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Title: **John Smith, Jesse N Smith's Adopted Father**

Provenance:

Category: **Document**

Person: **Jesse Nathaniel Smith**

Date:

Steven Williams, descendant of Jesse N Smith, shared this today on Facebook... After JNS's father Silas Smith passed away in 1839 (from extreme circumstances coming out of the Missouri expulsion), hi

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After JNS's father Silas Smith passed away in 1839 (from extreme circumstances coming out of the Missouri expulsion), his mother Mary Aikens Smith was sealed to her husband's younger brother, John Smith (JNS Journal, p. 7).

John Smith was later set apart as the first Patriarch of the church and was the 1st stake president in the Salt Lake Valley and had arrived in Salt Lake valley with JNS and mother Mary on the 25th of September 1847. John Smith had a number of polygamous marriages and was the father to a large progeny.

Uncle John Smith gave JNS his first patriarchal blessing in 1845 (p. 9 JNS journal) and a second fatherly blessing in 1851 (P. 17 JNS journal). These blessings are worth reading.

In the first blessing he addresses Jesse as a young man without a father, in the second blessing he addresses Jesse as "a father". Jesse had apparently become like a son to him since 1845.

The 2nd blessing mentions that Jesse would excel in learning. The journal material just before the 2nd blessing shows that "Uncle John" wanted to help with the education of JNS but was unable to do so since Jesse had accepted the call from Brigham Young to help settle Parowan, Utah with his brother Silas.

Mother, Mary Aikens, chose to go with sons Jesse and Silas to Parowan where she died in 1877 at al-

most 80. I have been unable to locate any further information about the relationship of JNS with his stepfather after 1851.

Before 1851, the relationship of JNS with his adoptive father seems to have been reasonably close. In 1839, following the death of her husband Mary Smith and sons followed John Smith to settle across the river from Nauvoo in Lee County, Iowa and the family then followed him in his move to Zarahemla, Iowa (p.7).

John Smith baptized and confirmed JNS in 1843 on the same day John was sealed to JNS's mother Mary. In 1846 after John Smith had left with church authorities planning the exodus to Utah, JNS and family moved into John's Nauvoo home (p. 9 JNS journal). During the trek west, JNS and family traveled with John Smith and family and Jesse was responsible for the livestock.

At Salt Lake, the family joined with John Smith in building a cabin near the east gate of the South fort. (p.12) and Jesse continued as caretaker of the John Smith livestock. John Smith was called at this time to be stake president of the Salt Lake Valley at the same time that Brigham Young and the new First Presidency returned to Winter's Quarters to organize the emigration.

Through the early pages of the JNS journal it is easy to see a reasonably strong bond between Jesse N and his adoptive father John Smith. John Smith is important in our church history as the father of George A. Smith, member of the First Presidency under Brigham Young, as the grandfather of John Henry Smith, apostle and great grandfather

of George Albert Smith 8th president of our church.

I would be interested in any other material regarding the relationship of JNS with his adoptive father John Smith.