

Jonathan Smith was born in the town of Perry, Genesee County, New York on 24 November 1825. He was the fourth child and second son of Jeremiah Smith and Abigail Demont. His brothers and sisters in order of their birth were Thomas Sasson, Polly, Sarah, himself, Richard Demont, George E., Henry, Jesse W. Smith and Loretta Helen. His mother was of French descent and his ancestors came over from England. The family moved to Ohio and then to Michigan during the economic panic of 1837. They were in Bertrand, Berrien County, Michigan. His brother Thomas and sister Sarah had married. Jonathan's father died two years after Sarah married on August 23, 1842 at the age of 46. Now Jonathan's mother was a widow with five children still at home. Jonathan was now her eldest at home being seventeen years old.

When Jonathan was a young man of 19, his older brother Thomas introduced him to the Mormon missionaries. Elders George A. Smith, Wilford Woodruff, Charles C. Rich, Samuel Bent and David Fullmer were holding a conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan on the 1st of June, 1844. There were 126 members there. Thomas was baptized into the new religion on 15 June 1844. Thomas was twenty-six years old. A few weeks later, the apostles left the area as they had received word that the Prophet Joseph Smith had been martyred. The Michigan saints were counseled to come to Nauvoo. Thomas left with his wife, Polly Clark, for Nauvoo.

Jonathan was very much interested and thrilled with the message of the restoration. He attended their meetings with much opposition from his mother. One time, she hid his Sunday clothes and thought this would stop him from going, but no! He went down 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 was at the meeting on time. His mother was so angry when he returned that he fully expected severe punishment. He told her of the things he had seen and heard at the meeting and also that he knew that within six weeks, she would join this Latter-Day Saint religion. Of course, she denied this very emphatically. Nevertheless, within six weeks, she was a member and a real devout one. Undoubtedly, she gave her permission for Jonathan to join.

Abigail brought her family to Nauvoo after she joined the church and was reunited with their son, Thomas. Only Sarah stayed behind with her husband. Abigail lived in the Nauvoo area until the church exodus. Jonathan helped his mother get outfitted with a wagon to cross the Mississippi leaving Nauvoo in February 1846. She brought with her the beloved conch shell that had belonged to her husband, Jeremiah.

They experienced all the hardships of the muddy crossing of the state of Iowa as the "Camp of Israel." In January 1847, Jonathan Smith was in Chicago with other Chicago saints signing a document as to the actions of the apostate James J. Strange. Jonathan met Nancy Jane Taylor possibly during this "Camp of Israel" and they were married on 11 July 1847 in Monroe County, Missouri. Nancy Jane was 14 years old, also a daughter of a young widow. Jonathan was 22 years old. He had grey eyes and dark brown curly hair, was 6 ft. 2 in. Tall. He weighed about 240 pounds. Later on in his life, he was so large that shirts had to be hand sewn to fit him. Nancy Jane was very thin and about 5 feet tall. She had blue eyes and very dark auburn curly hair. She was termed a very pretty girl. Nancy Jane had seen the Prophet taken away in Missouri and then as they were making their way for Illinois, her father died from exhaustion. After they moved to Nauvoo, she went with her mother and her brother to see where the prophets had died at the Carthage jail. Her mother had 14 children. Nancy Jane was the twelfth child.

They crossed the plains in 1848. Nancy Jane drove a team of oxen and a wagon across the plains and at one time when they were crossing a great river, the oxen turned and were being washed downstream. Nancy Jane was drowning but her husband, Jonathan who was a scout, came to her rescue. He caught the buffalo which supplied the meat for these hungry months. Jonathan crossed the plains three times to help bring emigrants.

Jonathan's brother Richard Demont joined the Mormon Battalion Company "C." He got ill with the fever and went with the sick detachment of eighty-eight men to Fort Pueblo, Colorado. He was nineteen years old. Richard died a year later when he went back to Michigan to help his sister Sarah and family move to Utah. He was probably buried with his father.

Jonathan and Nancy Jane were married three years when their first child, Permelia Jane was born in 1850. On December 31, 1850, Jonathan 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 over fourteen years of age and several children in the company. They were blessed with fourteen children. Their names in order of birth are: Permelia Jane, Joseph Jeremiah, Sarah Elizabeth, Jonathan Heber, Nancy Alzina, Abigail Arilla, Marzella, Mary Ann, Jessie Evelet, Thomas Allen, Ida Darleska, Flavilla, Loretta, and Effie Estella.

Jonathan was Sheriff in Davis County, Utah for a number of years. His daughter, Permelia, was attending a dance one night and saw him enforce law and order for which he was stabbed five times in the back. He forced three rough men out of the dance hall who were disturbing the peace. One of the men turned on him and stabbed him. The knife struck the bone and that saved his life.

