] a d___ for you only to make a tool of you to carry out there schemes that they may get gain and I hope you will not take a step in the matter without fully considering the importance of such [a] step as for my part I cannot sanction any such thing for I fear it will lead us in a difficulty that will bring a stain upon us [the Smith family] wherein we might suffer loss.6

Had John's letter reached Joseph in time it is unlikely that it would have had its desired effect. But, as it was, the letter arrived too late and its warning went unheeded.

Although Joseph III himself retained some reservations, by 5 March 1860, he had made a decision to become his father's successor. On that date he wrote to William Marks that he had determined to take his "father's place as the head of the Mormon church."7 On 4 April 1860, Joseph III, accompanied by his mother, Emma, left Nauvoo for Amboy, Illinois. There, on the thirtieth anniversary of the organization of the Church, he was chosen and sustained President of the High Priesthood and Prophet, Seer and Revelator to those assembled.8

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2Joseph Smith III Papers, Box P15, Library–Archives, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri; hereafter cited as RLDS Library–Archives. See also conversation between George A. Smith and John Smith regarding this letter in Historian's Office Journal, 8 October 1860, Church Archives.


4Early Minutes of the Reorganization, Book 1, under date of 6 April 1860, RLDS Library–Archives.
Simultaneous with the proceedings of the April 1860 Amboy conference, the 30th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was in progress. About forty missionaries were called to labor in Great Britain and Europe. Among them were two of the Martyrs’ sons: Joseph F. Smith, youngest son of Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. B. Smith, the only son of Samuel Harrison Smith. They left Salt Lake Valley for England on 27 April 1860.9

Prior to leaving the Rocky Mountains, Joseph F. wrote to his brother John in Florence for information concerning Nauvoo. Joseph F. was planning to visit that city of his youth and felt that any advance information concerning his kinsmen and the city would be of value.

John’s return letter dated 18 April 1860 gave particulars concerning his recent visit at Nauvoo. Of major importance is John’s perception concerning the Nauvoo Smiths—although fourteen years had separated them, John felt the Prophet’s family were basically still Mormons except for their rejection of polygamy:

Well Nauvoo is a desolate looking place the front or west end of the temple is standing yet. . . . I had a tolerable present visit with the folks altho I did not talk much I was very well treated they all appeared very glad to see me and express themselves sorry to see me gone away again they all profess Mormonism except poligamy there is considerable excitement in Bluff city [Council Bluffs] about Joseph [III] they are expecting him to come out there to take the leadership of a branch of the church I do not know whether he will come or not. I will know before I leave here to go home.10

After six weeks of traveling east, the England-bound missionaries reached the Missouri River. Arriving in Florence on 8 June 1860, Joseph F. wrote in his journal:

I met my Brother John who came down to the States last fall for the purpose of visiting Uncle Joseph’s Family and our Relatives generally and returning with our Sister Lovina Walker and Family this spring. He was in tolerable good spirits as also our Sister whom I had not seen for 14 years. Samuel and I stopped over night here with John.11

Taking ten more days to cross the state of Iowa, Joseph F. and Samuel arrived in Montrose on 19 June, and the following morning ferried across the Mississippi River to Nauvoo. Of their arrival Samuel wrote: “We crossed the river to Nauvoo where we saw our Cousin

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10Joseph Smith to Joseph F. Smith, 18 April 1860, Church Archives.
11Joseph F. Smith Diary, [retrospective survey], 13 April 1861, Church Archives.
Joseph and the rest of the folks Frederick, Alexander & David [other sons of Joseph and Emma Smith]." 12

With the arrival of Joseph F. and Samuel H. B. in Nauvoo six of the then seven living sons of the Martyrs were momentarily reunited after a separation of more than fourteen years. Details of this 20–21 June visit are preserved in the following letters written by Joseph F. and Samuel shortly after the events transpired:

JOSEPH F. TO HIS WIFE, LEVIRA, 28 JUNE 1860

When we rose in the morning I went down to the River and took a good long look at poor old Nauvoo. It looked as natural to me as tho' I had lived there my life time. There stood our old Barn and Brick Office as they did 14 years ago. Uncle Joseph's Big Brick store looked as it did when I saw it last, in fact I could pick out nearly every spot that I had known in Childhood. and you may well suppose that thoughts rose to my mind that are "easier felt than described."

