

Glimpses of Church History in New England: A Photo Essay

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New England holds a unique place in the heritage of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although relatively few events important to the history of the Church occurred on New England soil in comparison to other more prominent regions further west, this region was the seedbed of life and faith for many early members and leaders in the kingdom. That is, many of the first individuals to accept the Restoration of the gospel in latter days descended from early settlers of New England and themselves were born in this area of the United States. In addition, all members of the Church inherit blessings that religious freedom in America, especially New England, bestowed upon the world. In particular, the Prophet Joseph Smith and President Brigham Young were born in Vermont and descended from New England ancestry. During summer 2002 the Church history and doctrine faculty of Brigham Young University held a New England Regional Studies Seminar at various locations in a New England travel experience. We were blessed to see the homes, churches, cemeteries, and historical markers that preserve the memory of early New England Saints, settlers, and colonists.

The following show the homes of Joseph Smith's forefathers and other important sites. In addition, photographs and short essays are included on the birthplace of Brigham Young in Whitingham, Vermont, and on early missionary labors of President Wilford Woodruff in Maine. You will journey first to Plymouth, Massachusetts, where a replica of the *Mayflower* is kept in the harbor and a village depicting New England life in the early 1600s is re-created at Plimoth Plantation.¹ Next the essay will transport you to the

farms and homes of Joseph Smith's paternal and maternal ancestors, including the home of the influential religious reformer, John Lothrop,² as well as the Smiths' homestead in Topsfield, Massachusetts, and the homes of Lucy Mack's family in Gilsum, New Hampshire. Later, both families converged in Tunbridge, Vermont, where Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy met and were married. Afterward, they moved to Sharon, Vermont, where Joseph Smith was born. Photographs illustrate the granite shaft that the Church erected in the Prophet's memory and a visitors' center built to teach travelers about the significance of this beautiful area in the woods of Vermont. In sequence, the Prophet's life in Lebanon, New Hampshire, and his later journey to Salem, Massachusetts, are highlighted. The photographic trip next takes you to the birthplace of President Brigham Young, followed by a trip near the coast of Maine to the well-kept home of Wilford Woodruff's in-laws in Scarborough, and to the location of his successful mission to the Fox Islands, also in Maine.

Photo 1. Nephi saw in a vision that the Spirit of God would inspire multitudes of people with courage and determination to seek religious freedom. He recorded, "I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise" (1 Nephi 13: 13–14). Among those who fulfilled Nephi's prophetic vision were seven ancestors of the Prophet Joseph Smith who came to America on the *Mayflower*. These include Edward Fuller, his wife, and their son, Samuel, who brought with him a chest of surgeon instruments; John Tilley, his wife, and their daughter, Elizabeth Tilley, who married John Howland, another youthful *Mayflower* passenger and ancestor of the Prophet.³ During a storm, young John fell overboard, but was rescued when he managed to lay hold of a trailing halyard and was pulled back to the *Mayflower* with a boat hook.⁴ Today a full-scale replica of the *Mayflower*, built in England and sailed to America in 1957, sits in Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts. It gives a glimpse into life on the crowded ship that brought 102 passengers and 25 crewmen to New England in 1620. During the first winter, 44 of those 102 pilgrims died, including Edward Fuller, John Tilley, and their wives.



*Photo 1. Replica of the Mayflower in Plymouth Bay, Massachusetts;
unless otherwise noted, photographs are supplied by the author.*



*Photo 2a. Individuals portraying life at Plimoth Plantation
in Plymouth, Massachusetts*

Photos 2a and b. The modern visitor to Plymouth, Massachusetts, may take a journey back in time to 1627 and visit with colonists at Plimoth Plantation—an outdoor living history museum. Individuals portray the actual people who lived together in this community and invite visitors to learn of New England lifestyle in 1627. Shown in these photographs are scenes that are reenacted in the homes and on the streets of Plimoth Plantation. The living quarters, dress, language, games, crafts, labor, and mannerisms are authentic to those of Plymouth in 1627. With a little determination, the visitor may even successfully search out individuals portraying the lives of John and Elizabeth Howland, aforementioned ancestors of the Prophet Joseph Smith. John was a person of some importance in Plymouth. He was included with seven other leading men in a group called the “undertakers,” so-called because they undertook responsibility for a debt of eighteen hundred British pounds to the colony’s sponsors in London. In return they received a six-year agreement providing them with a monopoly on trade with the



Photo 2b. Men pausing for a song on the streets of Plimoth Plantation

American Indians of supplies that they procured from England.⁵ John was originally Governor Carver's servant but was included as one of the freemen because he was one of the original signers of the Mayflower Compact.⁶

