
John Johnson Home

Hiram, Ohio D&C 1: Introduction

The Johnson home is a New England-style farmhouse built in 1828 and the centerpiece of John Johnson's prosperous farmstead—a collection of buildings, fields, gardens, and fences. The exterior of the home is painted white. The interior of the home has detailed woodwork, bold colors, and ornate painting schemes that were fashionable in the era but out of reach for the average farmer. Outbuildings on the farmstead are painted red—red being a cheaper paint.

Joseph Smith lived in the John Johnson Farmhouse in Hiram, Ohio, from September 11, 1831, to March 1832. During his seven-month residency, he received more recorded revelations in that home than in any other location—twenty revelations recorded and sixteen published as complete sections of the Doctrine and Covenants, including the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants.

To better accommodate the needs of the Prophet Joseph Smith and those wishing to hear his sermons, shortly after his September arrival in 1832, the Johnsons built a log and brush bowery in the front yard of their home. The Prophet Joseph and other Church leaders held meetings in the bowery if weather permitted. One who attended a meeting in the bowery was Lorenzo Snow, who wrote,

It was rumored that the Prophet was holding a meeting in Hiram, Portage county, Ohio, about two miles from my father's home. Having heard many stories about him, my curiosity was considerably aroused and I thought I would take advantage of this opportunity to see and hear him. Accordingly, in company with some of the members of my father's family, I went to Hiram. When we reached there the people were already assembled in a small bowery; there were about one hundred and fifty to two hundred people present. The meeting had

already commenced and Joseph Smith was standing in the door of Father Johnson's house, looking into the bowery and addressing the people. I had a critical examination as to his appearance, his dress, and his manner as I heard him speak. His remarks were confined principally to his own experiences, especially the visitation of the angel, giving a strong and powerful testimony in regard to these marvelous manifestations. At first he seemed a little diffident and spoke in rather a low voice, but as he proceeded he became very strong and powerful, and seemed to affect the whole audience with the feeling that he was honest and sincere. It certainly influenced me in this way and made impressions upon me that remain until the present day."¹

The Johnson farmstead was the first historic property in Ohio acquired by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The purchase was negotiated in 1956 by Wilford Wood, a member of the Church Historic Sites Committee. After the Johnson home was remodeled to its 1830s appearance, the site was dedicated on October 28, 2001, by President Gordon B. Hinckley. At the dedicatory service President Hinckley said, "The power of God that was expressed in that farmhouse . . . has gone over the earth . . . and we have scarcely seen the beginning of it. So long as this Church lasts . . . so long as its history is written and known, the John Johnson home will have a prominent place in that history."²

¹ Lorenzo Snow, "Reminiscences of the Prophet Joseph Smith," 1, as quoted in *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2012), 269.

² Shaun D. Stahle, "John Johnson Home Will Have a Place in History," *LDS Church News*, November 2, 2001.