We crossed the river about 9 O'clock a.m. and landed just in front of the old "stone house" which stands yet and I could not see that it is very much impaired by neglect and long standing.

We walked down the River past the old steam mill. took a good look at the old printing Office where uncle Don Carlos lived. Stopped a moment in front of where our old house stood and looked at the Office, the Barn, and the little Brick out house where I shut myself up to keep from going to prison—as I supposed you have heard me speak of it, I think, often—went to uncle Josephs' old house where Joseph is living. found him at home. he shook us warmly by the hand and I think felt unfeigned pleasure at seeing us. he welcomed us, and enquired after the well fair of the saints in the Valley and of the health and prosperity of all the relations. after chatting a few minutes we went over to the mansion, where we found Fredrick & Allicsander who greeted us as cordially as did Joseph. Old man Bidema[n] 13 seemed to feel no great pleasure at seeing us, which we had expected of him. after having goan through with an introduction to those present & answard some questions and made some enquiries &c. &c. we were invited in to dinner. after dinner Fredrick took us in to his mother. she appeared to have forgotten Samuel 14 but me She said she would have known any where because I looked somuch like Father!! aunt Emma seemed very cold and distant. we had some little conversation tuching the situation of the people in Utah and the disposition manifested by Government toward them.

12Samuel H. B. Smith Diary, [mission departure synopsis], 20 June 1860, Church Archives.
13Emma Hale Smith, widow of the Prophet Joseph Smith, married Lewis Crum Bidamon, 23 December 1847 (see Hancock County Marriage Record Book, Carthage Courthouse, Carthage, Illinois, Book A1, 1829–49, p. 105, entry 1242).
14It is strange that Emma would not have recognized Samuel since he had been in Nauvoo sometime during 1856–1857 on an eastern states mission and had visited her at that time.
From a Painting of Nauvoo by David Hyrum Smith, circa 1860 (looking northwest)

"Icarian Community": Nauvoo, 1859, from a Painting by Joh. Schröder (looking northeast)
We then, in company with Fredrick and Alexander, walked up to the ruins of the Temple, and where the old Buerying ground was, some traces are left of it. the old Masonic Hall stands alone, and looks deserted. Bro. [Heber C.] Kimballs House looks fresh and good. we did not learn who were living in it, also bro. Brigham's house. I remembered it as soon as I saw it. it looks old. We returned and went thro' our old Barn and talked freely with the Boys of times gon by. after supper we had some conversation with Cousin Joseph on mormonism and the step that he is taking [i.e., the Reorganization]. We expressed ourselves freely to him and in return, he did the same. it being late however we did not continue long our conversation. Joseph received a letter from Uncle William [Smith] from which we learned (?) that he had sown his wild oats (?) &c. and that he was farming now for a living!— When we went to bed Joseph lighted us up stairs, and before going down related to us a couple of visions which he had, had, and wished us to remember what we dreamed that night. I dreamed— altho' I was very tyerd and sleepy,—of catching a great lot of fish. some were large and some were small. I had "trot lines" set. and some one tried to steal them from me, but I caught them in the act, and for fear they would steal them I took them up and fished with a rod & line. I told Joseph my dream in the morning but he said nothing. After Breakfast Joseph invited us out, and said if we wished to ask him any questions, he would answer them if he could and if he could not, he would wait till he could. we asked him what his feelings were toward the people at salt Lake. he said his feelings were good toward them and he wished them well. but he believed they were in darkness on some things, owing to the teachings they have had, & the influences that surrounded them. we asked if he believed the doctrines they taught were right. he said he believed they were,—but one,—but that they were abused by those holding authority. We told him our feelings in regard to the authorities of the Church and bore our testimony to mormonism. he was glad we felt so well but hoped that we should think differently before long on some things. He sais that he is not concerned at all as to the result of the step he is taking. he does not claim to have had any thing of importance revealed to him. still he sais he has something to reveal in the proper time and place, that is very singular to him, but did not speak to us, as tho' there was any great importance attached to it. he spoke of the defiling of the temple. believed it was defiled by the authorities, and in conciquence of their sins and transgressions they

