



## Joseph F. Smith's Encouragement of His Brother, Patriarch John Smith

A good argument could be made that no General Authority in the history of the Church has served as long in a presiding position and is yet as almost entirely forgotten as John Smith. He was the Church's Presiding Patriarch for fifty-six years; he gave over twenty thousand patriarchal blessings; he was sustained in general conference as a prophet, seer, and revelator; and yet, in some recent histories, it is occasionally difficult to even find John's name listed among Hyrum Smith's children.<sup>1</sup>

Part of this anonymity stems undoubtedly from the fact that there has not been an active Patriarch to the Church since 1979, when Eldred G. Smith (John Smith's great-grandson) was given emeritus status.<sup>2</sup> The passage of the thirty-plus years since then has made that office and its history more and more obscure. Part of this anonymity also stems from the reality that more attention is directed to John Smith's younger brother, Joseph F. Smith—and to be sure, no one would say that such attention is misdirected, considering Joseph F. Smith's pivotal importance in Latter-day Saint history and thinking. Yet there is also a sense that part of John Smith's anonymity reflects, as a handful of historians have recently suggested, a

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legacy of ambivalence and even discomfort about the Presiding Patriarch’s proper place in the Church’s hierarchy in general, and John Smith’s role in that office in particular.<sup>3</sup> (He was, after all, publicly chastised by the prophet during general conference!) This paper seeks to address both that anonymity and that ambivalence.

Of course, for Latter-day Saints living at the turn of the twentieth century, Patriarch John Smith and his relation to President Joseph F. Smith were well known—and invited obvious comparisons to an earlier prophet and patriarch. In February 1902, for example, Elder Rudger Clawson had just visited the Oneida (Idaho) Stake conference, and he was giving a report of the visit to his fellow Apostles in their weekly Thursday temple meeting with the First Presidency. Elder Clawson reported that he saw the following written “on a blackboard in the room where the conference was assembled”:

**Coincidence**

1844

Joseph Smith	(brothers)	Hyrum Smith
Prophet		Patriarch
Brigham Young		
President of the Twelve Apostles		

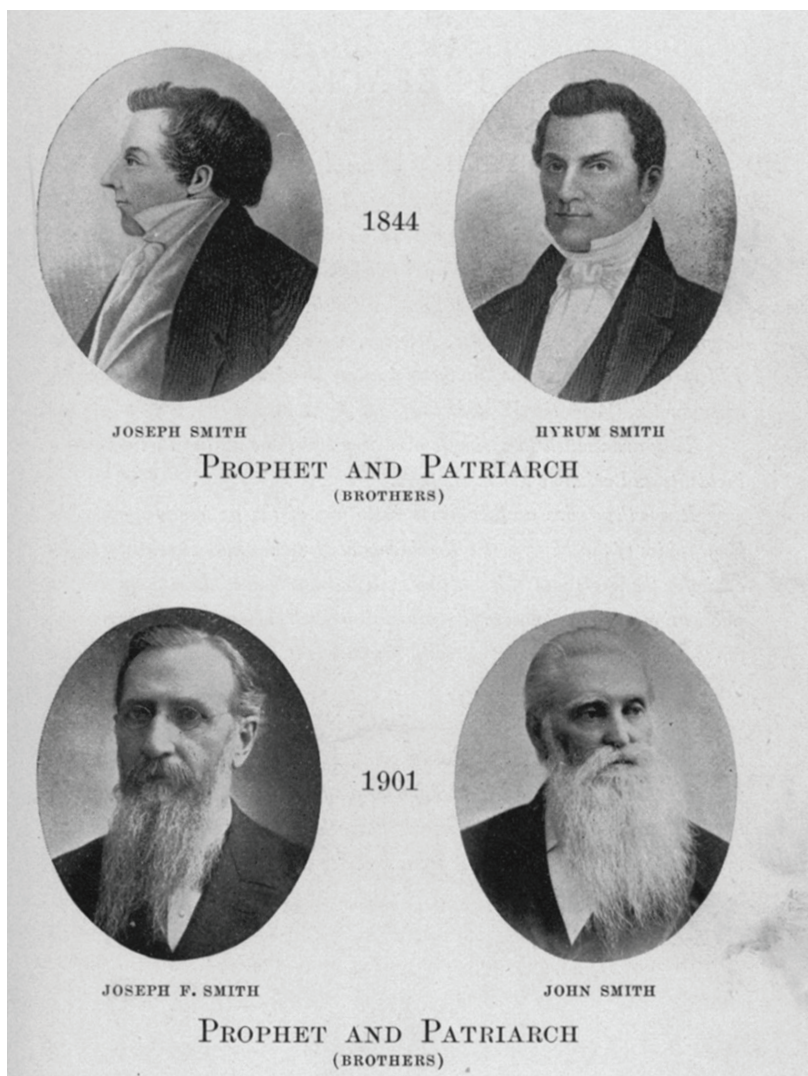
1902

Joseph F. Smith	(brothers)	John Smith
Prophet		Patriarch
Brigham Young [Jr.]		
President of the Twelve Apostles <sup>4</sup>		

While the parallels of these younger brothers/older brothers prompted the chalkboard diagram in Idaho, the contention here is that perhaps a better model for understanding President Joseph F. Smith’s relationship with his older brother John might be in the way that Joseph Smith Jr. treated Joseph Smith Sr.’s calling as Patriarch—Joseph Smith Jr. sought to elevate the office and office holder. There are important things to be considered here not only about an oft-forgotten John Smith but also about Joseph F. Smith’s attitude toward his brother and his brother’s office—and these considerations have broader implications related to the order of the Church.

## **A Biography of Peaks and Valleys**

Long before sharing the stand at general conference, the two brothers shared heart-break. John Smith was Hyrum's oldest son, the third child born to Hyrum and his



*Taken from the introductory pages of Matthias F. Cowley, Prophets and Patriarchs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Chattanooga, TN: Ben E. Rich, 1902).*

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first wife, Jerusha.<sup>5</sup> John was barely five when his mother died; six when his new step-mother, Mary Fielding Smith, gave birth to his younger brother Joseph F.; eleven when his father was killed. As a young teenager, he nursed Colonel Thomas L. Kane for two weeks when Colonel Kane was sick at Winter Quarters. On the night of his sixteenth birthday—September 22, 1848—John Smith “drove five wagons down Big Mountain.” In fact, “it was dark long before he got to camp with the last wagon. On the way one wheel of his wagon ran into a tree which was about fifteen inches through. He had to lie on his back and chop the tree down with a dull ax before he could go any further.”<sup>6</sup>

**Hyrum Smith’s Children**

Hyrum married Jerusha Barden on November 2, 1826. Their children are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lovina Smith Walker, 1827–76</li><li>• Mary Smith, 1829–32</li><li>• John Smith, 1832–1911</li><li>• Hyrum Smith, 1834–41</li><li>• Jerusha Smith Peirce, 1836–1912</li><li>• Sarah Smith Griffin, 1837–76</li></ul> Jerusha Barden Smith died on October 13, 1837, eleven days after Sarah was born.	Hyrum married Mary Fielding on December 24, 1837. Their children are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joseph F. Smith, 1838–1918</li><li>• Martha Ann Smith Harris, 1841–1923</li></ul> Mary Fielding Smith died on September 21, 1852.
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After arriving in Utah, John helped in building the family’s home, and then managed the family’s farm in Sugarhouse. In the spring of 1850, he “was enrolled in a company of horsemen, called the Battalion of Life Guards organized for the purpose of standing guard . . . to protect from the marauding Indians, who were hostile at the time. For about ten years he was compelled to keep on hand a saddle horse and other equipment for that purpose.”<sup>7</sup>

