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Title: **Jesse Nathaniel Smith Journal Margret Cooper West Journal**  
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Person: **Jesse Nathaniel Smith**  
Date:

Family Records Jesse Nathaniel Smith Journal Margret Cooper West Journal. Endowment House Records, TIB, St. George Temple Records. My great-grandfather, Jesse Nathaniel Smith, was born 2 Dec. 1834 a

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My great-grandfather, Jesse Nathaniel Smith, was born 2 Dec. 1834 at Stockholm, St. Lorence, New York. He was the third child (son) of Silace Smith (a brother of Joseph Smith Sr., father of the prophet—thus Joseph Smith, the prophet and Jesse N. were first cousins.) His mother was Mary Aikens, and after the death of her husband in Pittsfield, Illinois she moved to Nauvoo with the saints. Later, she and her two small sons, Jesse only thirteen, started their trek across the plains, June 9 1847, with "Parley's" Company. Mary Aikens 13 Aug. 1797 in Barnard, Windsor Co., Vermont. She died 27 Apr. 1877 at Parawon, Utah. Jesse N.'s father, Silas, was born 1 Oct. 1779 at Derrifield, Rockingham, New Hampshire. He died at Pittsfield, Illinois 13 Sept. 1839. There were three children: John Aikens, Silace and Jesse N.—John died at the age of 6, on 27 Nov. 1838. Jesse N. married five wives. His second wife, Margaret Fletcher West was a younger sister of his first wife. He (Jesse N.) had 44 children. Jesse N. was the first president of the Snowflake Stake—which before that was called Eastern Arizona Stake. He (Jesse N.) died in Snowflake, the community which he helped to settle and which he loved. He died 6 June, 1906.

Jesse Nathaniel Smith was, in his physical appearance, a real solid manly man. He was nearly six

feet tall, broad of shoulders, and his feet were firm set upon the ground. The first impression that came to you as you looked at him was that of firmness, solidity and dependability. He was rather slow of movement, calm and unexcitable. In a word, he was a stately, majestic man.

In speech, he was deliberate, orderly and coherent. Even in tense moments of stress and excitement he did not give way to irritability or rashness. Maturity and soundness characterized all his utterances. The description of one of his sons is most apt. "He seems to have always been grown up."

The writer recalls a Priesthood Meeting, at which a brother, who imagined that he had a grievance against President Smith, got up and spoke at some length, very harshly, of President Smith; and made sweeping and unfounded accusations. At the close of the virulent tirade of abuse, President Smith arose and in the utmost calmness and gentleness of spirit remarked:

"If Brother \_\_\_\_\_ wants to peck at me, he can just peck until he gets his belly full."

At the conclusion of the terse speech, he sat down with the poised dignity that always characterized his demeanor.

Possibly no word describes his emotional or temperamental makeup so complete as the one

word "poise." He was always self-contained, serene and calm.

Although he was naturally serious and not given to foolish jesting, yet he could at times unbend in a most pleasant way and indulge in side-shaking laughter. But his laughter was not of the hollow type that "speaks of the vacant mind." It was an irresistible inner chuckle, soul-stirring, but at times scarcely audible.

His sense of humor was genuine, sane, and balanced. He could always see both the serious and funny side of things. He was able to put himself at the little end of a joke. The writer will not soon forget the delight of an evening spent with President Smith, by an open fireplace in one of his homes in Snowflake, Arizona. He became reminiscent. His thoughts turned, in a quite genuine way, to notables he had met, to important places he had visited, and to outstanding events in his life. In a few modest, well-chosen words, he gave an appraisal of his own characteristics and capabilities. In the dry as dust accents of the true humorist, he remarked:

"I think I have financial ability; but I never had anything to practice on."

He was a man of unaffected goodness. A story relating to his sale of a piece of land near Parowan to his dear friend, Morgan Richards, reveals a heart of rare guilelessness. The transaction occurred some years after President Smith had moved to Arizona. The two were attending the General Conference. When the subject of the sale was broached, President Smith asked Brother Richards:

"How much can you afford to pay?"

"How much do you ask?" replied Richards.

It was several minutes before they arrived at terms. Smith was afraid he might ask too much; and Richards feared he might offer too little.

He was deeply spiritual; and was given a vision of the other world in which it was shown to him that those quiet, unassuming, yet faithful and true men were very much in evidence, while some that in life were always at the front and made much of were not so manifest and prominent, which seemed to be the most striking feature and the point of the vision.

President Smith was a man of rare versatility. He was what Carlyle would call great, because he could be "all sorts of men." He was a pioneer, colonizer, businessman, lawmaker, judge, ecclesiastic, and preacher of the gospel.

He had a regard for the Prophet Joseph Smith that was akin to veneration. Whenever he spoke of the Prophet, it was with a deep spirit of filial affection. The writer recalls with inspirational delight the last time he heard President Smith speak of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was in a reminiscent mood. He referred to the circumstance of sitting on the Prophet's lap. Tears came into his eyes, his voice mellowed, and his words flowed from him in simple beauty as he spoke of the greatest soul of our modern world.

I interrupted his reminiscent flow of eloquence, with the remark:

"You become eloquent when you speak of Joseph Smith."

