

JONATHAN SMITH 1823 –1899



When Jonathan Smith was a young man, he met the Mormon missionaries and was so interested in their message that he attended their meetings without regard to opposition from his mother. One time she hid his Sunday clothes and thought this would stop him from going, but he went to Lake Michigan and washed the clothes he had on, stood in the shade of the bushes until they dried, then stretched them the best he could and went to the meeting at the appointed time. His mother was so angry when he returned from the meeting that he expected severe punishment, but he told her of the things he had seen and heard at the meeting, and also he told her he knew within six weeks that she herself would join the Mormon Church. Within six weeks she was a member and remained devout in her belief the remainder of her life.

Jonathan Smith was born in the State of New York, Genesee County, in the town of Perry, 24 November 1825, to Abigail Demont, of French decent, and Jeremiah Smith. He was the fourth of eight children: Thomas Sasson, Polly, Sarah, Jonathan, Richard Demont, George E. Henry, Loretta Helen, and Jesse W. Smith.

Jonathan began making his way west as a young man. In January 1847 he was in Chicago among signers of a document with other Chicago Saints as to the actions of apostate James J. Strang. In Monroe County, Missouri, he met Nancy Jane Taylor, daughter of William and Elizabeth Patrick Taylor, and they were married there 11 July 1847. She was fourteen years of age at the time of their marriage and Jonathan was twenty two.

On 20 January 1848, Jonathan was in Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, signing with others in asking for a post office in the same county. Nancy and Jonathan crossed the plains that spring. Their son-in-law, William Dawson, tells the story of how Nancy Jane drove a team of oxen and a wagon while crossing a great river. The oxen turned and were being washed down the stream when her husband, Jonathan who was a scout, came to her rescue and saved her from what might have been a tragedy. Jonathan crossed the plains three different times to help bring emigrants. He often killed buffalo which supplied meat as they traveled.

On 31 December 1850, he was called by Apostle George A. Smith to go on a colonization expedition trip to Iron County. His young wife may have been with him as there were thirty women and several children in this company.

Jonathan and Nancy Jane were blessed with 14 children, Permelia Jane, Joseph Jeremiah, Sara Elizabeth, Jonathan, Heber, Nancy Alzina, Abigail Arilla, Marzella, Mary Ann, Jessie Everet, Thomas Allen, Ida Darleska, Flavilla, Loretta, and Effie Estella.

Jonathan was Sheriff in Davis County, Utah for a number of years. One night at the dance hall where his daughter, Parmelia, was attending, he forced three rough men, who were disturbing the peace, out of the dance hall. One of the men turned on him and stabbed him in the back. The knife struck a bone which saved his life.

On 4 July 1865, Jonathan was in charge of a children's dance at Farmington. His three year old daughter, Marzella, wanted to follow him. Her mother, Nancy Jane, was ill with a new baby and could not take her to him so she finally let "Zell" go alone with instructions to stay off the road and go directly to her father so he would know she was there. On the way, a drunken fellow riding a horse trampled over her. She received a crushed breast bone, mashed thigh, besides being badly bruised, and was unconscious for hours. Her father, Jonathan, set her leg and took care of her so well that she lived to be the mother of nine children with no ill effects.

Johnathan was sealed to a second wife, Isabella Forbes Hull Davis, 11 November 1872, in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.

The family moved from Farmington, Davis County to Harrisville, Weber County between 1872 and 1875, where they stayed until a later move to Weston, Oneida County, Idaho, on 1 August 1881. Nancy Jane had family members living in Harrisville, and it was probably during that time that their daughter Abigail Arilla Smith, became acquainted with her cousin Josiah Taylor, son of Nancy Jane's brother, Pleasant Green Taylor and Sara Jane Marler Lake Taylor. On 10 January 1884 the couple married and remained in Harrisville to raise their family in the home they built. (565 West Harrisville Road).

Jonathan Smith doctored and healed the sick with his wife, Nancy Jane, by his side. He set bones and did surgery work so well and so often that he was given a diploma stamped and sealed to show that he was a full-fledged doctor even though he had no schooling in this profession. He pulled teeth, took care of obstetric cases, etc., and made his own salves and liniments. He answered calls, even when he was sick himself and if people wanted to pay, all well and good, if not, he was satisfied.

Nathan J. Harris remembered how Jonathan Smith healed him from a terrible disease and saved his leg from being taken off. At fifteen years of age, Nathan had a serious attack of typhoid fever accompanied by a swollen ankle, which later developed into a disease of the bone termed a "white swelling." His leg continued to get worse and his parents, Martin Henderson and Louisa Sargent Harris, had the doctor come and examine it. The doctor told them the leg would have to be cut open, the bone chiseled down, and likely the leg would have to be taken off. Jonathan Smith came to the aid of Nathan. He made up a black salve which was applied to the ulcers twice daily after they had been swabbed out with another substance. Nathan walked on crutches for a year and a half but finally the healing process was completed with little remaining effects.

Jonathan had grey eyes and dark brown curly hair and was six feet two inches tall in his stocking feet. He was large in stature with a straight carriage, and weighed between 240 and 245 pounds. Nathan J. Harris later said of Jonathan: "I shall never forget his kind gentle way

which he had with those in trouble, for he was a man of monstrous size, as I remember him, his heart was as tender and his manner as gentle as a woman.”

Jonathan Smith died 15 July 1899 at the age of 74 in Weston Idaho.

SOURCE

“Jonathan Smith and Nancy Jane Taylor” history compiled by their great granddaughter, Phyllis Petteson Tueller.

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Dawson, William	Smith, Loretta Helen
Harris, Louisa Sargent	Smith, Loretta
Harris, Martin Henderson	Smith, Mary Ann,
Harris, Nathan J	Smith, Marzella,
Smith Abigail Arilla,	Smith, Nancy Alzina
Smith Jessie Everet	Smith, Permelia Jane,
Smith, Abigail Demont	Smith, Polly
Smith, Effie Estella	Smith, Sara Elizabeth,
Smith, Flavilla,	Smith, Sarah
Smith, George A. (Apostle)	Smith, Thomas Allen,
Smith, George E. Henry	Smith, Thomas Sasson
Smith, Heber,	Smith, Richard Demont
Smith, Ida Darleska	Strang, James J.
Smith, Isabella Forbes Hull	Taylor, Elizabeth Patrick
Davis	Taylor, Josiah
Smith, Jeremiah Smith	Taylor, Nancy Jane
Smith, Jesse W.	Taylor, Pleasant Green
Smith, Jonathan	Taylor, Sara Jane Marler Lake
Smith, Joseph Jeremiah	Taylor, William and