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Title: **Jesse Nathaniel Smith and Silas D. Smith story**
Provenance:

Category: **Document**
Person: **Jesse Nathaniel Smith**
Date:

Jesse Nathaniel Smith (1834-1906) From The Family of Jesse N. Smith 1834-1978, edited by Oliver R. Smith and Dorothy H. Williams, Jesse N. Smith Family Association, Snowflake, Arizona, 1978, pp. 1-10

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(See below this story the Smith-Bushman family connection.)

by Joseph W. Smith (a Son)

The subject of this brief sketch commenced his earthly pilgrimage in Stockholm, St. Lawrence Co., New York, on Dec. 2, 1834. He was the youngest child of his father's second marriage, and traces his lineage thus on the paternal side: Silas Smith and Mary Aikens; Asahel Smith and Mary Duty; Samuel Smith II and Priscilla Gould; Samuel Smith and Rebecca Curtis; Robert and Mary French. Robert came to America from England in 1638 and settled at Topsfield, Mass. in 1648.

His lineage on his mother's side is: Nathaniel Aikens and Mary Tupper; Solomon Aikens and Dorcas Whitcomb, whose parents came from England. Both of his grandfathers fought in the Revolutionary War, and his father fought his country's battles in the War of 1812 as captain of militia.

Asahel Smith was a somewhat visionary man. He predicted that something would come forth in his family that would transmit his name with honor to posterity. When near his death (in Stockholm) in 1830, he was visited at Silas's home by his son Joseph (the Prophet's father) and grandson Don Carlos, having with them the Book of Mormon and

the tidings of the restored gospel. He received with gladness the testimony of his son, and remarked that he had always been expecting the coming forth of the true gospel. Asahel died a few days later, being over 86 years old.

Jesse N.'s father, Silas Smith, was baptized in the summer of 1835 by Hyrum Smith. He was ordained first an elder, and afterwards a high priest. Mary Duty Smith moved to Kirtland, Ohio with her son Silas and family in 1836, but died soon after, being 91 years of age.

Silas moved with his family from Kirtland in April, 1838, bound for Far West, Mo., but was turned back at Huntsville by some who were fleeing from their homes and bearing Gov. Lilburn W. Boggs' "extermination order." He died on Sep. 13, 1839 at Pittsfield, Illinois, where he had been appointed president of a branch of the Church. His widow moved to Nauvoo where she was kindly received by relatives, and where she taught school for a subsistence. From her Jesse received teaching, not only in the rudiments of education, but also the principles of the Gospel. He readily absorbed both.

Jesse was baptized Aug. 13, 1843 by his Uncle John Smith, who also confirmed him. He was acknowledged as "friend" by the Prophet, who made him welcome and presented him with a copy of the Book of Mormon (first edition). He was familiar with the stirring events of Nauvoo, played soldier with the boys in the spirit of the Nauvoo Legion, was present and heard the speech of Gov. Thomas Ford on the day of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum, and saw the bodies of the Prophet and Patriarch when they were prepared for burial.

His cousin William Smith tried hard to dissuade Mary A. Smith and her two young sons from going off in the great exodus with Brigham Young, but they all expressed their purpose of doing so. With his mother and brother Jesse passed the summer of 1846 in Iowa across the Mississippi from Nauvoo, until they were picked up by the Church teams which came from Winter Quarters (afterward called Florence, Neb.), where they arrived Nov. 30. In the spring he was engaged in felling trees for the stock to browse on the swelling buds, before the grass started to grow.

The family started west in Perigrine Sessions' company of 50 wagons on June 30, 1847, and arrived in Salt Lake Valley on Sep. 25, 1847. Although only 12 years of age, Jesse drove Uncle John Smith's two yokes of oxen in making the arduous journey.

With his mother and brother he tried farming in what became Davis County. Then, in the fall of 1851, they were called to go to Parowan and help build up and strengthen that locality. It thus appears that while he was not yet 17 he was counted among the strong men. He bore his full part of the hardships of the Indian war in 1853-54, and while on guard at Chimney Springs suffered a painful accident in the misfire of his companion's rifle. The accident almost cost him the sight of his right eye. It was not entirely blind, but the sight was so dim that it was very little use to him.

In less than a year from his arrival in Parowan, Jesse became a married man. He eventually became the husband of five good women, all of whom had great respect for him; and each of them bore him children. He married Emma Seraphine West, May 13, 1852 who bore him nine children. He married Margaret Fletcher West, her sister, Jan. 27, 1856, who bore two children. He married Janet Mauretta Johnson, Oct. 9, 1866, who bore 13 children. He married Augusta Maria Outzen, June 3, 1869, who bore him 11 children. He married Emma Larson, Oct. 28, 1881, who bore nine children. He was not yet 18 years old when he married the first, and he was nearly 47 when the last wedding occurred. And when his youngest child was

born—the 44th—he was 69 years of age.