September 21, 1852—the day before John’s twentieth birthday—Mary Fielding Smith passed away after a two-month illness. For Joseph F. (six years younger than John), his mother’s death was, understandably, a crushing blow.<sup>8</sup> John’s own writings also hint at how difficult this loss was for him. It is obvious that he did not think of Mary as a stepmother; in his handwritten autobiography, he originally wrote that September 21 was the day of “the death of my mother,” and then there appears, as an insertion added above the text, the word

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“step.”<sup>9</sup> An even stronger indicator is found in a letter that John sent to his missionary brother in 1856, in which he refers to “the death of our mother.”<sup>10</sup>

Mary's death meant that John was thus left “to provide for a family of eight” by virtue of his station as the oldest son, but also because “Brother Brigham preached a surmon and he at that time appointed [John] gardian [*sic*] over the family.”<sup>11</sup>

Three years later, in 1855, President Brigham Young expanded that familial appointment. As the oldest male descendant of Joseph Smith Sr. in the Church, it was John Smith's right and responsibility to fill the office of Church Patriarch. John became the Church's fifth Patriarch and the fourth in the line of Joseph Smith Sr.<sup>12</sup> Brigham Young anticipated that some in the Church might have thought that the twenty-two-year-old John was too young; President Young's feeling was that “[John] can seal up a Patriarchal blessing upon the heads of the people better than any old man in the church.” President Jedediah M. Grant likewise expressed confidence in John, saying that he “would rather have a young man to fill this office than an old man who is filled with the leaven of sectarianism.” Significantly, Brigham Young said, in ordaining John, that he was conferring on John the “keys” which John's father, Hyrum, “would have conferred . . . on [him] if he had been alive.”<sup>13</sup>

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

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1. **Joseph Smith Sr.**—1833–40
2. **Hyrum Smith**—1841–44
3. William Smith—1845  
\*Asael Smith (brother to Joseph Smith Sr.), unofficial Patriarch, 1845–46
4. John Smith<sub>1</sub> (brother to Joseph Smith Sr.)—1847–54
5. **John Smith**<sub>2</sub> (son of Hyrum Smith)—1855–1911
6. **Hyrum Gibbs Smith** (grandson of John Smith<sub>2</sub>)—1912–32  
\*Nicholas G. Smith (son of John Henry Smith [Apostle], who was the son of George A. Smith [Apostle], who was the son of John Smith<sub>1</sub>), unofficial Patriarch, 1932–37  
\*George F. Richards (Apostle), Acting Patriarch, 1937–42
7. Joseph F. Smith II (son of Hyrum Mack Smith [apostle], who was the son of President Joseph F. Smith, who was the son of Hyrum Smith)—1942–46
8. **Eldred G. Smith** (son of Hyrum Gibbs Smith)—1947–79  
*In October 1979, Eldred G. Smith was designated Patriarch Emeritus.*

*Bold typeface indicates the Joseph Smith Sr.–Hyrum Smith–John Smith line.  
Based on “Appendix B” in Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith, Lost Legacy:  
The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch (Urbana and Chicago: University of  
Illinois Press, 1996).*

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After serving more than seven years as Patriarch, John was called on a mission to Denmark in 1862. He became fluent in Danish—on one occasion he wrote that he went seventeen days without speaking English except to show the locals what English sounded like, or to pray when non-Danish speakers were present.<sup>14</sup> He also was a lifelong attendee at reunions and celebrations of the Scandinavian Saints in Utah. He cared for his missionary comrades when they were ill. On the return trip, he was elected president of the company of Saints on the ship *Monarch of the Sea* and then captain of a returning wagon train.<sup>15</sup>

Yet, despite what would seem to be a commendable record of service typical of Church leaders in those pioneer times, in October 1875, after two decades as Patriarch to the Church, the First Presidency and the Twelve voted to remove John Smith from office and replace him with his brother, Joseph F. As Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal, that decision was tabled only after Joseph F. and John together pled with Brigham Young to give John an additional six months of probation.<sup>16</sup> He never was removed from office, yet over the years John Smith was admonished by Church leaders in public and in private settings.

In 1871, for example, Joseph F. Smith, then a young Apostle, recorded in his diary an account of a Kaysville, Utah, conference where he “said a few words about patriarchal blessings, and admonished John to forsake his follies, the people might seek him for blessings rather than he seek the people to bless them.” Then, in the hours following that admonition, Joseph F. “wrote for [John]” as he “blessed six persons.”<sup>17</sup> In an even stronger show of disapproval, President Wilford Woodruff rebuked Patriarch Smith from the pulpit of an 1894 general conference, suggesting that either John Smith change his ways or else he had “better resign.”<sup>18</sup>

In terms of John’s personal morality and rectitude, three basic issues popped up in these periodic complaints about John’s fitness to serve: first, John’s closeness to his Smith cousins in the Reorganized Latter Day Saint movement; second, his inconsistent commitment to the actual practice of plural marriage; and third, his delayed personal adherence to the proscriptions of the Word of Wisdom. So troubling were these issues to John’s brother that in 1883, Joseph F. Smith told his colleagues in the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency that he did not feel that John was worthy to be included in their Salt Lake School of the Prophets meetings—and he wondered if that should also be taken as a sign that John was not worthy to continue as Patriarch either.<sup>19</sup>

### **His Brother's Presidency— The Implications of Greater Prominence**

Considering all of this uncertainty (and even displeasure) surrounding Elder John Smith, what is to be made of the fact that on October 17, 1901, President Joseph F. Smith invited his brother not only to attend the first weekly meeting of the Twelve over which Joseph F. now presided (after the death of President Lorenzo Snow) but also to act as voice in setting apart Joseph F. Smith as President of the Church? This was an unprecedented ordination in the history of the Presidents of the Church.<sup>20</sup> What is to be made of the fact that John Smith would thereafter be a regular participant in those weekly temple meetings? Or that, beginning in general conference in October 1902, John Smith's name, as Church Patriarch, would be included in the group sustained as "prophets, seers, and revelators"?<sup>21</sup> Or in the fact that one month after becoming Church President, Joseph F. Smith instructed that Patriarch John Smith was to be included in the General Authority schedule to visit the Church's stakes?<sup>22</sup>

Only two decades after questioning his brother's fitness for his presiding role—and only two decades after decisively excluding his brother from a meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve—Joseph F. Smith repeatedly instituted measures to enlarge his brother's hierarchical and public profile. What does this apparent about-face signal?

The first suggestion here is that this seemed to signal something different in Joseph F. Smith's mind than it did in the minds of some of his brethren in the Twelve. To some of the Apostles, these overtures to increase the stature of the Church Patriarch raised potentially confusing issues about the order of succession. The full story is larger than the confines of this paper, and it has been treated thoroughly in other places, most notably in Irene Bates and Gary Smith's book, *Lost Legacy*, and in Michael Quinn's *The Mormon Hierarchy*. In a November 1901 special conference, when President Smith proposed that the Patriarch be sustained in general conference before the Twelve, or even before the First Presidency, some of his colleagues worried that this would muddle the issue of seniority and authority.<sup>23</sup> It is understandable that there were periodic back-and-forths as to whether the Church's Patriarch was a presiding patriarch—over a quorum of patriarchs, for example—or simply the Patriarch to the Church. In 1979, when Elder Eldred G. Smith (the last Church Patriarch



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and John Smith's great-grandson) was given emeritus status, his title had been Patriarch to the Church. But during Joseph F. Smith's administration (and at various times in earlier administrations), John Smith was clearly identified as the Presiding Patriarch.<sup>24</sup> Without question, there are broader issues involved in the inherent conflicts between what could seem like parallel lines of authority, when one line is hereditary and lineal and the other is based on selection and seniority. It is a conflict, as Irene Bates and Gary Smith have written, between "familial charisma" and organizational or "office charisma."<sup>25</sup> One needed only to raise the specter of a William Smith to highlight the difficulty in placing too much authority in a hereditary office.

