

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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Shown here (c. 1970) with his third wife, Jessie Evans Smith. They were married in 1938, and she was famous as a singer. Joseph Fielding Smith was the tenth President of the Church, serving in that position from 1970 to 1972.

ship. When President Smith was ninety-three, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley said, “I have never heard him say a mean or evil or unkind thing. . . . He speaks generously of those he discusses.” He repeatedly said, “I love my brethren,” and with regard to the wayward, he urged giving “them the benefit of the doubt; there are two sides to the story.” His counsel to bishops was similar: “If you make any mistakes in judgment, make them on the side of mercy.” He frequently financed missions, paid the hospital bills of the sick, and sent groceries to the needy. He always disciplined his children with love, avoiding physical punishment, preferring to look them in the eyes and say, “I wish my children would be good.” “No spanking or whipping,” said one daughter, “could accomplish what this kindly father did with love” (Joseph F. McConkie, pp. 71–90).

Joseph Fielding Smith became President of the Church on January 23, 1970, following the death of President David O. McKay. His two-and-

one-half-year tenure was marked by steady missionary growth; the dedication of the Ogden and Provo temples; some significant organizational restructuring, including reorganizations in the Church Sunday School system and the Church Department of Social Services; and a revamping of portions of the Church internal communication systems, which led to the consolidation of all general Church magazines into three.

After a long life of scholarship and influence, one of his most significant acts was his reaffirmation, as President of the Church, of the doctrines that he had taught throughout his apostolic ministry. “What I have taught and written in the past,” he said in the October general conference of 1970, “I would teach and write again under the same circumstances” (*CR*, Oct. 1970, p. 5). He died July 2, 1972, in Salt Lake City.

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## SMITH, LUCY MACK

Lucy Mack Smith (1775–1856) was the mother of the Prophet Joseph SMITH and his main biographer for the crucial formative years of the restored Church. A marked tenderness existed between the Smith parents and children, and Lucy lived near or in the Prophet’s household through hardships in New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. Mother and son maintained the strongest mutual respect throughout these years of change, sacrifice, and persecution.

Faith in God was central to Lucy Smith’s personality. When a young mother, she became critically ill and spent a night very near death, but a voice promised her life after she pleaded for the power to “bring up my children, and comfort the heart of my husband,” with a vow to serve God completely. More than forty years later, she publicly reviewed the result of her parental leadership

with her husband, Joseph SMITH, Sr. Of eleven children, nine reached maturity, and with typical intensity, Lucy said, "We raised them in the fear of God. . . . I presume there never were a family that were so obedient as mine" (MS conference minutes, Oct. 8, 1845, HDC).

Her father, Solomon Mack, was a dynamic venturer who showed courage and self-reliance in close combat in the French and Indian Wars and afterward as merchant, land developer, contractor, miller, seafarer, and farmer. Unsatisfied with the seeming meaninglessness of his way of life, he finally found God after severe sickness. He then published his concise biography—the saga of how God protected him in his wanderings and at the end showered his soul with love and insight. Lucy Mack Smith identified deeply with her mother, Lydia Gates, who came from the home of a prosperous Congregational deacon. Lydia used her schoolteaching skills in the home, creating what Solomon called an atmosphere of "piety, gentleness, and reflection" (Anderson, 1971, p. 27). All of the Mack children possessed mixtures of the daring enterprise of their father and the assertive piety of their mother. Lucy was true to this heritage of seeking light and then sharing it.

Lucy was born in Gilsum, New Hampshire, where town records enter her birthday as July 8, 1775, the year the American Revolution began. Her education included attending school there and at Montague, Massachusetts, supplemented by private instruction by her mother. Lucy Smith's speeches and writing reveal an intelligent believer who used English capably. In her late teens Lucy was also greatly influenced by the courageous deaths of her older sisters; each died in her early thirties, after testifying to personal revelations of the hereafter and of Christ's love.