He was essentially a Church man, although he was very active in civil positions as well. At 16 he was ordained an elder on July 6, 1851 by John Smith in Salt Lake City. Joseph Young ordained him a Seventy on March 12, 1854, and he became a member of the 9th Quorum. When the Parowan Stake was organized by Brigham Young on April 23, 1855, he was ordained a high priest and became a counselor to Pres. John C. L. Smith. After the death of Pres. Smith, the stake was reorganized by George A. Smith with William H. Dame as president and Calvin Pendleton and Jesse N. Smith as counselors. Jesse was also appointed to preside over the high priests of the stake.

He was elected district attorney by the legislature, and officiated as clerk of Iron County. During the winter of 1854-55 he taught school. In August he was elected as representative to the territorial legislature. In the winter of 1856 war broke out with the Utah Indians, and as Jesse was in Salt Lake City, Gov. Young sent word by him to abandon the smaller settlements in Southern Utah, and consolidate them in larger settlements. He did missionary work and taught school during the following winter. He was with the White Mountain exploring party from May 21, 1857 until the party came in. He, with a few companions, explored the valleys at the headwaters of the Sevier and Virgin Rivers, and made a report thereof to the Church Historian. He was elected mayor of Parowan in February, 1859, and in the spring he helped in making a settlement at Minersville in Beaver County.

There, while harvesting wheat in his field the next year, he received a letter from George A. Smith informing him that he was called on a mission to Europe, and that the company of elders would leave Salt Lake City on the 25th. As it was Sep. 12 when he received this word, quick action was required if he were to get there on time. Therefore he immediately set about arranging his affairs, and the following morning he started for Parowan, moving his family. Here he turned over his business to his brother, Silas, S. And left for Salt Lake City on the 17th, where he was informed that his mission was

to Scandanavia.

He was given an Elder's Certificate, a blessing by the apostles, and left on horseback with some 50 elders going to various parts of the world. Among them were Orson Pratt, Erastus Snow, and George Q. Cannon. It took them 40 days to reach Florence, Neb., where they sold their ponies. They traveled by boat and railway from there to New York. Jesse reached Copenhagen Jan. 11, 1861, having suffered considerably from the cold during the latter part of the journey, as lack of money compelled him and his companions to travel third class.

On March 16, 1862 Pres. John Van Gott of the Scandinavian Mission announced to a conference of about 1,000 Saints that Jesse N. Smith (then age 27) had been appointed by President Young to become president of the mission. During the next two year he revised the Swedish hymn book, with the assistance of Elder Jonas Engberg, and published a new edition. He labored earnestly to have the missionaries and members refrain from the use of strong drink and tobacco, and assisted 1,778 members in emigrating to America. He also paid off an indebtedness of the mission, and turned its accounts over to his successor without a deficit.

After his release he reached home Oct. 22, 1864 and found his family in extreme poverty. It had taken everything that he possessed for their support during his absence, and it barely sufficed. He rented some land, worked hard, and did every honorable things he could for the next four years to recuperate his fortunes. Among other things, he assisted in organizing a cooperative store in Parowan.

He was again appointed county clerk, and also was appointed regimental adjutant of the Iron Military District. In January 1866 he was elected probate judge for Iron County. During that year a state of war again existed with the Utah Indians, and the Sevier River country, including all of the settlements south of Gunnison, was organized into what was known as the Piute Military District, of which he was appointed colonel. The duty of organizing the militia was assigned to him. During that period

he was engaged in six military expeditions, furnishing his own horse, arms, and outfit, and serving without pay from any quarter.

In 1868 he answered a second mission call, and was "set apart" in Salt Lake City to preside a second time over the Scandinavian Mission. He attended in Liverpool a conference of the leading elders, at which he strongly advocated sending the emigrating Saints on steamships, thereby saving many lives that might be lost by being longer exposed in sailing vessels from sea-sickness, contagious disease, and other dangers of sea travel. During the next two years 1,100 adult converts, beside children were emigrated from Scandinavia. He filled a very good mission and started home July 15, 1870 in charge of a company of emigrants numbering nearly 600, besides nine returning elders. It made a very successful journey, both by sea and land. Just before reaching Salt Lake City he was met and welcomed by the First Presidency of the Church, the Presiding Bishop, and other leading citizens. He made his report of his mission in the "old Tabernacle" on Temple Square, speaking in English and Danish.

On the invitation of President Young, Jesse and his brother Silas joined him and his party (including Army Major John Wesley Powell) on an exploring trip to the Paria region on the border of southern Utah and northern Arizona.