Photo 3. John Lothrop (1584–1653), early colonist and religious reformer, was ancestor of many early Church leaders, including Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Orson and Parley P. Pratt, Frederick G. Williams, and Wilford Woodruff. He “has been ranked as one of the four most prominent colonial ministers in America. His spiritual and political strength not only was emulated by his sons and daughters, but has been evidenced in the lives of thousands of his descendants in the past four centuries. They include presidents of the United States, a prime minister of Canada, authors, financiers, politicians, and last but certainly not least, key leaders among religious groups throughout the centuries and spanning the continent.”⁷ In addition to early Church leaders, Lothrop's descendants also include four presidents of the United States: Ulysses S. Grant,



Photo 3. Barnstable, Massachusetts, 1717 Meetinghouse

Franklin D. Roosevelt, George Bush, and George W. Bush.⁸ With apparent reference to John Lothrop, in 1853 Elder Orson Pratt wrote to his brother Parley, “I have published the history and genealogy of Joseph Smith as written before his death: this includes six or seven generations of his ancestry. You will recollect that Joseph had a vision and saw that our fathers and his all sprang from the same man a few generations ago. I should be pleased to trace both genealogies back to their junction, if it be possible.”⁹

John Lothrop taught as a minister in this later renovated meetinghouse located in Barnstable, Massachusetts, from 1635 to 1653. The sign outside the building reads:



Photo 4a. Sturgis Library and John Lothrop home in Barnstable, Massachusetts

1717 MEETING HOUSE OF THE WEST PARISH CHURCH,
DESCENDANT OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF LONDON, FOUNDED IN 1616

Photos 4a and 4b. The Sturgis Library, also located in Barnstable, Massachusetts, includes the house John Lothrop built around 1645. The house is located to the right, and the library addition and entrance are seen on the left side of photo 5. John Lothrop was pastor of the Church of England at Eggerton, England, from 1611 to 1623. He later broke away from the state Church of England and led a group to form the Congregational Society at Southwark, London, from 1624 to 1632. His break from the Church of England eventually earned him a stay at the Newgate Prison in London from 1632 to 1634. He was released and sailed to New England, where he became pastor of a Congregational society in Scituate, Massachusetts, from 1634 to 1639 before settling in Barnstable until his death in 1653.



Photo 4b. John Lothrop home in Barnstable, Massachusetts

The Sturgis Library has the honor of housing and displaying John Lothrop's Bible, seen encased in glass in the photograph to the right.

Photos 4d and 4e. In addition to the library, the influence of John Lothrop on the community of Barnstable is reflected in the old Lothrop Hill Cemetery, where it is assumed that his body was buried.

Photo 5. On the Prophet Joseph Smith's paternal line, five generations of ancestors lived in or near Topsfield, Massachusetts. The first to sail across the Atlantic to Boston, Massachusetts, was fifteen-year-old Puritan Robert Smith, who came in 1638.¹⁰ He later settled the Smith homestead, upon which those five generations of Smiths lived. Robert was the father of ten children. The Smith ancestors of the Prophet Joseph Smith who lived here are, in order, Robert, Samuel I, Samuel II, Asael, and Joseph Sr. The privately owned, beautiful, white, New England-style home that graces the homestead was built in the nineteenth century. The following photograph shows the home that the Smiths actually occupied while



*Photo 4c.
John Lothrop's Bible*



*Photo 4d.
John Lothrop's
grave marker*



*Photo 4e.
Lothrop Hill
Cemetery*



Photo 5. Modern View of Old Smith Homestead in Topsfield, Massachusetts

living on this site. Asael Smith and his family, including Joseph Smith Sr., moved from Topsfield in 1790 to Ipswich, Massachusetts, and later to Tunbridge, Vermont. In Tunbridge, Joseph Sr. met, courted, and married Lucy Mack.

Photo 6. The old Smith home was built in 1690. Asael Smith, grandfather of the Prophet Joseph Smith, born March 7, 1744, lived here until his removal to New Hampshire. His mother died soon after his birth, and he was raised by Priscilla Smith after his father remarried. He left Topsfield, marrying Mary Duty of Windham, New Hampshire, February 12, 1767, and later patriotically serving as a soldier with the American army in the Revolution. After Asael's father, Samuel Smith II, died, Asael and family returned to the Smith homestead in Topsfield. Asael and Mary were religious people and raised their children in the Christian faith. Joseph Smith Sr., the Prophet's father, was born in the old Smith home July 12, 1777, the third of eleven children.¹² In the summer of 1830, after the publication of the Book of Mormon