On 4 July 1865, Jonathan was in charge of a children's dance at Farmington. His little daughter, Marzella who was three years old, wanted to follow him. Nancy Jane was ill with a new baby so she could not take her to him. 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 came up to little Zell and tramped all over her. She received a crushed breast bone, mashed thigh, besides being very badly bruised. She was unconscious for hours. Her father strapped her, set her leg, and took care of her so well that she lived to be the mother of nine children with no ill effects from this terrible incident.

In 1874, he married Isabel Forbes Hull Davis in the Endowment House. Together they had seven children. At one time, Isabel and Nancy Jane had babies a week apart. They named them Arvilla and Flavilla. They were just like twins. The two families were living in Harrisville. In 1879, an epidemic of diphtheria came through. Isabel lost 3 children and Nancy Jane lost one. This was a severe trial.

On August 1, 1881, both families moved to Weston, Oneida County, Idaho, now Franklin County. William Dawson, was a young lad of twelve years old when he saw Jonathan pick up a long railroad iron and tidily place it up against a shed. William, of course, tried to lift the iron and he could just lift it off the ground enough to drop it quick and it mashed his toe. Jonathan Smith's strength has been discussed among his children and relatives with much interest. William later married Jonathan and Nancy Jane's youngest daughter, Effie.

The following letter, a testimonial, by Nathan J. Harris, Attorney and Counselor at Law, Suite 313, Fred J. Kiesel Bldg., Ogden, Utah, was received by Mary Ann Smith Olsen, daughter of Jonathan Smith, 6 August 1925.

Ogden, Utah
6 July, 1925

Dear Mrs. Olsen,

I was very pleased at meeting you at Clarkston, Utah recently. I was especially pleased in meeting the daughter of Jonathan Smith, who during his life proved to be the devoted friend of my family who also proved to be my great benefactor. For when I was a lad probably fifteen years of age, I had a serious attack of typhoid fever accompanied by a swelling of the ankle which later developed into a disease of the bone and was termed a "White Swelling." After a long illness during which time my leg got constantly worse, my folks had a doctor come out and examine it. I remember the words of the doctor as though it were yesterday when he said, "It can never get well unless the leg is cut open and the bone chiseled down, and it will be a lucky leg if it ever gets well, it will probably have to be taken off."

Now you can imagine my feelings, as a boy, at having that brutally frank statement made in my hearing. Of course, the folks were very much alarmed, and whether they sent for your father, or whether he learned of the situation and volunteered his services, I do not remember; neither is it material. The facts are, that your father came and examined the afflicted leg and stated that he could cure it. I remember a remark he made something like this, "When they talk of taking off a leg, it is about time that we get busy."

Well, your father did get busy. He made up a black salve, the ingredients of which were known only to himself. At that time, the bone of my leg was swollen to two or three times it's natural size and I had a bad ulcer on each side of my ankle, going clear through between the cord and the bone. I had to swab out those ulcers night and morning with corrosive sublimate diluted with olive oil, and you can imagine somewhat as to how much pleasure I obtained from the process. Then I applied the Black Salve, which gradually healed the ulcers from the bottom. That being kept open by the use of the corrosive sublimate which literally ate out the flesh, and prevented it from healing too rapidly. I don't remember just how long your father treated me, but I do remember I walked on crutches for 1 year. It was probably another year before I was cured. The result was however; that the ulcers were in time completely healed, pieces of bone passing off during that process. The size of the bone was gradually reduced and finally when the healing was completed, the only remaining effects were a slight enlargement of the bone, a slight stiffness of the ankle with the marks of the ulcers.

Now as a daughter of Jonathan Smith, I thought you might be interested in knowing these facts and that other members of the family might be interested therein; also, that no charges were made for his services, only for the cost of the medicine. My folks gladly paid something in way of compensation, either in money or products from the farm. The point is that your father was willing at all times to help those in trouble or distress without any charge and that he was willing to go anywhere at anytime day or night to assist anyone who might be in any kind of trouble. No one remembers those things better than I do. I have a perfect picture of your father in my mind; in fact, I have many of them.

As a boy, I remember how he sat on the south side of the log cabin under the big trees, engaged in the telling of jokes, which pastime he enjoyed so well. I shall never forget the comfort that came to me when he from his big warm heart offered his services to prevent my leg from being taken off, and to heal me from the terrible disease which had me in it's grip. 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. I have no means of conveying to your father my appreciation of his many acts of kindness toward me and naturally as a young man, I did not fully express my appreciation of them to your father; as I would be able to do if I had the opportunity at this time. But I can at least leave with you and others my appreciation of your father and of his wonderful character as a man. Kindly convey my sentiments therefore to members of your family.