Joseph F. Smith apparently did not push his proposal to change the sustaining order; the only change to the sustaining, as mentioned earlier, was to include the Patriarch in the group sustained as "prophets, seers, and revelators."<sup>26</sup> Importantly, there is reasonable evidence to suggest that succession was not President Smith's intention at all. When he discussed apostolic succession, he never included the office of Patriarch in that discussion.<sup>27</sup> When he proposed in the November 1901 special conference that the Patriarch be given priority when Church authorities were sustained, he explicitly stated that he wanted to follow "the law of the Church in relation to the *presentation* of the authorities of the Holy Priesthood as they were established in the Church [D&C 124:123–24], and from which I feel that we have no right to depart."<sup>28</sup> And he clearly authorized the Twelve with selecting and commissioning John Smith's successor in 1911, a strong signal of the Apostles' preeminence, for it was the "duty of the Twelve to look after these evangelical matters."<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, the proposition here (and this is admittedly a proposition based on a particular reading of the sources) is that President Joseph F. Smith's approach to his brother and his brother's office seems to represent a concrete application of President Smith's understanding of, and teachings about, the patriarchal order of the priesthood. Looking at it this way, his attention to the Church Patriarch shows ties to the past as well as implications for the future: it harked back to patriarchal precedents in his own family line, and it also suggested principles that have manifested themselves even in the Church's most recent handbook. For President Joseph F. Smith, the stature of a patriarch—whether the Patriarch to the Church or the patriarch in the home—was uniquely important, and because of that, it called for a unique type of deference and honor. Instead of being concerned with



the Patriarch's place in the order of apostolic seniority, it seems that Joseph F. Smith's approach is better understood as a recognition that the hereditary nature of the office of Church Patriarch, this father to the Church, deserved respect precisely because it was different than other Church offices.

Only four months after becoming Church President, Joseph F. Smith wrote this: "The patriarchal order is of divine origin and will continue throughout time and eternity." He then spoke about the presiding authority that a father held in his own home, even if Apostles or stake presidents or bishops were also visiting in that home.<sup>30</sup> Significantly, in his discussion of different priesthood offices in the Church, President Smith explained that, first and foremost, patriarchs "are fathers."<sup>31</sup> This ties these teachings together: "This patriarchal order has its divine spirit and purpose, and those who disregard it under one pretext or another are out of harmony with the spirit of God's laws as they are ordained for recognition in the home. It is not merely a question of who is perhaps the best qualified. Neither is it wholly a question of who is living the most worthy life. It is a question largely of law and order, and its importance is seen often from the fact that the authority remains and is respected long after a man is really unworthy to exercise it."<sup>32</sup>

Now, obviously, this could be pushed too far. Worthiness did matter to President Smith, and when John Smith passed away in 1911, Joseph F. Smith instructed the Apostles "to go and talk personally with John's family, not with a view to selecting any one member of his family unless it be ascertained that he is worthy to act; and should it be found that neither of John's sons is capable and worthy for this position, it may be possible, President Smith said, that one of his grandsons may be found worthy and capable."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Hyrum Gibbs Smith, John's grandson, was ordained the next Presiding Patriarch of the Church instead of John's oldest son (and Hyrum Gibbs Smith's father), Hyrum Fisher Smith.<sup>34</sup>

### **Reorganite Relatives, Plural Marriage, the Word of Wisdom, and Reticence**

There are good reasons for modern readers to be cautious about assuming too quickly that John was not essentially living a "worthy" life, based on the standards of the day. Because of those standards, the worthiness questions that swirled around John Smith—Reorganite relatives, plural marriage, Word of Wisdom—deserve further comment, especially since by 1901, and because of

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various circumstances, those questions seemed to be largely resolved—or at least less troublesome. Finally, and even more significant here, it also seems that some of John Smith’s General Authority colleagues complained most of all that John was not really a *Presiding Patriarch*—that is, he did not actively magnify a leadership role. It is in response to that deficiency that Joseph F. Smith’s actions perhaps make the most sense.

First, the concern about the cousins of the Reorganization: In 1864, Joseph F. wrote to his brother in Denmark and informed him that some at home called him a “Josephite.” John replied that it was “no new thing” because his wife Hellen “wrote the same” six months earlier. But what is most interesting about John’s response letter is that the discussion of his being a Josephite is preceded by John’s pleas for Joseph F. to help their brother-in-law, Lorin Walker; both John and Joseph F. feared Lorin was leaning toward the Reorganized Church. Lorin was the husband of John’s older sister Lovina, and the Walkers had stayed first in Illinois until 1856, and then Florence, Nebraska, until 1860, so they had experienced a greater exposure to much of the Reorganization movement. What is most striking about this letter is what John wrote to Joseph about helping Lorin: “I beleave him to be an honets man but he lacks firmness or resolution. . . . If I were where I could see him . . . every month or two I could keep him straight, I hope you will take him by the hand and talk with him. . . . I should very much dislik to have them go away now I have been to the trouble of getting them up there.”<sup>35</sup> Lorin and Lovina did stay in Utah—and with the LDS Church.

There is no question that John maintained lifelong relationships with his Illinois cousins—and such bonds would seem, in many ways, only natural and expected. He was just six weeks older than Joseph Smith III; both were thirteen when John left Nauvoo. But those close family ties were also strained by the diverging trajectories of post-Martyrdom Mormonism—the subsequent competition for the loyalty of the Saints meant that those ties were subjected to an “aiding and abetting the enemy” type of scrutiny.<sup>36</sup>

The strength of John’s language in various pieces of correspondence with his relatives says much about the strength of his convictions, convictions that he expressed soon after the exodus from Nauvoo. Joseph Smith III sent a letter to his cousin John in the spring of 1848. From the text of Joseph III’s letter, it can be inferred that John had recently written to Joseph III, trying to persuade him to join their imminent westward march. Apparently, John had suggested that Joseph

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III was being unduly influenced by other people because Joseph III lashed out at the thought that he “would condise[n]d [*sic*] to be dictated by any person what [he] shall write and what [he] shall not write.” Joseph III also revealed that John expected “largely upon helping to roll on the great work in the track of [their] fathers,” and had obviously pled with his cousin and friend to join that work. Even in that earliest letter, Joseph III brought up the issue of plural marriage (he called it “spiritual wifery”) and adamantly denied that either of their fathers “upheld such doctrines in public or practised them in private.”<sup>37</sup> It is apparent that even for these teenaged boys, there was no mistaking the chief issue that divided their respective interpretations of their fathers’ religion. John chose to go west.

Another vignette in this ongoing discussion took place in 1860. John, while in the East to help bring Lovina’s family to Utah, visited Nauvoo and all of his relatives. This visit took place just a few months before Joseph III was appointed president of the Reorganization, and John was on the westward trail when he received word that the appointment was going to take place. In no uncertain terms, he sent a letter back to Nauvoo, urging his cousin to disassociate himself with a group that John feared would “make a tool of [Joseph] to carry out there schemes that they may get gain.” He plainly stated, “As for my part I cannot sanction any such thing.”<sup>38</sup> The letter reached Joseph after the action had already been taken, and therefore did not have its desired effect. But the letter did (and does) have the effect of speaking to John’s loyalties and sympathies.