*Photo 6. The Dorman-Smith House, Birthplace of Joseph Smith Sr.
Photo from The Historical Collections of the Topsfield Historical Society¹¹*

and organization of the Church of Christ, Joseph Sr. visited his aged father, who at that time lived in St. Lawrence County, New York. Asael gladly received the message of the Restoration carried by his missionary son. "The subject of the Book of Mormon was introduced," wrote John Smith, Asael's eighth child, who was present at the time. "Father received with gladness that which Joseph communicated; and remarked, that he had always expected that something would appear to make known the true gospel."¹³ A grandson, George A. Smith, reported, "My grandfather Asael fully believed the Book of Mormon, which he read nearly through, although in his eighty-eighth year, without the aid of glasses."¹⁴ Sadly, he was not baptized because of his weakened and aged condition, and died soon thereafter. His widowed wife, Mary, moved to Kirtland, Ohio, in May 1836, at the age of ninety-two.¹⁵ Her grandson Elias was among those who traveled with her. Concerning the reunion of this grand old matriarch and her prophet grandson, Elias related, "The meeting between the grandmother and her prophet-descendant and his brother [Hyrum] was most touching. Joseph blessed her and said she was the most honored woman on earth."¹⁶ "She had not been baptized," recorded the Prophet Joseph



*Photo 7. Home of Solomon Mack II and his son, Solomon III,
in Gilsum, New Hampshire*

Smith, “on account of the opposition of Jesse Smith, her eldest son, who has always been an enemy to the work. . . . My grandfather, Asael Smith, long ago predicted that there would be a prophet raised up in his family, and my grandmother was fully satisfied that it was fulfilled in me.”¹⁷ Sadly, Mary took sick soon thereafter and died firm in the faith, but without having received the saving ordinances of the gospel. The foundation of faith laid for the Smith family in their Topsfield, Massachusetts, home provided the needed strength to bring forth the Restoration of the gospel through the descendants of Asael and Mary Smith.

Photo 7. The family of Solomon Mack settled in Gilsum, New Hampshire. Solomon was the grandson of John Mack, who was the first of that family to sail to America from Scotland.¹⁸ While living in Gilsum, Lucy, mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith, was born in a log cabin July 8, 1775.¹⁹ Two years previous Solomon and his wife, Lydia, had moved from nearby Marlow, New Hampshire. Solomon’s brother, Elisha, owned sawmills and gristmills, and many of his Mack cousins had settled in Gilsum, being among the original proprietors who laid out the town.²⁰ Indeed, the Mack

family remains a prominent name in Gilsum more than two centuries later. The site of the home in which the Macks lived when Lucy was born is located on the southwestern edge of the Centennial Bond Cemetery in Gilsum. It is a private, fenced residence and is inaccessible to the public. After living for a time in the Tunbridge Gore of Vermont, Solomon Mack returned to Gilsum, where he died on August 23, 1820, at eighty-eight years of age, and was buried in the Centennial Bond Cemetery. Three individuals, all named Solomon Mack, played an important role in connecting Church History to Gilsum, New Hampshire. They are the Prophet Joseph Smith's maternal grandfather, his uncle, and his cousin.

Solomon Mack II, Lucy's Mack Smith's older brother and the Prophet's uncle, built this home in 1835. It was the second home that he built in Gilsum. Lucy commented that, unlike other members of her family, Solomon II lived in Gilsum all of his life.²¹ On January 8, 1831, Lucy Mack Smith wrote to Solomon and his wife, Ester, about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel.²² Her encouragement to investigate the fulness of the gospel bore fruit in the Macks of Gilsum. Although the records are not complete, it is clear that Solomon II and his family were baptized and remained a strength in the branch at Gilsum. Solomon's two sons, Solomon III and Chilion, served as branch president and branch clerk, respectively. This home was the meeting place of the branch reorganization in 1849.

Photo 8. The time-honored site of Stephen Mack's store in Tunbridge, Vermont, is the traditional location where Joseph Smith Sr. met Lucy Mack. Lucy worked for her brother, who owned a store and tinning business with his partner, John Mudgett.²³ We suppose that Joseph either saw Lucy working the counter or met her nearby. They were later married on January 24, 1796. Regarding this union, President Brigham Young declared, "It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that [Joseph Smith] should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fulness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God. The Lord had his eye upon him, and upon his father, and upon his father's father, and upon their progenitors



Photo 8. Village Store in Tunbridge, Vermont

clear back to Abraham, and from Abraham to the flood, from the flood to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. He has watched that family and that blood as it has circulated from its fountain to the birth of that man.”²⁴

Photo 9. Stephen Mack, who served in the Revolutionary War from age fourteen to seventeen, was later a successful businessman. His financial successes paved the way for his father’s family to move from Gilsum, New Hampshire, to Vermont. In addition to the previously mentioned village store, his enterprises in Tunbridge, Vermont, included a sawmill, an oil mill, a fulling mill (for cleaning and pressing cloth), a clothiers shop, tainters bars (for dyeing), a shop for cutting and heading rails, a carding machine, and a nailing works. Further, Stephen owned 120 acres on the northeast end of Tunbridge village.²⁵ To the west of the Tunbridge village store, immediately before the covered bridge, two buildings owned by Stephen Mack are still standing: the sawmill on the left in this photo-



*Photo 9. Sawmill and blacksmith shop owned by
Stephen Mack in Tunbridge, Vermont*

graph, and the brick building that housed the blacksmith shop on the right.