15William Smith, brother of Joseph Smith, Jr., was rebaptized into the LDS Church in 1860 by J. J. Butler. In a letter to Brigham Young, William Smith talked about joining the Saints in Salt Lake. (See Brigham Young Office Journal, 14 May 1860, Brigham Young Collection. Church Archives; see also D. Michael Quinn, "Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," BYU Studies 16 [Winter 1976]: 205, fn. 54.) It was not until 9 April 1878 that William Smith was received into fellowship in the RLDS Church (History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [1873–1890], 4:212). Until his death on 15 November 1893, he was affiliated with that group.

16For additional and varying accounts of this dream, see Andrew Jenson, Historical Record (Salt Lake City: Published by author, 1887), 6 (May 1887): 190; Joseph F. Smith quoted in letter of John R. Young to Mrs. Vesta Pierce Crawford, undated, Crawford Papers, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City; Young letter quoted in Raymond T. Bailey, "Emma Hale: Wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1952), appendix 4.
were driven from Nauvoo, and brought "Courtings, wrath, indignations, and judgment upon them. believes the people to be in bondage, and oppressed by the Authorities.

He sais he is not afraid but what he will come off right, and that he will take no counsel but from God, for the Lord, if he has a work for him to do—will make his will known to him, before he will to any body els[e].

As Samuel is writing to Cousin Geo. A. [Smith] the particulars of our visit with Joseph, I will proceed with a short description of our visit farther ahead when we returned to the mansion to bid the folks "good by,"
— Aunt Emma came to me and said, "Joe—you are going a wandering are you?"

I thought a moment, and said, I suppose we will wander some before we ged home again."— she said, "I suppose you have done considerable of it?— I told her I had done some. she asked me then if I liked it better than I did to stay at home. I told her my natural feelings would be to stay at home.— and she turned away, and as she went towards the house said "I hope the time will come when we can all stay at home!" giving me no time to say any more.17

SAMUEL H. B. TO HIS COUSIN, GEORGE A. SMITH, 11 JULY 1860

We visited Nauvoo and saw the young Prophet, for I suppose that is the name he goes by, having been ordained by his Father previous to his death and called by the Spirit (of late) he steps forth to do a work but what that work was to be we didn’t find out, only he intends to be dictated by the Spirit in all things and whether the work was great or small it mattered not with him he intends to "leave the result with the Lord." he sais he holds to every principle in the church but one [plural marriage] and that he sais he cannot uphold and sustain with the knowledge that he has, and said that he didn’t believe his Father ever taught and practised that principle, (which would do to talk to someone else better then to us, for any one that knows any thing about mormonism at all knows better then that, by the testimony of thousands whose testimony no one has a right to deny according to the way that I understand it, it is evident that Joseph has been under the influence of his mother altho he sais that his mother has never tried to influence his mind one way or the other, but has let him take his own course, that may be to and her influence work[s] in a nother way, so that it would have as much weight as though She was to converse with him personally on the subject, and I don’t know but a great deal more, he sais that the Spirit has been working on his mind dering the last two years and he has felt all the time as though he had a work to do, but it appears that his mind has been so formed against the principle of Polygamy that the Spirit has failed in removing its fromation [formation], but he told us that if he should come to understand it to be a true principle that he