"Why shouldn't I?" he replied, "It's the darling theme of my heart."

He always spoke in the most affectionate way of the Prophet. In an address delivered at the L. D. S. High School, he refers to the unusual appeal of Joseph Smith's voice.

"I may say I was never so impressed by any person. I am unable to fully describe my sensations when in the presence of this wonderful man. I only know that I rejoiced being in his presence. No voice that I had ever heard seemed to me to be such a voice. I have never heard any human voice, not even my mother's, that was so attractive to me. Even his bitterest enemies, if they had the privilege of hearing him speak, became mollified, and forgot their anger. Now I believe even his murderers, at the last, if their passions could have been stilled, if their anger by which they were enraged and were no longer men, could have heard his voice, his impressive voice, and listened to his explanations, I do not believe they would have demanded his life. It was a sort of insanity. The powers of evil are abroad in the world. They obtain dominion sometimes of the children of men. It was under this circumstance that they were impelled to make that mad attack."

He was a cultured gentleman in the finest sense of the word. He had traveled extensively; lived by persistent reading with the best minds of all time; and developed to a high degree the arts of refined, interesting conversation and effective public speech. He had a passionate love for all the fine arts-the best music, classical literature, sacred eloquence; and he was a constant patron of dramatic art when opportunity afforded. His tastes were those of the most refined of mankind.

His culture was not one-sided. He was an outstanding product of the purest religion-a religion that persistently upholds the sanctity of the body, exalts the intellect, inculcates pure ethical principles, glorifies the fine arts, and develops the finest flowering of culture-deep, genuine spirituality.

He was the highest thing a human soul can be. In the very best sense of the word, he was a Son of God, pure in heart, clean of mind, gentle in spirit; and a valiant, guileless servant of the Most High. In his almost flawless character, there was a rare, harmonious blending of the basic characteristics of the perfect man-the beauty of purity, the sublimity of simplicity, the heroism of courage, the majesty of meekness, the guilelessness of goodness, and the graciousness of love.

In the fall of 1847 a group of Mormon pioneers entered the Wasatch Mountains near the Great Salt Lake. I, Jesse Nathaniel Smith, was a member of this company, twelve years old at the time of our arrival. Upon approaching the panorama of the Great Salt Lake, we gave gratitude to the Lord for having reached the Promised Valley.

I journeyed across the plains with my widowed Mother and older brother, Silas. My father and younger brother had died the year before from persecution and exposure, as suffered by the Saints. We traveled with my Uncle John Smith's company. I was given the responsibility of teamster, a large undertaking for one so young. Our arrival in the Valley marked the end of a thousand mile trek by ox team and covered wagon. During the long journey I witnessed great examples of faith, courage and endurance, displayed by this sturdy band of pioneers who braved the desert wastes and Indian persecutions in that historic trek from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the Rocky Mountains. Certainly, this unceasing faith in God enabled these noble souls to complete this march under most unusual circumstances.

I was born on December 2, 1834, at Stockholm, New York, to humble, upright parents, Silas and Mary Aikens Smith. My father was an uncle to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Because of my parents' conversion to the Gospel, we did not remain long in the place of my birth.

I spent years of my young life in Nauvoo. It was my privilege and blessing to know the Prophet and hear his glorious testimony. At the age of eight, I sat on his knee and received a Book of Mormon from him with an inscription in it. This I ever cherished.

I was scarcely ten years of age when the Prophet and his brother, Hyrum, were martyred in Carthage. A vivid remembrance of this tragedy remained with me throughout my life. I could never forget the feeling of sorrow as I viewed the bodies of these great men of God, united in death as they had always been in life.

Shortly after reaching the Valley, I witnessed the miracle of the gulls and the Providence of the Lord in sending the gulls from the lake to devour crop-destroying crickets, thus saving all from starvation.

In June, 1851, my brother and I and our families were sent by President Brigham Young to establish a home in Parowan, Iron County, and to help in settlement development. While living there I enjoyed taking part in civic affairs and politics, serving as County Clerk and Mayor, and in the Territorial Legislature.

In 1859 I was called to the Scandinavian Mission. Reluctantly, I left my two young families, yet knowing that it was the Lord's will, I was obedient to his call. After returning for a few years, I was called again, this time to serve as President of the Danish Mission. Hundreds of converts were desirous of immigrating to Zion. A company in which I was in charge, over one thousand souls came.

In 1879, having been called by President John Taylor to serve as President of the Eastern Arizona Stake of Zion, I began a new journey to Snowflake, Arizona. My third wife, Janet, and five daughters accompanied me on this first trip to Snowflake. Though many hardships were endured, we pre-

pared to establish our home there. Later, other family members joined us.

After the Eastern Arizona Stake was divided, I was called to serve as President of the Snowflake Stake, which calling lasted over thirty years.

With a strong belief in the principle and divinity of plural marriage, revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, I obediently chose five wives. These devoted wives, Emma, Margaret, Janet, Augusta and Emma Larson, and forty-four children, gave me great joy and strength. I have devoted my life to the up building of the Lord's Kingdom, with a desire to be a blessing to my family and my fellowmen, thereby, bringing honor and glory to my Heavenly Father.