Stephen Mack, nine years older than his sister, Lucy, was as charitable and generous as he was prosperous. Lucy records:

Soon after I was married, I went with my husband to see my parents, and as we were about setting out on this visit, my brother Stephen and his partner in business, John Mudgett, were making some remarks in regard to my leaving them, and the conversation presently turned upon the subject of giving me a marriage present.

“Well,” said Mr. Mudgett, “Lucy ought to have something worth naming, and I will give her just as much as you will.”

“Done,” said my brother. “I will give her five hundred dollars in cash.”

“Good,” said the other, “and I will give her five hundred dollars more.”

So they wrote a check on their bankers for one thousand dollars and presented me with the same.²⁶

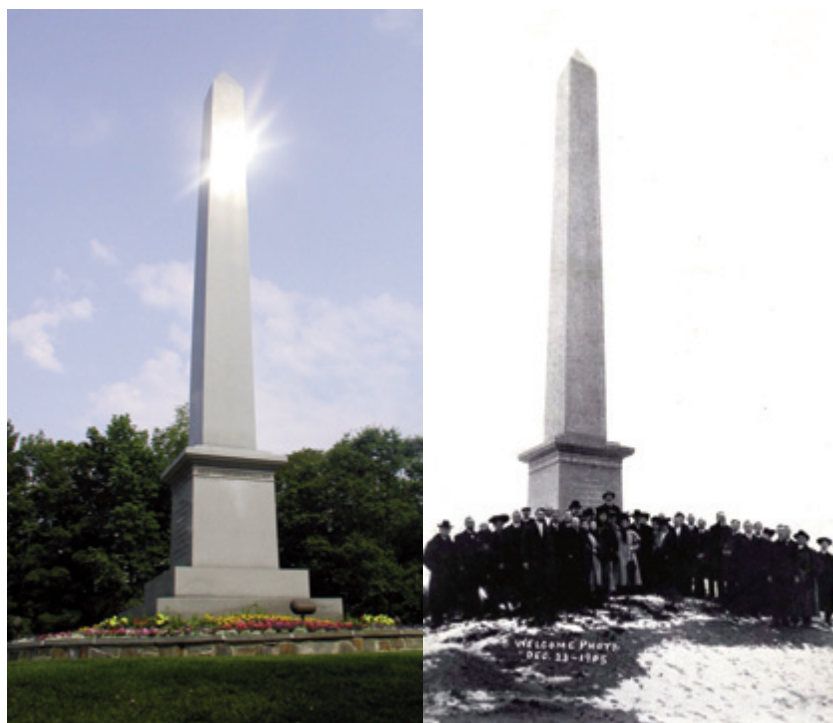
Stephen Mack eventually settled in Pontiac, Michigan, where he continued his successes and generosity, contributing to building



Photo 10. Joseph Smith Memorial Grounds in Sharon, Vermont

that area until he died of a sudden illness in November 1826, being sixty years of age.²⁷

Photo 10. In 1804 Solomon Mack purchased a one-hundred-acre farm straddling the township line between Sharon and Royalton, Vermont. It is now part of the 238 acres owned by the Church and dedicated as the Joseph Smith Memorial Grounds. The cabin in which the Prophet Joseph Smith was born actually stood on the boundary between the two townships, which site is shown on the left side of the photograph above. The bedroom was in Sharon, Vermont, and the rest of the cabin was in Royalton. Thus, as Joseph stated in his history, “I was born in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, on the twenty-third day of December, in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, State of Vermont” (Joseph Smith—History 1:3). For three years, 1804–7, Solomon’s son-in-law Joseph Smith Sr. and his young family lived in Solomon’s cabin and rented sixty-eight acres of the farm. Solomon returned to live on the farm until the death of his wife,



*Photo 11. Joseph Smith Memorial Monument, Sharon, Vermont
(1 July 2002 and 23 December 1905)²⁸*

Lydia, about 1817. After her death he returned to live out the rest of his life with his son, Solomon II, in Gilsum, New Hampshire.