Lucy's entrepreneur brother, Stephen Mack, took her to Tunbridge, Vermont, where she met her future husband, Joseph Smith, Sr. She evaluated his family as "worthy, respectable, amiable, and intelligent." To their marriage on January 24, 1796, Lucy brought a dowry of a thousand dollars, a gift of her brother and his business partner; her husband owned a farm of almost equal value. A huge exporting investment failed because of the dishonesty of their agent, and the couple used their total assets to pay the debt rather than default on merchandise obtained for their Vermont store. Their first twenty years of marriage were spent in neighboring Vermont and New Hampshire towns. They climbed back to prosperity through the

schoolteaching of Joseph Smith, Sr., assisted with farming and home industry. Yet setbacks came with agonizing sickness in the family in 1812–1813 and frozen crops in 1814–1816, which precipitated their move to Palmyra, New York.

Lucy and Joseph Smith, Sr., were active seekers. As a young, sensitive woman, Lucy sought the conversion that she heard preached in churches. As she "perused the Bible and prayed incessantly," Lucy concluded that the biblical church "was not like" any existing church. Thus, after a miraculous healing in early marriage, she asked a minister to baptize her without commitment to attend his denomination. Finding New England Presbyterianism wanting, she investigated Methodism, only to be opposed by her unaffiliated husband. In these years, he received periodic dreams promising future answers. And Lucy in turn dreamed of Joseph Smith, Sr., as a pliant tree; she concluded that he would yet receive the full truth from God.

Lucy Smith was a vigorous forty years of age when regional crop failure forced the family to the opening wheat land of western New York. Their move was evidently in 1816, and her husband preceded her, sending Lucy the means to bring a few goods and their eight children, ranging from eighteen-year old Alvin to the new baby, Don Carlos. Mother Smith showed independence in publicly dismissing her unprincipled teamster (who had been hired to help the family, but proved to be selfish and undependable). She also showed tender emotions in the reunion of "throwing myself and my children upon the care and affection of a tender husband and father" (Coray MS).

In the Palmyra area the family rebuilt financial security, only to have it slip away again amid the hostility of their neighbors to their son's revelations. Lucy first began to "replenish" her home furnishings by continuing "painting oil cloth coverings for tables, stands, etc." Like many new settlers, the Smiths signed a short-term contract to purchase about a hundred acres of uncleared land. Over several years the family cleared forty acres, built fences and outbuildings, kept up a coopering business, and ran farm operations for a large sugar maple harvest, orchard production, and the main wheat crop. These activities objectively contradict one of two charges in neighborhood affidavits that Lucy and her family were lazy and superstitious. The realities behind such accusations were poverty and a belief in the miraculous. Obvious attempts were made to discredit the new religion by denigrating its founders and their families.

Mother Smith's history admits that the family was accused of occult treasure searching, but it passes over the issue by stating the intense goal of their New York years: "Whilst we worked with our hands we endeavored to remember the service of [God] and the welfare of our souls" (Coray MS). In this context, she relates how the prayers of her son Joseph were answered. The Prophet does not suggest that he confided his FIRST VISION to his family, and his mother reports only that she had early knowledge that an angel later revealed the Book of Mormon. Lucy carefully describes that she handled the URIM AND THUMMIM and the ancient breastplate. Her conviction of the divinity of the Book of Mormon was total, as suggested by a letter to her brother in 1831: "I want you to think seriously of these things, for they are the truths of the living God" (Kirkham, p. 67).

For a time, Lucy affiliated with a Presbyterian church in Palmyra, though she was excommunicated for nonattendance the month before the LDS Church was organized. Her powerful faith in the young Church was expressed in her taking a large New York group to Ohio by canal boat to Buffalo and by steamer across a partially frozen Lake Erie in 1831. She braved cold weather and discouragement, leading in prayer, missionary work, and practical arrangements until again united with her husband and sons in upper Ohio. She then went to teach her Mack relatives in Detroit, converting Stephen Mack's widow, Temperance. Mother Smith endured two later migrations, one in the spring rains on the way to Missouri in 1838 and a move to Illinois in the wet snows of early 1839.

Joseph Smith, Sr., died in late 1840, a casualty of a decade of trauma and exposure. Shortly before he died, he blessed his children and expressed love for his "most singular" wife, promising her that her last days would be her best days. But other searing partings preceded the fulfillment of this promise of peace. Lucy early had lost two infant sons, and later came the sudden death of her oldest son, Alvin, during her New York days. She buried her husband in Illinois and, within the next four years, endured the deaths of four more sons—Samuel and Don Carlos in sickness and Joseph and Hyrum murdered by a mob.

