

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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Edited by  
Daniel H. Ludlow

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of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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SYDNEY SMITH REYNOLDS

## SMITH FAMILY ANCESTORS

Five generations of the Prophet Joseph SMITH's ancestors lived in Topsfield, Massachusetts. The first was his great-grandfather's grandfather, Robert Smith, who came from England to Boston in 1638. He married Mary French in 1659 at Topsfield. They were the parents of ten children. When Robert died at Boxfield, Massachusetts, in 1693, he left an estate valued at the comparatively large amount of 189 pounds. Robert and Mary's son Samuel was born in 1666. He was listed on the town and county records as a "gentleman" and apparently held public office. He married Rebecca Curtis, and the third of their nine children, also named Samuel, was born in 1714.

Samuel Smith, Jr., was a distinguished community leader and supporter of the American War of Independence. He served six terms in the Massachusetts state legislature and twelve as a town selectman. He was chairman of the Tea Committee at Topsfield in 1773, which sustained the action of the Boston Tea Party, and he was elected to the First Provincial Congress in Massachusetts in 1774. Samuel married Priscilla Gould, a descendant of Zaccheus Gould, the founder of Topsfield.

Asael Smith, the Prophet Joseph Smith's grandfather, was born to this couple in 1744. His mother died just six months after he was born. Asael married Mary Duty at Topsfield in 1767. Their son Joseph SMITH, Sr., was born in Topsfield in 1771. They later moved to New Hampshire. Asael served in the Revolutionary War, following which he was town clerk of Derryfield, New Hampshire, from 1779 until 1786. When his father died, Asael returned to Topsfield at great personal sacrifice and worked for five years to liquidate his father's debts. In 1791 Asael left Topsfield to make a new life, first in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and

then that same year in Vermont. He continued his trade as a cooper, settling in Tunbridge, Vermont, where he served as selectman, grand juror, and surveyor of highways. Over the years, he held nearly every public office in Tunbridge.

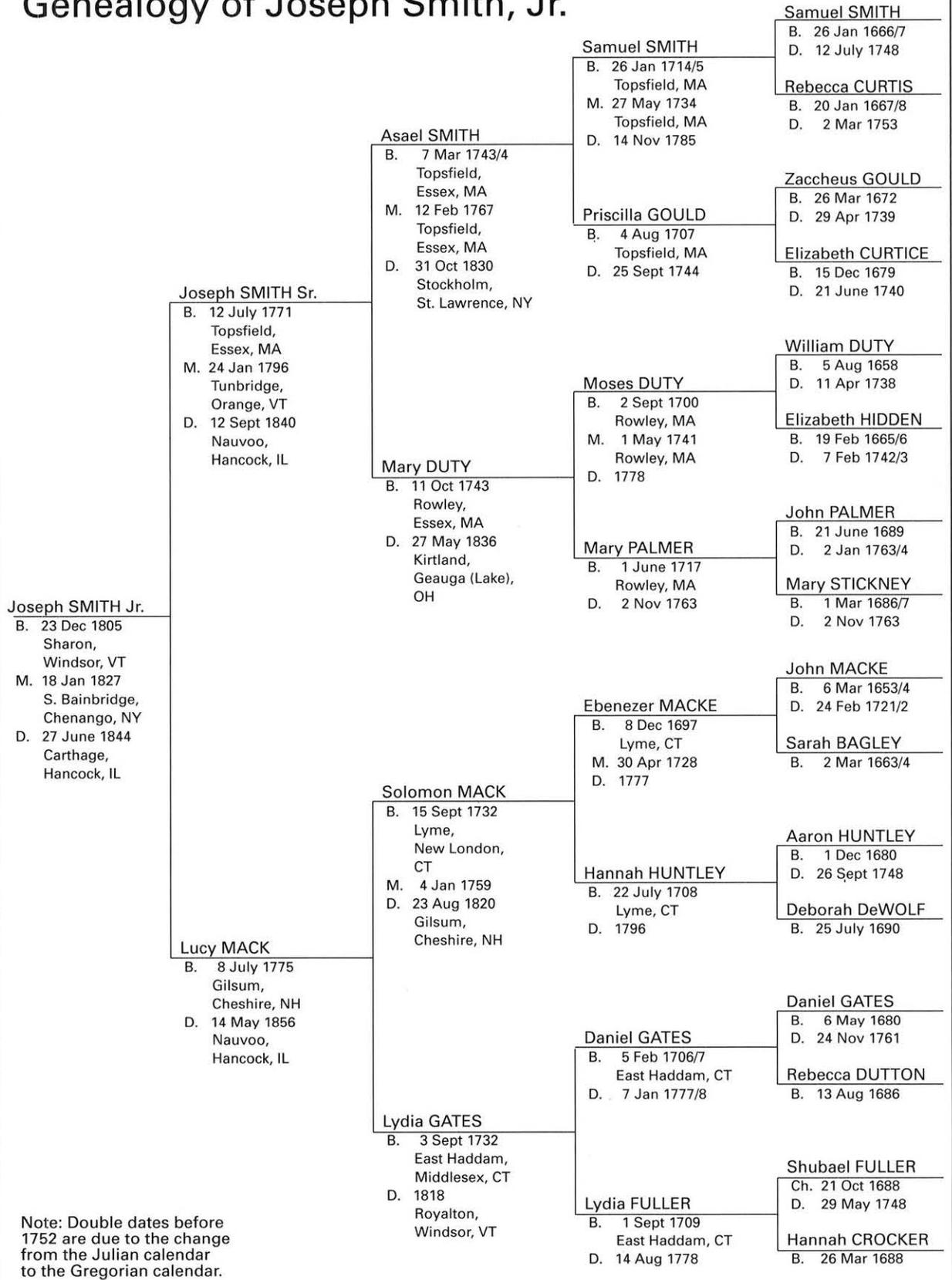
Although Asael believed in a personal God and Savior, he came to oppose the established churches. He served as moderator of a meeting that established one of the early Universalist societies in Vermont in 1797. He always subscribed to the Universalist doctrine that the atonement of Christ was sufficient to redeem all men. Despite this departure from traditional New England orthodoxy, his writings show him to have been a man of warm Christian faith. Asael said that he felt that God intended to raise a branch of his family to be of great benefit to mankind (R. L. Anderson, p. 112).