The Church purchased acreage from the farm in 1905 as part of the centennial memorial to the Prophet Joseph Smith. These grounds now are home to a memorial shaft raised to the Prophet, as well as the sites of the original cabins of the Mack family. In addition, the Church has a chapel, a visitors' center, and camping facilities on these beautifully landscaped hills.

Photo 11. As part of a centennial celebration, commemorating one hundred years since the birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Joseph F. Smith (shown in the photograph on the right, standing in the center) dedicated this monument and a nearby memorial cottage on December 23, 1905. This granite obelisk rises 38 1/2 feet into the heavens, each foot representing a year of the



*Photo 12. Site of the cabin near Sharon, Vermont,
in which the Prophet Joseph Smith was born*

Prophet's mortal life. In his dedicatory prayer, President Smith said, "We dedicate the spire, as a token of the inspired man of God whom thou didst make indeed a polished shaft in thine hand, reflecting the light of heaven, even thy glorious light, unto the children of men."²⁹

Photo 12. When the Lord wishes to bless mankind, he often sends a special child into the world. Such was the case on a wintry December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont, when Joseph Smith and his wife, Lucy, welcomed a newborn son into their home. The young child was given his father's name, Joseph, in fulfillment of ancient prophecy. Many centuries before, the Lord revealed to Joseph of Egypt, "A seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins. . . . And his name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his father" (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:30, 33; see also 2 Nephi 3:11, 15). The latter-day Prophet Joseph was foreordained to be born into the world that he



Photo 13. Hearthstone from the Smith cabin near Sharon, Vermont

might be an instrument in the Lord's hands in bringing forth the Book of Mormon and restoring the fulness of the gospel. At a later time Joseph Smith taught, "Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council."³⁰

Only two remnants of the original cabin in which the Prophet Joseph Smith was born have survived to the present. One of them is the doorstep seen to the left of the bench in photo 12. The other is the hearthstone shown in the next photograph. The Smiths lived in this cabin in Sharon for approximately three years before returning to live in nearby Tunbridge, Vermont.

Photo 13. Earlier mention was made of two surviving remnants of the Smith cabin in Sharon, Vermont. This hearthstone, housed in the visitors' center at Sharon, Vermont, is the second of those remnants. At the beginning of the twentieth century Junius F. Wells was appointed to oversee the construction of the memorial shaft and cottage commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the Prophet Joseph Smith's birth. Referring to the newly constructed



Photo 14. Site of the Solomon Mack home near Sharon, Vermont

cottage he stated, “Now, as to this house. It is built over the old cellar. The hearthstone is right where it was. That mantel has been built around it. The sentimental reason is this: Joseph Smith was only three years old when his parents moved; so if he had any association with that hearthstone, it was as a child. I thought perhaps it was where he was washed and dressed as a babe.”³¹

Photo 14. In 1799 Solomon Mack and his wife, Lydia, followed their children, Stephen and Lucy, to live in Tunbridge, Vermont. Five years later he purchased one hundred acres that bridged the towns of Sharon and Royalton, Vermont. Soon afterward he built a home, which stood on the cellar foundation that remains on the Joseph Smith Memorial property. It was while living here in 1810–1811 that Solomon was bedridden and began to search the Bible, through which, along with fervent prayer, he experienced a conversion to Christ. From that time he dedicated his life to following the Savior and wrote his autobiography, in which he chronicled the hand of the Lord in his trials, directing him in his search for peace.



Photo 15. Smith home site in West Lebanon, New Hampshire

He spent his later years riding horseback in the area selling copies of his autobiography as a testimony of the goodness of God.³²

Photo 15. Modern buildings and asphalt now obscure the important history of West Lebanon, New Hampshire. As a young boy, the Prophet Joseph Smith displayed great courage in the home that once stood here (see photo 16).

Photo 16. After a series of financial setbacks, Joseph and Lucy Smith moved their family from Vermont across the Connecticut River to New Hampshire, where they resided in Lebanon (now West Lebanon) from 1811 to 1813. “In Lebanon we settled down,” wrote Lucy, “and began to congratulate ourselves upon our prosperity and also to renew our exertions to obtain a greater abundance of this world’s goods. . . . We met with success on every hand, but the scene soon changed. In 1813, the typhus fever came into Lebanon and raged there horribly.”³³

All of the Smith children were soon afflicted with this dreaded disease, which threatened to take their lives. When nearly recovered from typhus fever, Joseph, at the time a mere seven years old, one