17Joseph F. Smith to Levira A. Smith, 28 June 1860, Church Archives. Joseph F. Smith married his first cousin, Levira A. Smith, half-sister of Samuel H. B. Smith, on 5 April 1859 (Life of Joseph F. Smith, p. 196).
would imbrace it, but untill then he could not, he further Stated that one day as he was pondering over in his own mind why he didnot go to Salt Lake that he felt his Father's hands upon his head, and then he thought the reason why he dident go, and he told us a circumstance of his seeing his Father, he said that one day he went up sta[i]rs to show some person's his Father's likness and after they had all turned, and stepped out the door, he turned around towards the likness and he saw his Father, [?] he then told us of two or thre other visions he had had, and give us to understand that he had something else to reveal, in its proper time and place, but spok as though he didn't attach any very great importance to it, but he said it was very strange to him, we found him to be affable and kind, we found no truble in getting him to converse with us freely and he expressed himself in a very candid manner, he said he didn't feel like blaming us for the corse we were persuing, and said he thought we would come out all right, and spoke as though he thought we would view things different some time. I think he is sincer and, I have some faith in his coming out strait in the end, that is in seeing his position more clearly then he does at the present, aloth I dont know how clear he can see, but I have a great deal more Faith in him then I have in some of his followers, for instance Marks. . . 18 it appears that Uncle Joseph was suspicious of jest such men as Marks when he said if he should reveal some things that had been revealeed to him that jest as good a man as Marks would cut his throat, I shouldent think that Joseph [III] would have any thing to do with such men it must be that he is not aware that they are such, for if he was I can hardly think that he would, without he intends to mold them over and make better men of them, but then it seems to me that it is us[ec]less for him to undertake, to accomplish what his Father failed in accomplishing, well to cut it short it seems to me as though Salt Lake was the place for him to go, but I suppose he knows his own business best, Aunt Emma was pretty much the same as she use to be, She has that same way about her which is very strange. I think, we all have our ways and especially her. . . 19

JOSEPH F. TO HIS COUSIN, GEORGE A. SMITH, 22 AUGUST 1860

After stoping overnight with Joseph we came out to McConnah [McDonough] Co. and spent a week with Arthur, Sophrona and Catherine, and a small branch of the Saints, held two meetings with them and did some tall preaching to them. and before we left we got them to think very differantly of a great many things. they all seem'd to feel very shy about Josephs' Step [i.e., assuming the presidency of the Reorganization]. at the same time they seemed to want it to be right. I could see that they were very fearful of his success, tho' I believe they did hope earnestly that he would proove successful in the undertaking. and I do most earnestly hope and prey that what he is now doing may prove a guide-board to mark the error of the way and turn him to the right course. My feelings never were worked upon as they were after

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18William Marks was a former president of the Nauvoo Stake.
19Samuel H. B. Smith to George A. Smith, 11 July 1860, Church Archives. George A. Smith was a first cousin to the Martyrs. He was an LDS apostle and Church Historian at this time.

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parting with Joseph. I felt grieved to think he was so determined in his opinions about the people of Utah that he could not look at them as they were, and shake off the influences of evil reports and pre-conceived notions and ideas, yet I felt that surely God would remember him for he seemed sincere and earnest. he did not tell us much in regard to what he was going to do, nor what he had done, he seemed sanguine of success & was perfectly resigned. said he would do all he could and leave the result with God. and farther he felt sure that he would accomplish the work he has begun, I hope he may and It will prove to him the Right-way! . . .

I am inclined to think that they all though[t] better of me when I left them than they did when I came. and that is a source of satisfaction to me, and I thank god that I have been privaledge to see them all, and instrumental in doing them some little good.20

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE 1860 NAUVOO REUNION

Joseph F. left Nauvoo with many impressions regarding his visit, impressions that would linger with him throughout his life. In his own words, they were “easier felt than described.”21

Samuel made one of the most astute observations of that 1860 reunion when he noted that his Aunt Emma had played a major role in influencing the doctrinal concepts of her children. He observed that the sons of his Uncle Joseph had had their minds formed to a greater degree by the silence his aunt had maintained than by what she had actually said. He recorded, “We all have our ways and especially her [Emma].”22

Joseph F. and Samuel made little mention of visiting with their cousins David, Alexander, and Frederick. This is especially surprising since their 20 June visit was Frederick’s twenty-fourth birthday. Since none of Joseph III’s brothers had affiliated with the Reorganized Church in 1860, it is probable that the cousins’ conversations amounted to the usual kind of small talk that makes no lasting impressions.