After that 1860 visit, John wrote about Nauvoo in a letter to his brother, since Joseph F., on his way to England, was planning to pass through that city. This brief note provides the interesting insight that John considered “the Prophet’s family . . . basically still Mormons except for their rejection of polygamy.”<sup>39</sup>

Any lingering doubts about John’s commitment to the “Utah” church go unsupported in his mission correspondence. In no fewer than four consecutive letters to his brother Joseph F., John mentioned their cousin Solomon Mack in New Hampshire. Since Joseph F. would return home from England before John would return from Denmark, John requested that Joseph “go and see him when you get to New York,” or at least “write to cousin Mack and punch him.”<sup>40</sup> John wished he could “tak [*sic*] the business in my own hands . . . and bundle them up and push off in a hurry” on the return trip to Salt Lake City.<sup>41</sup> The concern evident in his repeated inquiries about this branch of the family gives a journal entry at the end of John’s mission an even greater air of sadness: “I received a letter

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from Solomon Mack and his wife. . . . He wished he could go with me to Zion but his wife did not wish to go to Zion. She said that she had here [*sic*] reasons but would not tell them.”<sup>42</sup>

Similar attention was given to the cousins in Colchester, Illinois. John had visited them sometime before his mission, and wrote to his brother that he wished Joseph F. would try and take their cousin “Don CS Millikin home with you next summer.” In a very telling passage, John confided that he is “afraid that Cousin Joseph will get him to be baptised in there church if someone does not interfere.”<sup>43</sup> Clearly, as Irene Bates and Gary Smith write, John’s “friendship with his Reorganized Church cousins . . . did not alter John’s commitment to the Utah church.”<sup>44</sup>

John Smith had cast his lot for good with Brigham Young and his successors. Yet giving his loyalty to the so-called “Brighamite” Church with its principle of plural marriage did not, of course, mean that practicing that principle would come easily for him—and there are indications that it did not. In 1883, Joseph F. Smith complained to his apostolic colleagues that one of his concerns with his older brother’s behavior was that John “lived entirely with one [wife],” even though he had married a second wife in 1857 at the encouragement of Brigham Young.<sup>45</sup> John’s first wife, Hellen, wrote to Joseph F. about the inner turmoil she confronted when John married Nancy Melissa Lemmon. She said, “Dear Joseph it was a trial to me but thank the Lord it is over with. . . . I care not how many he gits now, the ice is broke as the old saing is, the more the greater glory.”<sup>46</sup>

The understandable emotional toll this marriage took on Hellen is evident in a letter she wrote to John three months after his second marriage: “Talk about me apostatizing, God forgive me for I am a later day saint, but the Lord knows that I am know polygamist, and with the help of the Lord I will have nothing to do with it, can you understand that.” In these and other letters, Hellen’s strong will comes through, as does her love and loyalty to her husband, despite the difficulties of plural marriage. The poignant ups-and-downs that must have been a part of daily life come through too, in a letter from John replying to Hellen’s suggestion that he “get two more wives when [he gets] home,” but “on [her] terms.” John’s telling reply was, “I know that your generous hart is ever ready to do me good but for the present allow me to say that I have wives enough.”<sup>47</sup> John and his second wife, Melissa, had one son, but that son died when he was only nine years old—and Melissa did receive financial support from the living allowance

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that came to John Smith because he was a General Authority.<sup>48</sup> With the hindsight that history affords, there is something to be admired even in these apparently halting efforts to live one's faith in the face of moments of heart-rending anguish—and there is something to be said in the fact that John, and Hellen, still devoted their lives to his service in the Church. And it seems likely that because of the Manifesto of 1890, the complexities of John's commitment to plural marriage largely, and circumstantially, faded into the background.

The most glaring of John's "follies," at least in terms of public notice, was his apparent laxness toward the standards of the Word of Wisdom. Today it would be unthinkable for a Church authority to drink a morning coffee or enjoy a little tobacco, but the attitudes of both Church members and Church leaders were significantly different in the nineteenth century. Some of the Patriarch's General Authority contemporaries were famous for struggling with these difficult habits.<sup>49</sup> Even Joseph F. Smith, who on occasion reprimanded his brother for his failings in this area, reported that on an August 1872 weekend camping trip in Big Cottonwood Canyon, everyone "attended to our prayers, & only violated t 'wofw' by drinking coffee."<sup>50</sup> This was a time when it seems that the establishment of this principle developed in a line-upon-line way, showing still that the Word of Wisdom was "adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints" (D&C 89:3).

Yet, in the later years of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, the Word of Wisdom took on a greater urgency as a test of faithfulness; in fact, John's brother would do much to accelerate that change.<sup>51</sup> In that same 1883 setting where Joseph F. worried about John's halfhearted practice of plural marriage, Joseph F. also mentioned John's Word of Wisdom problems as a source of concern. When President Wilford Woodruff publicly chastised Patriarch Smith at that 1894 general conference, he specifically addressed John's "tobacco and smoking" and "liquor habits." President Woodruff, from the pulpit, said that if John thought "those things are of greater value then the Holy Spirit," then "[he] better resign."<sup>52</sup>

Again, historical hindsight allows for a degree of sympathy for someone caught between the rock of personal addiction and the hard place of a transition toward stricter Church norms. Early in Joseph F. Smith's administration, he "urged stake presidents and others to refuse recommends to flagrant violators, but to be somewhat liberal with old men who used tobacco and old ladies who drank tea."<sup>53</sup> This case-by-case leniency meant that the Word of Wisdom was progressing toward—but still not yet—a hard-and-fast standard for temple recommends.<sup>54</sup>

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Nevertheless, it is obvious that in John Smith's case, some of his brethren in Church leadership became periodically (and publicly) impatient with him. As strongly worded as President Woodruff's reprimand had been, Joseph F. had suggested no less in the 1883 meeting with the Twelve and the First Presidency and various stake leaders of the Church. He at that time had "asked the brethren to use their influence that Bro. John might become a man."<sup>55</sup> John's reputation did occasionally suffer; John even wrote to Joseph F. in the late 1880s to defend himself against rumors that he (John) had been barred from the temple.<sup>56</sup>

Still, with all of this in mind, and based on the memory of Brigham Young Jr., President Brigham Young had apparently *another* reason altogether for seeking to replace John in 1875. Heber J. Grant remembered this conversation: "Brigham Young [Jr.] said that if his father had had his way that Joseph F. Smith would have been the Patriarch of the Church, but that brother Joseph F. had begged that the office be given to his brother and had almost refused to have it when his [Brigham Young Jr.'s] father wanted him to take the place. He knew that his father had felt strongly that Brother Joseph F. Smith should be the Patriarch. He felt that the Patriarch should be a man who could stand with the First Presidency of the Church and meet and counsel with them."<sup>57</sup>

President Brigham Young wanted a man who "could stand with the First Presidency" and the Quorum of the Twelve as presiding authorities, someone who could "counsel with them." John Smith did not seem to be that man. By all accounts, John Smith was not suited by disposition to preside. By his own admission, he shied away from public speaking, even demurring repeatedly when Brigham Young tried to have him say the benediction at conference.<sup>58</sup> (When Joseph F. and John Smith traveled together to a conference in Kaysville in 1871, Joseph F. recorded, revealingly, that he spoke for fifty-five minutes, and then John spoke for five!)<sup>59</sup> He worried about the work involved in keeping a record of all the Church's patriarchs as part of a suggestion that he oversee a quorum of patriarchs.<sup>60</sup> John Smith certainly was no William Smith—trying to grab more power—but neither was he an "Uncle" John Smith, his immediate predecessor, who served as president of the Salt Lake Stake, as well as an assistant counselor to the First Presidency.<sup>61</sup> That reality seems to have motivated Brigham Young's desire to have Joseph F. in the office.