*Photo 16. Home rented by Joseph Smith Sr. in Lebanon, New Hampshire
(photograph pre-1967)*

day “suddenly screamed out with a severe pain in his shoulder.”³⁴ A doctor was called to the Smith home in Lebanon and upon examining the lad discovered a large fever sore between the left breast and shoulder. After the sore was lanced, the pain “shot like lightning (as he said) down his side into the marrow of his leg bone on the same side.”³⁵ The leg began to swell and cause intense pain for three weeks before the doctor returned and made an eight-inch incision between the knee and the ankle, relieving the pain somewhat. Lucy carried her young son in her arms throughout the day, attempting to calm and comfort him until she too became ill from exhaustion. At that time Lucy recorded, “Then Hyrum, [thirteen years old], who was always remarkable for his tenderness and sympathy, desired that he might take my place. . . . We laid Joseph upon a low bed and Hyrum sat beside him, almost incessantly day and night, grasping the most painful part of the affected leg between his hands, and, by pressing it closely, enabled the little sufferer the better to bear the pain which otherwise seemed almost ready to take his life.”³⁶

Eventually a team of doctors came to the Smith home and determined that Joseph’s bone was so infected that it was necessary to amputate the leg to save his life. Lucy pled with the surgeons to

make one more attempt to cut out the diseased portion of the bone with the hope of saving the leg. They agreed and ordered that Joseph be bound to the bedstead. When the young boy refused, the doctor asked him to take some wine to endure the severe operation. Joseph again refused, but consented to be held in his father's arms while pieces of bone were broken loose with the medical tools of the day—trephines, or hand drills, and bone-grasping forceps.³⁷ Following a successful operation, Joseph began to recover, and his parents sent him 130 miles away to live in Salem, Massachusetts, with his uncle, Jesse Smith, hoping the sea breezes might benefit his health. Soon the family returned to Vermont, living in the village of Norwich, a mere nine miles from Lebanon, New Hampshire, across the Connecticut River.

Photo 17. A journey to Salem, Massachusetts, has been the cause of much criticism of the Prophet Joseph Smith because it connects him with supposed treasure hunting. He traveled to Salem, Massachusetts, in August 1836 while on a trip from Kirtland, Ohio, to the eastern seaboard. At that time heavy debt weighed upon the leaders of the Church because of loans secured to purchase land and goods for the mercantile establishments of the Church, and to build the Kirtland Temple. Joseph, his brother Hyrum, Oliver Cowdery, and Sidney Rigdon traveled to New York City to meet with creditors. "From New York we continued our journey to Providence, on board a steamer," the Prophet wrote, "from thence to Boston, by steam cars, and arrived in Salem, Massachusetts, early in August, where we hired a house, and occupied the same during the month, teaching the people from house to house, and preaching publicly, as opportunity presented; visiting occasionally, sections of the surrounding country, which are rich in the history of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, in Indian warfare, religious superstition, bigotry, persecution, and learned ignorance."³⁸

The tenement identified as that leased by the Brethren evidently still remains and is located on Union Street. Reportedly, a Church member named Jonathan Burgess offered a means to relieve the Church of its indebtedness. Burgess purportedly knew of a home in Salem, along Union Street, in which a deceased widow had secreted a treasure. He offered to show the Prophet Joseph Smith the location of the home and to help him obtain the treasure.³⁹



Photo 17. Tenement building along Union Street, in Salem, Massachusetts

Soon after the Brethren arrived, the Lord spoke by the spirit of revelation, mildly chastening them for their follies, and directed them to “inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders of this city; for there are more treasures than one for you in this city” (D&C 111:9–10). This treasure was apparently a reference to the Prophet’s early American ancestry of Smiths who had settled in nearby Topsfield, Massachusetts, in the early 1600s.

The early Puritans that sailed to Massachusetts Bay and settled in Salem, like the Pilgrims of Plymouth, were not separatists from all other churches. Thus, they were willing to be instructed by those in Plymouth how to organize a Congregational church. The honor of instructing them fell to Samuel Fuller, ancestor of the Prophet Joseph Smith. After a group of Puritans settled in Salem, many were still suffering from scurvy and an infectious fever that took some of their lives while at sea before landing in New England. Dr. Fuller traveled to Salem and was able to cure many of the sick. While on this mercy mission, he spoke with the leading men of the



Photo 18. Monuments commemorating President Brigham Young's birthplace in Whitingham, Vermont

settlement about organizing their church on Congregational principles. That is, the ministers could guide the church without special training for the ministry and ordination in the Church of England if they felt an inward calling to preach the gospel. By approval of the congregation and laying on of hands, in semblance of apostolic succession, they were ordained to the ministry.⁴⁰

Photo 18. The brief stay of John and Abigail (Nabby) Young in Whitingham, Vermont, proved to be momentous in its eventual influence on the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the settlement of the western United States. The Young family moved to Whitingham in January 1801 and within a few months, on the first day of June, Nabby gave birth to her ninth child, whom she and her husband named Brigham. By the time the child was two years old, the family moved from Vermont to New York. The exact site of the Young's Whitingham cabin is unknown. Further, an unknown individual, apparently a member of another faith, placed an approximately three-foot-high stone memorial on the traditional site of the birth, which is locally identified as Brigham

Young Hill. This marker was placed sometime prior to the year 1900.⁴¹ It reads: "Brigham Young, born on this spot 1801, a man of much courage and superb equipment."