During John’s visit to Nauvoo earlier in 1860, he enjoyed a closer relationship with his cousin Alexander than did either his brother Joseph F. or his cousin Samuel. After extending an invitation to Joseph III to come out to Utah, John invited his cousin Alexander to do the same. “Alexander Smith was willing to come West with [me],” John reported, “if he could obtain his mother’s consent.” However Emma, breaking her usual silence declared that “no child

20 Joseph F. Smith to George A. Smith, 22 August 1860, Church Archives.
21 Joseph F. Smith to Levira A. Smith, 28 June 1860, Church Archives.
22 Samuel H. B. Smith to George A. Smith, 11 July 1860, Church Archives.
John and Joseph F. Smith
Patriarch and President
Circa 1896

David H. Smith
Missionary
Circa 1862

Samuel H. B. Smith
Missionary
Circa 1874

Alexander and Joseph Smith III
Patriarch and President
Circa 1901
of hers should ever be permitted to go to Salt Lake." 23 In spite of the factors that kept them apart, John and Alexander had much in common. They were kindred spirits indeed, for each would be the Presiding Patriarch of his church.

Years of separation, before and after 1860, would also bring about a paradoxical bond between the cousins Joseph F. and Joseph III. This bond was destined to place an almost unbearable strain upon their relationship, for each would be the President of his respective church. But despite increasing problems between them, Joseph F. retained a favorable recollection of his cousin Joseph and their Nauvoo visit. In September 1860, Joseph F. wrote of Joseph III:

He is determined and resolute; he evinces a strong and immutable mind and will, and is calm & thoughtful, he is well spoken of and much respected by all that know him, in his moral, (and political) Character he is unspotted. 24

Joseph's reaction to his cousin Joseph F. during their 1860 reunion remains somewhat of a mystery. In his extensive memoirs, dictated the last few years of his life, Joseph III mentions only that he saw and had an interview with Joseph F. 25 Extant diaries of Joseph III also fail to record any reference to Joseph F.'s or Samuel's 20-21 June visits. 26 The only clues we have to the true feelings Joseph III formed towards his Utah cousins in 1860 are found in letters and statements he made later.

LATER REACTIONS

John was serving a mission in Denmark in 1863 when his brother Joseph F. and cousin Samuel returned home from their missions in Great Britain. Joseph F. and Samuel retraced their 1860 route east as they made their way back to the Salt Lake Valley, but they did not see their cousin Joseph III on this journey. In a 14 August 1863 letter to John, Joseph III told of the return of his missionary cousins and shared personal feelings with John regarding family and destiny:

When the bonds of natural affection have swayed in our minds we find that we are all more or less alike and that differences of opinion if any exist, are not such differences as to create a sundering of natural ties.

23Conversation between John Smith and George A. Smith as recorded in Historian's Office Journal, 8 October 1860. Church Archives.
26Diaries kept by Joseph Smith III while serving as President of the RLDS Church are located in the RLDS Library-Archives.
Joseph and Samuel both have passed on their way to the valley and I saw neither and had of course no opportunity to talk with them.

Joseph's health is not good but Samuel is as I am told a stout hearty strongman.

I am told that you are studying and trying to make up for the neglect with which you in common with the rest of the Smith family have been visited. God help you John stick to it read, study, learn to weigh things for your self, assert your manhood and I warrant me the spirit of your father will burn in your bosom. Open your eyes John look all around you and extend charity to all who do not think just as you do. I am so well pleased by what I have heard of Joseph and Samuel since I came out here last night that I am led to rejoice for I can see the dawning of the day when the sons of our fathers will stand shoulder to shoulder in the war of truth with error as stood our Fathers in bygone days.

Fifty-one years later, in 1914, a blind, deaf, and eighty-one-year-old Joseph III was living out his last few months as the only surviving child of Joseph and Emma. He sent a poignant and prophetic letter to his cousin Samuel that echoed the same kind of sentiments regarding kinship contained in his 1863 letter to John:

By letter . . . I learn of your extreme illness which seems to be the premising of your early departure from this life. I use the word early departure with the idea that it is nearer than the years you may have passed would seem to indicate. . . . Notwithstanding we may have differed in regard to religion touching the faith and personal conduct, my love and regard for you as a member of my father's family has never wavered. I have always regarded you with affection and relationship love and you still hold that position in my affections and will under divine Providence whatever may be the issue.