But based on his refusal to accept Brigham Young's proposal, as well as his subsequent words and actions, it seems reasonable to assert that in the particular

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case of this specific office, Joseph F. Smith was attuned to something else. It seems that Joseph F.'s attention to the stature of the Patriarch (both the position itself and the brother who occupied that position) is better understood as a recognition that the hereditary nature of this office, this father to the Church, deserved respect precisely because it was different than other Church offices—and that it indeed was a question of *order* in this case, rather than, just as he had said about patriarchs in the home, a question of who is best qualified.

Order mattered deeply to President Smith. In the November 1901 special conference that was convened to sustain his new First Presidency, he said, "I do not know of any more perfect organization than exists in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today. We have not always carried out strictly the order of the Priesthood; we have varied from it to some extent; but we hope in due time that, by the promptings of the Holy Spirit, we will be led up into the exact channel and course that the Lord has marked out for us to pursue, and adhere strictly to the order that He has established." With that prelude, he then read from what is now Doctrine and Covenants 124:123–24 and mentioned specifically the office of Church Patriarch: "It may be considered strange that the Lord should give [in D&C 124:124] first of all the Patriarch; yet I do not know any law, any revelation or any commandment from God to the contrary."<sup>62</sup>

And this is perhaps the point: Joseph F. Smith's efforts to respect that order, that familial right,<sup>63</sup> seemed to bear fruit in the life of his brother. John's grandson remembered that in his grandfather's later years, he did give up tobacco.<sup>64</sup> And while John may not have been naturally comfortable with the "presiding" half of his Presiding Patriarch calling, he in fact did more actively participate in leadership and administrative and training functions during his brother's administration.<sup>65</sup>

This says something important about Joseph F. Smith too. After all, Joseph F. Smith was a man who, as a teenage missionary, wrote to John about John's new patriarchal responsibilities and prayed that John would be as honored and respected as their father. Joseph F. Smith was a man who used double exclamation points when he first heard that his brother had given patriarchal blessings. This was a man who, as an Apostle, encouraged his brother and then scribed for him. This was a man who interceded on his brother's behalf before President Brigham Young. This was a man who asked his Church colleagues to help make "a man" of his brother. Importantly, this was a man who trusted his brother to give a patriarchal blessing



to his own son, Joseph Fielding Smith. And this was a man who asked his brother to serve as voice to set him apart and ordain him to the highest office in the Church.<sup>66</sup>

### Looking Backward and Forward

As mentioned earlier, in this spirit, Joseph F. Smith seemed to be both responding to precedent and setting precedent. There is much to commend historian Richard Bushman's analysis of Joseph Smith Jr.'s desire to honor his father with the office and calling of patriarch—especially in the gesture of having his father sit in the most elevated seat in the Kirtland Temple pulpits, a seat even above that of the Prophet. The Prophet Joseph said of his father, “Blessed of the Lord is my father, for he shall stand in the midst of his posterity and shall be comforted by their blessings when he is old and bowed down with years, and he shall be called a prince over them.” Professor Bushman portrays this as an almost redemptive moment, since “like Adam [Joseph Smith Sr.], would assemble his children—his one undoubted accomplishment.” This made “priesthood . . . a father's legacy to his son, counting for more than lands and herds.”<sup>67</sup>

In the case of Joseph F. and John Smith, it seems that there are echoes of something that Joseph Smith Sr. said in blessing his sons. First to Hyrum, “Thou hast always stood by thy father, and reached forth the helping hand to lift him up, when he was in affliction, and though he has been out of the way through wine, thou has never forsaken him, nor laughed him to scorn.” Then to Joseph, “Thou has stood by thy father, and like Shem, would have covered his nakedness, rather than see him exposed to shame.”<sup>68</sup> This family legacy of honoring a patriarch seemed to have passed to Joseph F. Smith.

On the other hand, in terms of setting a precedent that is relevant in the modern Church, consider that in a 2010 Church worldwide leadership training meeting convened to introduce thoroughly revised handbooks, Elder Quentin L. Cook drew special attention to new instructions about the priesthood participation of fathers:

Elder Oaks has said that these handbooks focus on the salvation of the children of God and the strengthening of their families. Under that focus, I call attention to some important changes that affect fathers performing priesthood ordinances and blessings. Please turn to chapter 20, section 20.1.2, which sets forth the general principle. It reads:

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“Only a Melchizedek Priesthood holder who is worthy to hold a temple recommend may act as voice in confirming a person a member of the Church, conferring the Melchizedek Priesthood, ordaining a person to an office in that priesthood, or setting apart a person to serve in a Church calling.”

Now note carefully the next two paragraphs:

“As guided by the Spirit and the instructions in the next paragraph, bishops and stake presidents have discretion to allow priesthood holders who are not fully temple worthy to perform or participate in some ordinances and blessings. However, presiding officers should not allow such participation if a priesthood holder has unresolved serious sins.

“A bishop may allow a father who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood to name and bless his children even if the father is not fully temple worthy. Likewise, a bishop may allow a father who is a priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder to baptize his children or to ordain his sons to offices in the Aaronic Priesthood. A Melchizedek Priesthood holder in similar circumstances may be allowed to stand in the circle for the confirmation of his children, for the conferral of the Melchizedek Priesthood on his sons, or for the setting apart of his wife or children. However, he may not act as voice.”

Note the two important principles at work in these sections: First, recognition of the eternally significant role of fathers, and second, the discernment that must be righteously exercised by bishops and stake presidents.<sup>69</sup>

The suggestion here is that in these contemporary instructions there can be heard echoes, too, but this time of President Joseph F. Smith's voice, that the “patriarchal order has its divine spirit and purpose, and those who disregard it under one pretext or another are out of harmony with the spirit of God's laws as they are ordained for recognition in the home. It is not merely a question of who is perhaps the best qualified. Neither is it wholly a question of who is living the most worthy life. It is a question largely of law and order, and its importance is seen often from the fact that the authority remains and is respected long after a man is really unworthy to exercise it.”<sup>70</sup> Similar sentiments seem to resound in President Smith's plea that his colleagues use their influence to motivate and inspire his brother to rise to the measure of his calling.

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In the end, that is perhaps the most important chapter in this story, for while the “presiding” aspect may not have been part of John Smith’s natural disposition, contemporaries witnessed that the “patriarch” aspect—that of a spiritual father or a prophet—indeed *was* part of his nature. One of his twenty thousand blessings is worth mentioning here. In this particular blessing, he told a young man, “The Lord has a work for thee to do, in which thou shalt see much of the world, assist in gathering scattered Israel and also labor in the ministry. It shall be thy lot to sit in council with thy brethren and preside among the people and exhort the Saints to faithfulness.” That young man was a thirteen-year-old David Oman McKay.<sup>71</sup>

Elder James E. Talmage eulogized Patriarch Smith this way: “He was a patriarch in manner and life as well as in calling.”<sup>72</sup> In reporting John’s death, the *Salt Lake Tribune*—a paper not known for heaping praise upon the Church—memorialized Hyrum’s oldest son by saying that “perhaps no man has been so widely known and loved by so many generations among members of the church. Few central figures in spiritual affairs of Mormonism have received such universal esteem and tribute.”<sup>73</sup>

To contemporaries, Joseph F. Smith’s wish for his brother expressed more than a half-century earlier—that he be “honored and respected as our father was”—had been realized. It is hoped that in some small measure, this paper would find approval in that vein as well.