President George Albert Smith dedicated a larger twelve-foot-high marker honoring this area of Vermont as the birthplace of President Young on Sunday, May 28, 1950. He requested that the Spirit of the Lord might rest on those visiting the memorial. "We are here to do honor to one of thy faithful sons," prayed President Smith, "who in the past so lived that there are hundreds of thousands of people who honor him and revere his memory. We are here now to present this monument of granite, the native granite of this great state, that which President Brigham Young himself undoubtedly would choose if he were here, and, Heavenly Father, we pray that thy Spirit may remain here that those who come to read the inscription on the monument may realize that thou are the Father of us all and that he whom we are gathered to honor was one of thy choice sons who was great enough to assume his responsibilities and carry a tremendous load during his long lifetime."⁴²

The inscription on the memorial reads:

BRIGHAM YOUNG

Church Leader—Colonizer—Statesman

Born in the Town of Whitingham, Vermont, June 1, 1801. Leader of the Mormon Pioneers from Nauvoo, Illinois to the Rocky Mountains, arriving in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake July 24, 1847. Second President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving from December 27, 1847 until his death at Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29, 1877.

His statue occupies a place in the Statuary Hall, national Capitol, Washington DC. This monument erected by Descendants of Brigham Young in cooperation with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Photo 19. Elder Wilford Woodruff first met his wife's parents, Ezra and Sarah Carter, on August 8, 1837, while traveling to preach on the Fox Islands in Maine. He and Phebe Carter had married the previous April in Kirtland, Ohio, where Wilford felt impressed to take the gospel to the inhabitants of the isles of the sea. Before he embarked to the Fox Islands, Wilford and his new bride stayed



Photo 19. Former Home of Ezra and Sarah Carter in Scarborough, Maine

with her parents in this home. The current owner (as of 2003), Robert Jenkins, has possession of a fishing pole found in the attic, claimed to have possibly been used by Elder Woodruff while he visited with his in-laws. Although Phebe's parents did not accept the restored gospel or baptism at the hands of their son-in-law, they were sympathetic to the message and the messengers. Following Sarah's death, Wilford and Phebe wrote, "Mother Carter ever considered it a pleasure, and one of the duties required by her religion to administer to the wants of the poor and needy, and during the last fifteen years of her life she has administered with cheerfulness to the wants of the elders of Israel and the Saints of God, in their travels in the world. And as she has often administered to the wants of the disciples of Christ, may she receive a disciple's reward."⁴³

Photo 20. The Fox Islands, today identified as North Haven and Vinalhaven, are located midway along the coast of Maine. Wilford Woodruff and his missionary companion, Jonathan Hale, arrived



*Photo 20. Baptist Church at which Wilford Woodruff
taught in North Haven (Fox Islands), Maine*

at North Haven in the dark hours of the morning of August 20, 1837. After being warmly received by a host who provided them lodging and breakfast, and upon learning of the lone Baptist meetinghouse on the island, they walked five miles to meet the Baptist minister. They arranged to preach to the congregation that evening at 5:00 pm. At the well-attended meeting, the elders taught that the gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith and testified of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. The local minister, a Mr. Newton, accepted the message, and Elder Woodruff recorded that he received a witness of its truthfulness yet chose to reject the truth and fight against the work of God. As members of the Baptist congregation were converted and baptized, Mr. Newton became alarmed and invited the Methodist minister from Vinalhaven, Mr. Douglas, to South Fox Island to join him in overthrowing the message of the missionaries. The elders attended a special appointed conference of the two ministers and in turn invited the congregation to attend a meeting where each false

assertion was refuted and the Restoration explained. More than one hundred people on the Fox Islands were baptized, and a year later fifty-three left their island homes to gather with the Saints in Missouri.⁴⁴

Conclusion

New England provided the sturdy roots and tree trunk from which the family branches of early Church leaders and members received their strength. The brief photographic review of their birthplaces, homes, businesses, rented rooms, and meetinghouses illuminates the reality of their contribution to the Restoration of the gospel in latter days. It is evident that the hand of the Lord was involved in the foundation laid in New England for the coming forth of His latter-day work. It is hoped that the lives of those individuals who were part of this New England stock will be held in sacred remembrance for the contributions that they made at this early era in Church history.