. . . I seem to know for some reason that the Providence that has looked over us both so long will not permit a much longer continuance of life for either and that you will proceed me. My prayer is, therefore, that you may retain your faculties to the last and trustful in divine [sic] mercy you may pass into the beyond as it is written of some of the old time fathers.

. . . With malice toward none and charity for all, I am,
Your cousin and friend,
Joseph Smith
IAS

27 Joseph Smith III to John Smith, 19 August 1863. Original in possession of LDS Patriarch Eldred G. Smith, Salt Lake City.
28 Samuel H. B. Smith died 12 June 1914; Joseph Smith III died 10 December 1914.
29 Joseph Smith III to Samuel H. B. Smith, 29 May 1914, written by his son, Israel Alexander Smith. Copy of original in possession of author.
Ironically, after concluding his letter to Samuel "with malice toward none and charity for all," Joseph III, President of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, had somewhat uncharitable last words for his cousin Joseph F., President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

"I haven't an enemy in the world that I know of—unless it be one, and some might consider him my enemy." (He referred to his cousin of similar name, then president of the church in Utah.) And after a pause, added, "And deep down in his heart, he knows I have been right in this controversy, all along!" 30

**BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY**

The sons of the Martyrs' Nauvoo reunion during February and June of 1860 involved seven young men, ranging in age from fifteen to twenty-seven. The sons of Hyrum Smith—John and Joseph F.—were twenty-seven and twenty-one years old respectively. The only son of Samuel Harrison Smith—Samuel H. B.—was also twenty-one years old. The sons of Joseph Smith, Jr., were Joseph III, age twenty-seven; Frederick G. W., age twenty-four; Alexander Hale, age twenty-two; and David Hyrum, age fifteen.

**Hyrum's Sons**

The sons of Hyrum were deeply involved in church work by 1860. John Smith was ordained the Presiding Patriarch of the Church in Utah on 18 February 1855 and as such functioned as a prophet, seer, and revelator for fifty-six years, dying on Joseph Smith III's birthday, 6 November 1911.

Joseph F. was a veteran missionary for the Church, having spent nearly four years on an assignment to the Hawaiian Islands during his first mission and in 1860 was on his way to his second mission, this time to Great Britain. Joseph F. was called to the apostleship and as a Counselor in the First Presidency 1 July 1866, when he was twenty-seven years old. He served the Church in those callings during the administrations of Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow. In 1901, he was sustained as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and served seventeen years until he died in 1918.

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Samuel's Son

By 1860, Samuel H. B. was also a veteran missionary. His first mission took him to the states in the East in 1856 when he was eighteen years old. After being transferred to England, he was called home from that mission in 1857. In April 1860 he was called with his cousin Joseph F. to serve a second mission in Great Britain.

Joseph Jr.'s Sons

The only son of the Prophet officially engaged in church work in 1860 was Joseph III. He was president of what became known later as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He, like his cousin Patriarch John, was called that year to function as a prophet, seer, and revelator, but in a different church.

Frederick Granger Williams Smith died on 13 April 1862. He was twenty-five years old. His brother Alexander was grieved and perplexed that Frederick had died without baptism but found comfort in the doctrine of baptism for the dead that his father had taught.

"Satisfied of the necessity of baptism for the living, and comforted by the evidence of its possibility for the dead," Alexander Hale Smith was baptized on 25 May 1862 by Joseph III.31 After Alexander was baptized, he functioned alternately as missionary, apostle, Counselor in the First Presidency, and Presiding Patriarch in a long life of service to his church.

David Hyrum Smith was baptized into the Reorganization, 26 June 1861. He served his church first as missionary and then as Counselor in the First Presidency. David was a prolific poet and chastised his brother Frederick for failing to stand up with his brothers and be counted in the cause of the Reorganization. He entitled his poetic chastisement, "An Appeal to my Brother Frederick When on his sick bed." David was seventeen years old at the time.