## Notes

1. For John Smith’s biography, see Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith, “Continuing the Tradition,” in *Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 123–50; see also Andrew Jenson, “John Smith,” in *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson Historical Company, 1901–20), 1:183–86, 3:780. For examples of John’s relative anonymity in recent works dealing with Latter-day Saint history, see Church Educational System, *Church History in the Fulness of Times (Religion 341–43)* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000), 76, where John Smith is listed as Hyrum’s son in a chart that illustrates Asael Smith’s posterity, but he is not referenced in the index. Leonard J. Arrington, Susan Arrington Madsen, and Emily Madsen Jones, in their discussion of Mary Fielding Smith in the revised edition of their book *Mothers of the Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2000), do list John as part of the family, and mention his call as Patriarch, but leave out his name from their index (there is, in the index, a reference to Mary’s “stepchildren”). The book’s summary of John Smith’s life after Mary Fielding Smith’s death makes the mistake (an understandable one, considering the shared name) of saying that John was ordained Church Patriarch upon the death of his grandfather in 1854. In reality, John’s grandfather was Joseph Smith Sr., who died in 1840. John Smith succeeded his

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great-uncle (Joseph Smith Sr.'s brother John) as Patriarch. A common approach in biographies of John Smith's family members is to simply state that Hyrum had five living children at the time of his marriage to Mary Fielding rather than listing the children by name; see examples of this in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), xi–xii, and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and R. Q. Shupe, *Joseph F. Smith: Portrait of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 14. One last example is the epilogue of a fictionalized biography of John's older sister, Lovina. It relates that she and her husband, Lorin Walker, emigrated west in 1856 with the help of Lorin's brother William, but fails to mention that the Walkers actually stayed in Florence, Nebraska until 1860, when John Smith came with the supplies to bring them to Utah. See Becky Paget, *The Belle of Nauvoo* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 1994), 189.

2. See Conference Report, October 1979, 25, for the statement read by President N. Eldon Tanner announcing the emeritus designation.
3. Along with Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 123–50, see also D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 116–31.
4. Stan Larson, ed., *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 393.
5. Hyrum and Jerusha's children were Lovina (1827–76), Mary (1829–32), John (1832–1911), Hyrum (1834–41), Jerusha (1836–1912), and Sarah (1837–76). Family group sheets are included in Jerry C. Roundy, *Copies of a Biography and a History from Ralph Gibbs Smith concerning a Great Grandmother and a Grandfather* (Provo, UT: reprinted by Earl H. Peirce, 1999), Church History Library, Salt Lake City. The reprint includes an introduction, additional related text, photographs, and commentary.
6. Ralph Gibbs Smith, *A Biography of Patriarch John Smith* (1976), included in *Copies of a Biography and a History from Ralph Gibbs Smith*, 6. Ralph Gibbs Smith was John Smith's grandson. It is apparent that Ralph Smith relied on his grandfather's autobiography for much of his account. Compare John Smith, *Autobiography* (1885), Accn 1567, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 5.
7. *Biography of Patriarch John Smith*, 6–7; spelling standardized. Compare John Smith, *Autobiography*, 5.
8. Joseph F. wrote in 1888, "After my mother's death there followed 18 months—from Sept 21st, 1852 to April, 1854 of perilous times for me." Joseph F. Smith to Samuel L. Adams, May 11, 1888; cited in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), xv. One biographer noted that young Joseph was "so shaken that he fainted & suffered from shock to the extent that some feared for his life." Scott G. Kenney's notes, in Scott G. Kenney Collection, UU\_Ms0587, box 5, folder 1, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library.
9. John Smith, *Autobiography*, 6.
10. John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, January 31, 1856, in the John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, box 1, folder 30, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.
11. John Smith, *Autobiography*, 6; John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, January 31, 1856; original spelling retained throughout. Apart from the Smith children, an older man, George Mills, and an older woman, Hannah Grinnels, were also included in the household (and perhaps

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- another older woman as well—see Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 185). Joseph F. Smith mentions that George Mills was “blind and derided,” and that the woman was “an old lady, whom we called ‘Aunt’ Hannah Grinnels.” See Joseph F. Smith diary, November 13, 1860, Joseph F. Smith Papers, MS 1325, box 1, folder 11, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; included on the two-volume DVD set *Selected Collections from the Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Richard E. Turley Jr. Apparently, Hannah Grinnels had helped tend the children ever since Jerusha Smith’s death, and the family had taken care of George Mills, “an old British soldier,” since their days in Kirtland. See Arrington, Madsen, and Jones, *Mothers of the Prophets*, 98–99.
12. Joseph Smith Sr. was the Church’s first Patriarch. He was followed in that office by his sons Hyrum and William, and then his brother John. Occasionally, Joseph Sr.’s brother Asael (or Asahel) is listed as an “unofficial patriarch” or “fourth patriarch” for the years 1845–46. See Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:182, where he noted that “as his [Asael’s] health was poor, he is not known to have taken any active part in the office of presiding Patriarch”; see also the helpful chart in appendix B of Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 235.
  13. Quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 128, 125. John’s name was presented for a vote of the Quorum of the Twelve in July 1854, but he wasn’t set apart as Patriarch until February 1855. See Wilford Woodruff’s *Journal*, 1833–1898, 7 vols., ed. Scott Kenney (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 4:283.
  14. John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, August 7, 1863, in the John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, box 1, folder 30, L. Tom Perry Special Collections,.
  15. See Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 128; Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 1:186; John Smith, *Autobiography*, 10–12.
  16. Wilford Woodruff’s *Journal*, October 9, 1875, 7:249–50: “Last evening the 12 met at Presidet Youngs and after Discussing the Subjet of the Presidency & Twelve voted to drop John Smith from the Patriarchal Office & put in his place Joseph F Smith but during the day John & Joseph F had Seen Presidet Brigham and pled vary hard to try John another six month to see if he would magnify his calling any better than he had done in the past.”
  17. Joseph F. Smith, diary, September 17, 1871, Joseph F. Smith Papers, MS 1325, box 3, folder 1, Church History Library; included on the *Selected Collections* DVDs.
  18. Wilford Woodruff, in an October 1894 general conference address, as cited in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 139.
  19. See Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 134–35.
  20. See Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 337.
  21. See Conference Report, October 1902, 83. For a thorough discussion of changes in the way the Patriarch’s name was presented and sustained over the years, see Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy*, 116–31.
  22. See Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 358.
  23. See the comments of President Joseph F. Smith at a November 10, 1901, “Special Conference” called by the First Presidency, in Conference Report, October 1901, 71, where, after reading from what is now Doctrine and Covenants 124:123–24 (“Verily, I now say unto you, I now give unto you the officers belonging to my Priesthood. . . . First, I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch unto you”), he added, “It may be considered strange that the Lord should give first of all the Patriarch; yet I do not know any law, any revelation or any commandment from God