Back home, Jesse was instrumental in organizing the Parowan Cooperative Co. He again officiated as county clerk and as justice of the peace.

A new chapter in his career was opened when in 1878 he made a trip of exploration into Arizona with Erastus Snow, who had supervision over the Mormon settlements which were beginning in that area. Upon his return he reported to Pres. John Taylor, and subsequently was called and set apart as president of the Eastern Arizona Stake. He then moved his family from Parowan to the location of his new "mission" in two stages—the first in December, 1878 and the second in April, 1880. Having been elected previously, he also served in the Utah legislature in the winter of 1880.

In Arizona he performed a distinct service in assisting to incorporate and organize irrigation companies for St. Joseph, Woodruff, Snowflake, and Taylor, and he labored enthusiastically to locate and build dams and reservoirs for the storing of flood waters. He thus became a pioneer in the practice which has now become so popular and essential in the nation, the building of storage reservoirs. He also assisted in organizing a grist mill and cooperative herd in Taylor and Snowflake Wards. To provide means of subsistence for the people he, in company with John W. Young and Ammon M. Tenney, took a small railroad contract for grading near the continental divide in New Mexico.

In 1884 he was appointed on a committee of five to purchase lands in Mexico where Saints (being persecuted under the anti-polygamy statutes) could make homes. In the discharge of this duty he labored in Mexico for nearly a year in the states of Sonora and Chihuahua. In the spring of 1889 he was called by the First Presidency, in company with Brigham Young Jr., to go to New York City and negotiate a purchase of lands from the Aztec Land and Cattle Co., who had ordered the Mormon people to vacate their lands and would have broken up the settlements on Silver Creek and Show Low. Through his aid the purchase was successfully made, and he, with the help of E. M. Webb, made a careful survey and platted the lands. His survey he recorded, and it is the guide and the standard of description in the conveyance of all transfers of real estate in this locality (Snowflake). In all his duties as president of the stake, and they were numerous, none was of greater benefit to the whole people than what he did in this connection.

In other civic duties, he was appointed probate judge by the governor of Arizona Territory, and was elected a member of the house and served in the 19th session of the legislature. As a businessman, he helped organize and serves as president of the Arizona Cooperative Mercantile Association.

Jesse N. Smith's life of 71 years was full of activity. As a pioneer, a statesman, and officer in court, in field, or office, he was ever industrious, painstaking,

dignified, and honorable. He gave prestige to every activity that he undertook. As a missionary he labored for the saving of souls. His preaching had the ring of righteousness. It never echoed of hypocrisy.

The record might warrant our referring to him as a scholar and a gentleman; but probably his greatest accomplishment was in rearing a family. Any man who has lived harmoniously and finished a life successfully with one wife has done well and is to be commended; but here we have one who goes him five times better! He was a good disciplinarian, and with the hearty cooperation of his good wives, he reared 44 children, all but two of whom reached maturity. They were obedient in the home and became dependable, useful citizens; not a criminal, nor an imbecile in the bunch. In my judgment, a man's success in life is primarily measured by the development of his family. So, considering the great number, their character, and all, he has here a fine testimonial.

In conclusion, let me say Jesse N. Smith was true to his friends; he never betrayed a trust; and he discharged capably and faithfully every commission that was properly placed in his hands.

[Jesse N. Smith died at his home in Snowflake, Arizona on June 5, 1906, and was buried in the Snowflake Cemetery.]

Editor's Note: The foregoing article was written in 1934 for the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jesse N. Smith by his eldest son.

The Smith-Bushman Family Connection

Maria Elizabeth Bushman Smith, *The Story of Our Motherby Derryfield N. Smith*, published by the Maria E. B. and Silas D. Smith Family Association, pp. 51-52.

The young man Maria was destined to marry was Silas D. Smith, the second son of the nine children born to President Jesse N. Smith of the Eastern Arizona Stake and his wife Emma Seraphine West. An exceptionally attractive relationship subsequently

developed between the families of President Jesse N. Smith of Snowflake and Bishop John Bushman of St. Joseph. In addition to Silas D., two other sons of Jesse N. Smith were to marry other daughters of John Bushman; i.e. J. Walter Smith married Lois Evelyn Bushman and Hyrum Smith married June Augusta Bushman. Also Homer F. Bushman, John's elder son, married Jesse N. Smith's daughter Sariah and another daughter married Preston A. Bushman. When Anna later died, after bearing four children, Preston married Daphne Decker, a granddaughter of J. N. Smith. Another granddaughter, Edith Smith, married Alonzo Bushman. This exceptional interrelationship of families has fostered an excellent system of family reunions, newsletters and cooperative genealogical research programs.