Remember Brother dost thou not
What Mother used to say
Or are her consels all forgot
Her teachings thrown away.

31There is evidence that Alexander believed in baptism for the dead as taught by his father and that this belief motivated his own baptism. See "Biography of Alexander Hale Smith," ed. Vida Elizabeth Smith (his daughter), Journal of History 4 (January 1911): 14.
Remember O how innocent
Our early years were passed
Shall we when Mother's life is spent
Neglect our god at last.

Remember how she taught us five
In faithfulness to pray
That God would guard us through the night
And watch us through the day
Oh did we think when ere we read
The bible! holy book
In after years that in to it
We'd be ashamed to look.

O! Shall we stand above her grave
And in our conscience say
That on life's road we have not walked
As Mother showed the way.
You know how righteous she has been
Through all her weary years
Let's turn to her example then
Lest we repent with tears.32

David became ill, and after several years of physical and mental illness, Joseph III committed him to the Northern Illinois Hospital for the Insane in January of 1877.33 David spent the last twenty-eight years of his life there.

CONCLUSION

The sons of the Martyrs were at once heirs of promises and victims of circumstances set in motion at the deaths of their fathers. It was obvious to all believers in the Restoration that God had not brought about the great work of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times simply to have his purposes thwarted. However, the objective of the adversary, to divide and conquer, seemed for a time to find its best expression in the activities of these same Martyrs' sons.

It seems unthinkable that men who died for a cause could have sons that would not live up to the principles of that cause, and yet there appears to be reason to rejoice, even in that. George Q. Cannon, a member of the LDS First Presidency, best summed it up in 1884:

32David H. Smith Diary, 1853–1864, entry for 17 February [1862?], RLDS Library–Archives.
SONS OF THE MARTYRS
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Joseph Smith III  
David H. Smith  
Alexander H. Smith
There may be faithful men who will have unfaithful sons, who may not be as faithful as they might be; but faithful posterity will come, just as I believe it will be the case with the Prophet Joseph's seed. To-day he has not a soul descended from him personally in this Church. . . . But will this always be the case? No. Just as sure as God lives, just as sure as God has made promises, so sure will some one of Joseph Smith's posterity rise up and be numbered with this Church. . . . It may be delayed in the wise providence of our God . . . but these promises are unalterable; God made them to Joseph during his lifetime; and they will be fulfilled just as sure as God made them.134

There are no parallel promises concerning the descendants of Hyrum or of Samuel Harrison found in the history of the Reorganized Church.

The simple truth is all that remains. In 1844 the martyr fathers died united, but by 1860 their sons were living divided. The principles of the Restoration brought lasting peace to the Martyrs, but it later brought a sword to the sons. The earlier fear of the Prophet Joseph for his brothers and sisters now applied to his sons and nephews, for they were prevented from "seeing things as they really are" and "the powers of Earth & hell" had combined to overthrow the Church by "causing a division in the family."135

Of the seven sons of the Martyrs to be reunited at a fork on the gospel road at Nauvoo in 1860, one would soon pass away while the remaining six would journey along divergent paths into the twentieth century.

Photo credits:
Page 353—Samuel H. B. Smith, LDS Church Archives; John Smith, Ralph G. Smith Collection; Joseph F. Smith, Buddy Youngren Collection; group photo of Joseph Smith's sons, Lynn E. Smith Collection.
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134George Q. Cannon in Journal of Discourses, 26 vols. (Liverpool: Franklin D. Richards et al. 1854-1886), 25:367. See also letter written to Joseph Smith III in 1886 by LDS apostle John Henry Smith wherein he declared: "The promise made to your father, 'that in him and his seed all of the families of the earth should be blessed' [D&C 124:58] cannot fail. If, you and your brothers fail to come forward and perform your part, God will raise up through your children, or, children's children seed that will yet honor all of His laws, and sustain every principle, being mighty among the Saints; for, your fathers words will not fail" (John Henry Smith Letterbook, 28 April 1886, p. 522, Marriott Library, University of Utah).
135Joseph Smith Diary, 1 January 1836, Church Archives.