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to the contrary. . . . At the same time we well know that this order has not been strictly followed from the day we came into these valleys until now—and we will not make any change at present. But we will first take it into consideration; we will pray over it, we will get the mind of the Spirit of God upon it, as upon other subjects, and be united before we take any action different to that which has been done.” That last comment about unity seems especially significant, considering concerns raised by several apostles. See Elder Rudger Clawson’s record of the June 1902 discussion of the Twelve about this issue in Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 457–58. Elder Clawson first recorded his own feelings (in third person): “And besides, the Lord has brought the apostles still closer [to] the Presidency by designating them, prophets, seers, and revelators. Not so in the case of the patriarch. He [Elder Clawson] viewed the present arrangement as being just right.”; and then the feelings of President Brigham Young Jr.: “Pres. Young said that when Pres. [Joseph F.] Smith, the head, indicated what is right in this matter we would be ready to sustain him. Nevertheless, if he desires our views upon the subject, we will give them. Said, ‘If I were John Smith, I would work where I am until the Lord calls me to stand before the Twelve. By urging his own claims, he only hurts himself and lessens rather than strengthens his influence.’ When the matter comes up and Pres. Smith indicates what is right, let us accept the decision and be one.” Apparently President Smith never did push this issue, and instead the only change made was to include the Patriarch in the list of prophets, seers, and revelators in the next general conference (held in October 1902).

24. See D. Michael Quinn’s important and extensively referenced treatment of changes to the Patriarch’s role and position in the larger context of evolving Church government in chapter 4 of his *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 116–31. John Smith was explicitly sustained as “presiding Patriarch” in the November 1901 special conference called by President Joseph F. Smith and his new First Presidency, though the Conference Report for the previous conferences that year only list him as “Patriarch to the Church” (compare, for example, in Conference Report, April 1901, 44, and in Conference Report, October 1901, 62, 80). Contemporaries referred to, and understood, the office to be a presiding one, even after John Smith’s death. For one example, see John A. Widtsoe, *Rational Theology*, reprint ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 100: “The Patriarchs of the Church possess the sealing and blessing powers and receive instructions from the Presiding Patriarch.” *Rational Theology* was originally published in 1915 as a priesthood manual.
25. See Bates and Smith, “Introduction,” *Lost Legacy*, 5–10.
26. See note 24 above. Quinn notes, in *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 123, that “this was the first time since Hyrum Smith in 1841 that a patriarch was given such a title.”
27. See his discussion of succession in the (note the date) May 1902 *Improvement Era*, included in Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 175: “When he [the President of the Church] dies, the calling of his counselors ends, and the responsibility of Presidency falls upon the quorum of Twelve Apostles, because they hold the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood and are the next quorum in authority.”
28. President Joseph F. Smith at the November 10, 1901 “Special Conference” called by the First Presidency, in Conference Report, October 1901, 71; emphasis added.
29. See *Minutes of the Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Privately Published, 2010), L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library,

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Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 4:98, for a record of this December 7, 1911 meeting: "President Smith, referring to the subject of the calling of Patriarchs, said he would like President Lyman and any of the brethren of the Apostles he might wish to have associated with him, to take up the question of a successor to the presiding patriarch, John Smith; and he would like them to go and talk personally with John's family, not with a view to selecting any one member of his family unless it be ascertained that he is worthy to act; and should it be found that neither of John's sons is capable and worthy for this position, it may [be] possible, President Smith said, that one of his grandsons may be found worthy and capable. As it is the duty of the Twelve to look after these evangelical matters, the President said he would like President Lyman and the Twelve to consider the matter of a successor to the Presiding Patriarch."

30. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 287.
31. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 181.
32. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 287.
33. *Minutes of the Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4:98.
34. For a discussion of the circumstances surrounding this ordination, see Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 151–58.
35. John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, January 2, 1864, in the John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, Box 1, Folder 30, L. Tom Perry Special Collections; spelling in original.
36. See Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 131.
37. Joseph Smith III to John Smith, March 21, 1848, in John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, box 2, folder 43, L. Tom Perry Special Collections. It is possible that a crossed-out word in Joseph Smith III's letter, immediately preceding the phrase "spiritual wifery" might be "Brighamism," so that the sentence could have originally read, "You expiate largely upon helping to roll on the great work in the track of our fathers if you mean by this that I must support Brighamism [?] spiritual wifery and the other institutions which have been instituted since their deaths (for you very well know that they never upheld such doctrines in public or practised them in private) I most assuredly shall be your most inveterate adversary."
38. John Smith to Joseph Smith III, April 3, 1860, as cited in Buddy Youngreen, "Sons of the Martyrs' Nauvoo Reunion—1860," *BYU Studies* 20, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 355.
39. Youngreen, "Sons of the Martyrs' Nauvoo Reunion—1860," 356.
40. John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, March 14, 1863; see also letters dated December 27, 1862; February 10, 1863; June 8, 1863, in the John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, box 1, folder 30, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.
41. John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, March 14, 1863, December 27, 1862; see also letters dated February 10, 1863 and June 8, 1863, in the John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, box 1, folder 30, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.
42. John Smith mission diary, March 22, 1864, in John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, box 1, folder 3, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.
43. John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, December 27, 1862; spelling in original.
44. Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 124.
45. Quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 135.
46. This November 3, 1856, letter to Joseph F. Smith is cited in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 127, as well as in an important article that gives insight into the strong relationship shared by John



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- and Hellen Smith; see Irene M. Bates, "The Wives of the Patriarchs," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 100.
47. The correspondence is quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 127, 129, and in Bates, "The Wives of the Patriarchs," 100–101.
  48. See Bates, "Wives of the Patriarchs," 100, and Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 136. John admitted that he only infrequently wrote to Melissa while he was serving his mission in Denmark; in the 1880s he even apparently considered divorcing Melissa (which did not happen)—see Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 121. John Smith's *Deseret News* obituary mentioned that he was "survived by his wife, Mrs. Melissa L. Smith"; Hellen had died four years earlier. Bates, "Wives of the Patriarchs," 103.
  49. For a helpful overview, see Thomas G. Alexander, "The Adoption of a New Interpretation of the Word of Wisdom," in *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930*, Illini Books edition, with a foreword by Stephen J. Stein (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 258–71. In writing about attitudes among Church leaders in the late 1890s, Alexander notes, "Though it seems clear that some church leaders like Heber J. Grant and Joseph F. Smith insisted upon complete abstinence from tea, coffee, liquor, and tobacco, all general authorities did not agree"—and Alexander then lists examples of those who did not practice or advocate such strict abstinence (*Mormonism in Transition*, 260). See also Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 139.
  50. Joseph F. Smith, diary, August 15, 1872, Joseph F. Smith Papers, MS 1325, Box 3, Folder 2, LDS Church Archives; included on the *Selected Collections* DVDs. One year earlier, Joseph F. Smith had written that he "bought a coffee mill" for one dollar. Joseph F. Smith, diary, September 17, 1871, in Joseph F. Smith Papers, MS 1325, box 3, folder 1, Church History Library; included in the *Selected Collections* DVDs.
  51. See Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 261: "The death of Lorenzo Snow brought to the presidency Joseph F. Smith, whose views on the Word of Wisdom were close to those of Heber J. Grant. The path to the current interpretation of the Word of Wisdom leads from Smith's administration."
  52. Wilford Woodruff, in an October 1894 general conference address, as quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 139. For public knowledge of John Smith's Word of Wisdom troubles, as well as his efforts to overcome such, see Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 129, 135, 139–40. See also Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 121, 123.
  53. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 261. See also Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 578–79, for this entry from 1903: "Pres. Lund [of the First Presidency] said that saints should be instructed that it is not right to move from place to place without counsel. Tobacco users should not be recommended to the temple, but cases might arise where a little leniency should be shown in regard to this matter." The growing attention to, yet persistent ambiguity around, Word of Wisdom adherence in the specific case of a *local* patriarch is illustrated in Elder Clawson's record of a later 1903 discussion. Following the recommendation by a member of the Twelve that a "former bishop of Wellsville be ordained a patriarch," the proposal was tabled since "it was known that [the man] had been addicted more or less to the use of liquor and tobacco, and it became a question of worthiness on his part to receive the patriarchal office. The matter was laid over for the present." Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 620.