"O God, why were my noble sons permitted to be martyred?" was her cry upon seeing their corpses (Anderson, 1977, p. 135). An inner voice assured her that divine purpose was accomplished in the tragedy. Lucy never lost her faith in God, in

the revelations to her son, and in the destiny of her family. She was cared for by Joseph and Emma Smith until 1844, by her daughter Lucy Millikin some years thereafter, and by Emma once more in her final years in Nauvoo. Feeble and unable to write, she impressed visitors with her spiritual and social vitality. She passed from life May 14, 1856, at nearly eighty-one.

For a time after 1844, Lucy Smith depended emotionally on her only surviving son. Yet William seems to have overused her name in his cause. In 1845 he sought to expand his patriarch's office, and John TAYLOR's journal records visions briefly circulated from Lucy about William's supposed authority to lead the Church. Perhaps William helped her write them, since the apostles who met with Lucy found her questioning whether they had "a correct copy." Taylor described her "good feelings" toward the Twelve (pp. 63–68). She and most of her sons' widows were in the first companies receiving higher ordinances in the Nauvoo Temple. She received WASHINGS AND ANOINTINGS on December 11, 1845, and the ENDOWMENT the following day (HC 7:542–44).

Lucy Smith gave a spirited talk before the October 1845 conference, expressing her need to stay with her children in Nauvoo but giving her blessing to the Twelve and their plans for the exodus: "I feel that the Lord will let Brother Brigham take the people away." She also said that her memoirs were complete: "I have got all in a history, and I want this people to be so good as to get it printed" (MS conference minutes, Oct. 8, 1845, HDC). This was dictated to Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, whose first narrative survives. Lucy's history was not printed until Orson PRATT obtained a copy and published it in England in 1853.

The first edition of Lucy's memoirs was recalled by Brigham Young. However, his goal was accuracy, not suppression, since he initiated a second edition. According to Wilford WOODRUFF's journal, the President charged the careful Woodruff and two Smith family members to "correct the errors in the History of Joseph Smith as published by Mother Smith, and then let it be published to the world" (Apr. 22, 1866).

Lucy Smith's history gives more than two hundred names in its various drafts, and hundreds of details. Nearly all of these individuals and episodes are confirmed by independent contemporary records. Astute John Taylor evaluated her capacity after talking with her about her history: "Though now quite an aged woman, the power of her mem-

ory is surprising; she is able to relate circumstances connected with the family, with great distinctness and accuracy" (p. 52). Beyond facts, her history burns with the dedication that made the events of the Restoration possible. She achieved religious greatness—as a mother and as a dynamic contributor to the infant church. Furthermore, her history is irreplaceable, judged by her expressed goal to give “the particulars of Joseph’s getting the plates, seeing the angels at first, and many other things which Joseph never wrote or published” (Lucy Smith to William Smith, Jan. 23, 1845, HDC).

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#### SMITH, MARY FIELDING

Mary Fielding Smith (1801–1852) has the unique distinction of being the mother of one President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Joseph F. SMITH) and the grandmother of another (Joseph Fielding SMITH).

Born on July 21, 1801, at Honidon, Bedfordshire, England, Mary Fielding was the sixth child of John Fielding and Rachel Ibbotson, staunch



Mary Fielding (1801–1852) married Hyrum Smith, elder brother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, following the death of his first wife. She was mother of Joseph F. Smith and the grandmother of Joseph Fielding Smith, the sixth and tenth presidents of the Church. A nineteenth-century portrait. Artist unknown.

Methodists. In 1834, Mary migrated to Toronto, Canada, where her brother and sister, Joseph and Mercy, had moved two years earlier. Nearby at Charleton, the three Fieldings were baptized into the Church in May 1836. The following year, Mary moved to KIRTLAND, OHIO.

Attractive and well educated, Mary became a live-in governess and teacher for various families in Kirtland. On December 24, 1837, Mary Fielding married the widower Hyrum SMITH, whose first wife had died while giving birth to their fifth child. Though reluctant to become a stepmother, Mary accepted this responsibility as the will of the Lord.