The maternal ancestors of the Prophet Joseph Smith were named Mack(e). John Macke was born in 1653 at Inverness, Scotland, a descendant of a line of clergymen. He emigrated to Salisbury, Massachusetts, in 1669, and then on to Lyme, Connecticut. His son Ebenezer inherited his father's large estate in Lyme and married Hannah Huntley. For a while Ebenezer was able to keep his family in good style, but their prosperity was short-lived. Their son Solomon, born in 1732, was apprenticed to a neighboring farmer in Lyme at the age of four. Solomon later reported that he was treated as a slave and never given instruction in religion or taught to read and write, which was a great hardship to him in later life.

In 1759 Solomon Mack married Lydia Gates, a young schoolteacher and a member of the Congregational church. She was well educated and from a well-to-do religious family. Although Solomon and Lydia came from contrasting backgrounds, theirs was an enduring marriage. Lydia took charge of both the secular and religious education of their eight children. They pioneered the upper Connecticut River Valley and settled Marlow, New Hampshire. They later moved to Gilsum, New Hampshire, where the Prophet Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack, was born in 1775 (*see* SMITH, LUCY MACK).

During the American Revolution, Solomon helped with the manufacture of gunpowder, served in an artillery company, and shipped aboard a privateer. Although he worked hard as a merchant, land developer, shipmaster, mill opera-

# Genealogy of Joseph Smith, Jr.



Note: Double dates before 1752 are due to the change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar.

tor, and farmer, fortune did not favor him, and accidents, hardships, and financial reverses beset him most of his life.

Solomon Mack was not outwardly religious, though he was a God-fearing and good-hearted man. He showed little inclination toward scripture reading or churchgoing until 1810, when rheumatism forced him to reassess his values. "After this I determined to follow phantoms no longer, but devote the rest of my life to the service of God and my family" (quoted in Smith, pp. 7–8). That winter, he read the Bible and prayed earnestly, eventually finding peace of soul and mind. From then on until his death in 1820, Solomon spent much of his time telling others of his conversion and admonishing them to serve the Lord. He wrote an autobiography in the hope that others would not become enamored with the desire for material gain as he had. He enthusiastically shared his religious conviction with his grandchildren, among whom was young Joseph Smith, Jr. Solomon Mack died in 1820, three weeks before his eighty-eighth birthday and shortly after his grandson's remarkable FIRST VISION of the Father and the Son.

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A. GARY ANDERSON

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## SMOOT HEARINGS

Before seating senator-elect Reed Smoot, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the U.S. Senate conducted lengthy hearings into his alleged involvement in PLURAL MARRIAGE and into the policy and government of the Church. Few events have had greater impact on the Church and its public image than the highly publicized Smoot Hearings of 1903–1907.

The 1890s had seen the Church pass through some of its most challenging times, including the

tumultuous political fight for Utah statehood following the MANIFESTO OF 1890 (officially curtailing new plural marriages) and presidential amnesty for Church officers who had practiced POLYGAMY, initiating the process of accommodation and acculturation to mainstream America. Euphoria, however, was short-lived.

The election to the U.S. Senate of Reed Smoot, a highly visible Church leader, unleashed intense anti-Mormon sentiment, which had subsided after statehood. Within a year of his election, more than 3,100 petitions arrived in Washington, D.C., protesting his seating and creating a furor that forced the Senate to examine the case. The prosecution focused on two issues: Smoot's alleged polygamy and his expected allegiance to the Church and its ruling hierarchy, which, it was claimed, would make it impossible for him to execute his oath as a United States senator. Although the proceedings focused on senator-elect Smoot, it soon became apparent that it was the Church that was on trial.

The case opened with Church leaders subpoenaed to testify as to the power the Church exerted over its members in general and over General Authorities in particular. Investigators probed into past and present polygamous relationships of leaders and lay members alike. They raised questions on points of doctrine that affected how Church members and their leaders interacted with American society at large.

Some of the testimony revealed situations and circumstances that put the Church in an unfavorable light. President Joseph F. SMITH received especially harsh treatment in cross-examination. Some members of the Quorum of the Twelve refused to testify, which increased the hostility of senators already concerned about the Church's motives and conduct. Faced with intense pressure, Church leaders accepted the resignations of apostles Matthias Cowley and John W. Taylor, who were rumored to have performed plural marriages after the Manifesto. To further evidence good faith, in the annual April conference of 1904 President Smith issued a "Second Manifesto" that added ecclesiastical teeth to the Manifesto of 1890. Excommunication would now follow for those who refused to relinquish the practice of plural marriage.

Despite some damaging testimony, Senator Smoot gradually won support for three reasons. First, his character was found to be above re-