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54. See Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 264: "In 1921 the church leadership made adherence to the Word of Wisdom a requirement for admission to the temple. Prior to this time, as indicated, stake presidents and bishops had been encouraged in this matter, but exceptions had been made." Alexander also quotes passages from the 1928 and 1933 editions of the Church's *General Handbook of Instructions* to illustrate the new inclusion of a passage about the Word of Wisdom as a strict temple recommend rule (Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 265).
55. Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 135.
56. See John Smith to Joseph F. Smith, June 6, 1887, quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 136.
57. Heber J. Grant, diary, October 4, 1894, 143, as transcribed in the Kenney Collection, box 5, folder 1; emphasis added.
58. See Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 127.
59. Joseph F. Smith, diary, September 17, 1871.
60. See Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 121.
61. Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 121: "Four church presidents and the apostles encouraged him to become the Presiding Patriarch in the full sense of the term. Whereas William Smith had expected too much of the office, John Smith expected too little." For a discussion of "Uncle" John Smith, see Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 117; Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 104–22; and Lawrence R. Flake, *Prophets and Apostles of the Last Dispensation* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2001), 311–12.
62. See the comments of President Joseph F. Smith at the November 10, 1901 "Special Conference" called by the First Presidency, in Conference Report, October 1901, 71; emphasis added. See another example of this attention to order cited in D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 253, where Joseph F. Smith approved of the decision to "set apart" Lorenzo Snow as president of the Church whereas his predecessors had apparently not been set apart; in Joseph F. Smith's view, "[they] had failed to do something which he felt should have been done."
63. One additional important factor to consider is another of Joseph F. Smith's hallmarks: unfailing devotion to family. The intensity of this feeling was evident in so much of his personal and public life, but perhaps one case in point will suffice here. As President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith nominated two of his sons (Hyrum Mack and Joseph Fielding) and one of his cousins (George Albert Smith—his Uncle John Smith's grandson) to fill vacancies in the Quorum of the Twelve. While the Twelve Apostles unanimously sustained those appointments, they also discussed the reality that there would be inevitable criticism. Notwithstanding that criticism, it seems apparent that President Smith felt such appointments were appropriate and warranted—and he wished he could do more to honor family ties. On the occasion of nominating Hyrum Mack to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of President Lorenzo Snow, he said, "I would be glad if we all had sons worthy of the apostleship, for I would like to see the sons of the apostles brought forward as far as possible. I feel that this is right." Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 341. Three years later, when he presented the name of George Albert Smith, he said that "he had made it a subject of prayer, for he desired the mind of the Lord respecting the matter. Many names of prominent families—such as Geo. Q. Cannon's, Daniel H. Wells', Wilford Woodruff's, Jno. Taylor's, Heber C. Kimball's, Parley P. Pratt's, Lorenzo Snow's, and others . . . had occurred to him." Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 660. It would be difficult, it seems, to ask where service to the family ended and service to the Church began in Joseph F. Smith's mind—and maybe that

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would be asking the wrong question in any case. A fair analog might be found in Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph F.'s grandmother, who wrote about early Church history as the story of her family's ultimate sacrifices. See Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 8–9. In that way it would only be natural to honor such sacrifice by recognizing the loyalty and leadership of these founding families—especially in honoring a position (Church Patriarch) that was hereditary and centered in the Smith family line.

64. There are good reasons to believe that John Smith did make efforts to conform to the rising Church standards—and that Joseph F. Smith's stance toward his brother's position reflected that. Irene Bates and Gary Smith frame the issue this way: "Despite the earlier criticism, . . . complaints about the Church Patriarch declined in the following years [after Joseph F. Smith's and Wilford Woodruff's reprimands]. Whether John Smith modified his behavior as a result of these criticisms is not apparent, although his grandson Ralph Smith claimed that he did" (Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 140). See also Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 123. Significantly, an interesting statement made by John Smith's nephew, Church apostle Hyrum Mack Smith, can be read in support of Ralph Smith's assertion. Elder Hyrum Mack Smith's statement was made in the context of the Apostles' discussion about Joseph F. Smith's (and John Smith's) proposal that a correct reading of what is now Doctrine and Covenants 124 would mean that the Church Patriarch should be sustained *after* the First Presidency, but *before* the Quorum of the Twelve (using their father Hyrum Smith as the precedent). As mentioned above, some of the apostles worried about the potential import of this change. Carried to its extreme, they saw this order of sustaining as leading to a misunderstanding by the Church's membership that the Patriarch would supersede the apostles in the order of succession. All agreed that this was not the intention, and apparently President Smith did not push the issue further; the only change made to the sustaining was to include the Patriarch in the list of the Church's "prophets, seers, and revelators." Yet in the course of the discussion concerning the reason for even considering such a change, Hyrum Mack Smith, the newest apostle, "took a little different view," as Elder Rudger Clawson characterized it, "to some of the brethren. He [Hyrum Mack Smith] understood that Brother John Smith lost his place in the line of presentation because of a failure to magnify his calling. If that be true, *and he repents, should he not be brought back into line?*" Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 457; emphasis added; the diary entry is for June 25, 1902. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that Hyrum Mack Smith was here representing the view of his father, Joseph F. Smith, that the proposed change in sustaining order was motivated not by the question of succession, but (in addition to the prime issue of proper Church order) as a recognition of, or motivation toward, John Smith's reformation.
65. See evidence of that, for example, in Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, 358, 461–63; Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, 122–23.
66. On the double exclamation points, see Joseph F. Smith to John Smith, April 19, 1857, in John Smith Papers, Vault MSS 803, box 2, folder 46. On Joseph Fielding Smith's patriarchal blessing, see Joseph F. McConkie, *True and Faithful: The Life Story of Joseph Fielding Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), 20.
67. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 262–63. See also D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16, no. 2 (Winter 1976): 202: "Determining what Joseph meant by his description of this office [Patriarch] as the highest in the Church is problematic, because the documents and history of the LDS Church from 1833 to 1844 unquestionably

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refute the concept that the Presiding Patriarch's office was superior in authority either to the President of the Church or to the Quorum of the Twelve. . . . Perhaps the Prophet described that office as the 'highest' in honor, rather than in priesthood keys, due to the completely revelatory nature of its operation."

68. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 262.
69. Elder Quentin L. Cook, "Selected Principles from the New Handbooks," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting* (2010); <http://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/print/worldwide-leadership-training/2010/11/selected-principles-from-the-new-handbooks?lang=eng>.
70. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 287.
71. Quoted in Church Educational System, *Presidents of the Church Student Manual: Religion* 345 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 146; quoting Jeanette McKay Morrell, *Highlights in the Life of President David O. McKay* (1966), 26. See also Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 5, for a description of President McKay's son's reaction to the prophetic promises in both David O. McKay's blessing and that of President McKay's younger brother, Thomas.
72. James E. Talmage, quoted in the *Deseret News*, November 13, 1911, as found in *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, November 12, 1911, 15.
73. Cited in *Journal History*, November 6, 1911.