NOTES

¹Note that although the town is spelled “Plymouth,” the proper spelling of the plantation is “Plimoth.”

²There are variant spellings of the Lothrop name, also spelled “Lathrop.”

³Archibald F. Bennett, “Solomon Mack and His Family,” *Improvement Era*, October 1955, 713. The name of Edward Fuller’s wife is unknown, and the name of John Tilley’s wife is uncertain. It appears that John may have been married several times, because various wives’ names and marriage dates are given in the family history records currently available.

⁴Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Story of the “Old Colony” of New Plymouth [1620–1692]* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), 38.

⁵Morison, *Old Colony*, 128–29.

⁶Morison, *Old Colony*, 148–49.

⁷Richard Woodruff Price, *John Lothrop (1584–1653): A Puritan Biography & Genealogy* (Salt Lake City: Richard W. Price and Associates, 1984), 5.

⁸Helene Holt, Exiled: *The Story of John Lathrop, 1584–1653* (New York: Paramount Books, 1987), 219–21.

⁹Price, *John Lothrop*, 33.

¹⁰Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 20.

¹¹George Francis Dow, ed., *The Historical Collections of the Topsfield Historical Society* (Topsfield, MA: Merrill, 1902), 8: photo insert between pages 44 and 45.

¹²Dow, *Historical Collections*, 89–101.

¹³John Smith Journal, cited in Lucy Mack Smith, *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith By His Mother*, eds. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996), 231.

¹⁴George A. Smith, “Memoirs,” holograph, 2, cited in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Joseph Smith’s New England Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 112–13.

¹⁵In her *History of Joseph Smith*, Lucy Mack Smith gives Mary’s age as ninety-three (see page 343). However, Anderson noted that her birth date in the town records states she was born October 11, 1743, which would have made her ninety-two years old at this time (see Joseph Smith’s *New England Heritage*, 215–16, note 220).

¹⁶Edward W. Tullidge, “Judge Smith,” *History of Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Star, 1886), 157.

¹⁷Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 2:442–43; hereafter cited as *History of the Church*.

¹⁸Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), 26–27.

¹⁹Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 39, 42 note 1.

²⁰Bushman, *Beginnings of Mormonism*, 13.

²¹Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 34.

²²See Janiece Johnson, “Give Up All and Follow Your Lord,” *BYU Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002): 83–89.

²³See Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 27. Tinning is the “art or practice of covering or lining any thing with melted tin or with tin foil, as kitchen utensils, locks, bits, etc.” (*Noah Webster’s First Edition of an American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828. Reprint, San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1980).

²⁴Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1854–86), 7:289–90.

²⁵LeMar C. Berrett, ed. *Sacred Places: New England and Eastern Canada* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999), 120–21.

²⁶Smith, *Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith*, 44.

²⁷Smith, *Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith*, 27–29.

²⁸1905 photograph, *Improvement Era*, February 1906, between pages 312 and 313.

²⁹President Joseph F. Smith, “Prayer in Dedication of the Memorial Monument,” *Improvement Era*, February 1906, 325.

³⁰*History of the Church*, 6:364.

³¹*Proceedings at the Dedication of the Joseph Smith Memorial Monument* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, n.d.), 15.

³²Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 22–25.

³³Smith, *Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith*, 68–69.

³⁴Smith, *Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith*, 72.

³⁵Smith, *Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith*, 72–73.

³⁶Smith, *Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith*, 73.

³⁷Dr. LeRoy S. Wirthlin has written on the medical procedure proposed by Dr. Nathan Smith of Dartmouth College, in Hanover, New Hampshire, a few miles north of the Smith home in Lebanon. The hand of the Lord is evident in the Smith's move to Lebanon, as Dr. Smith is the only surgeon known to have performed the limited removal of the infected bone described in Lucy Smith's narrative rather than amputation of the leg (see LeRoy S. Wirthlin, "Joseph Smith's Boyhood Operation: An 1813 Surgical Success," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 2 [spring 1981]: 131–54).

³⁸*History of the Church*, 2:464–65.

³⁹B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1948–57), 2:410–11.

⁴⁰Morison, *Old Colony*, 119–20.

⁴¹Larry C. Porter, "Brigham Young's Birthplace in Whitingham, Vermont," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: New England*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon (Provo, UT: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1988), 70.

⁴²President George Albert Smith, "Dedicatory Prayers at the Unveiling Ceremonies," *Improvement Era*, September 1950, 693.

⁴³Wilford Woodruff and Phebe Woodruff, *Millennial Star*, September 15, 1845, 109.

⁴⁴For more information on the Fox Island mission, see Donald Q. Cannon, "Wilford Woodruff's Mission to the Fox Islands," in Cannon, *Regional Studies*, 85–99.