With best wishes and kind personal regards to yourself and other members of the family,

Nathan J. Harris"

All through Jonathan's life, he went far and near to doctor and heal the sick. His wife, Nancy Jane, was by his side and he had full cooperation from her in everything he did. 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 obstetrics cases, etc. and made his own salves and liniments. He answered calls even when he was sick himself and never charged a cent. If people wanted to pay, all well and good. If not, he was satisfied. Dr. Herbert Adamson of Richmond, Cache County, Utah said he learned many valuable things from Jonathan Smith.

He and Nancy Jane were devoted Latter-Day Saints and resided in Weston, Idaho until their deaths. He died at the age of seventy-four years, 15 July 1899, honored and loved by all who knew him. His wife, Nancy Jane, was loved by all who knew her. She worked in the Relief Society and other organizations of the church. Her son-in-law, Orsen Olsen, said that she was one of the most wonderful women he ever knew. She died 19 March 1900 in Weston, Idaho.

Compiled by Phyllis Peterson Tueller, great grand-daughter.

Poem written by grand-daughter, Agnes F. Olsen Campbell Weston, Idaho, August 11, 1946

TO OUR DEAR JONATHAN AND NANCY JANE

In the year of 1825 at Perry, Genesee County, New York, on November the 24th,
a son Jonathan, to Abigail and Jeremiah Smith was born.

His was a noble spirit, decreed was the plan,
that he should fight for truth upon the earth, and pioneer our chosen land.
He grew in stature tall and straight, his eyes were as sharp as the eagles,
another Sampson of his time, this man of steel, and hardened muscles.

His own dear mother forbade her son to listen to our Mormon Elders,
inspired was he, his bosom swelled, his soul was filled, and soon he was converted.
Then great-grandmother Abigail, like her son Jonathan, received the Gospel message,
they sacrificed and gave their all, to them we owe our heritage.

One day as Jonathan stood on the street, a petty little girl ran by, with ringlets flying in the wind,
her sunbonnet on her arm, she was a picture for an eye.

Right then Dan Cupid did the trick, he pierced that young man's heart,
someday he vowed, she shall be my bride, ere upon life's mission I embark.

He wooed his pretty little maid, his dream of love came true,
like many others we have this story how Nancy Jane Taylor married at the age of fourteen,
and how she came to be our own, dear, sweet, little grandmother.

When our sainted pioneers started their long trek west,
Jonathan became a leader, he could ride and fight and he knew the trail like Carson or Jim Bridger.

His word was law, his wisdom great, he defeated every challenge,
no obstacle ever barred his way, he knew no hate or malice.

His child wife he had to leave many times, while he helped to pilgrim others,
ere long he planned a home for Nancy Jane out west, then started their adventurous life together.

Jonathan rode his horse as captain at the front, then back and forth along the train,
to see that all was well, or help a faithful soul, too ill, or weak, or weary to complain.

Nancy Jane drove her own ox team through heat or rain over the mountains high, over rocks and ruts, and
through sand she faithfully walked and rode laughing, singing, praying, weeping,
as the days and weeks and months went slowly by.

While fording, her oxen turned downstream, many started to scream with fright thinking all was lost,
what a sight as Nancy Jane prayed her life was saved from that terrible watery grave.

At night the coyote's howl was heard, and the scream of the buzzard birds,
the mountain lions and panthers too, chilled the blood of our valiant crew.
As they circled for the night, and the stars shown down on their campfire bright,
in crude beds tired and hungry, Nancy and Jonathan tried to sleep with a gun for a pillow,
they dreamed of the savage Indian who upon them might creep.
At last, they reached the end of the trail, though weary and weak, all was well.
God had brought them safely through, his wonderful work and will to do.
But Oh! The many hardships they did endure, as they worked, toiled,
and pioneered so bravely, to care, provide, and educate the many daughters, and sons of their family.
They washed and corded wool for clothing, and late into the night,
the spinning wheel was humming, as Grandmother made thread by candlelight.
Yards, and yards of Linzy cloth was woven from thread they had dyed and shrunk,
on winter night neighbors gathered to sing and dance, and to parch corn in the old Dutch oven.
Through rain and snow, and summer's heat, they worked weak and faint, their stomachs gaunt and empty,
they never tasted bread for days, weeks, and months, there simply wasn't any.
The stories of adventure, love, and romance, my mother used to tell,
would bring excitement and tears to our eyes, they were brave Indian stories we all loved so well.
Diphtheria hit their home as a plague, antitoxin came years later,
they buried three children in one week, God alone healed their hearts and gave them comfort.
When the gold rush came along, Jonathan went with many others,
he fought the Indians and matched his wits to save his own life and his friends unnumbered.
Grandmother was brave and stayed behind to raise her little family,
there was no train or airplane to bring mail from her hubby.
They believed in and supported their religion in every way,
when our leaders brought forth the plan of polygamy, they agreed to that and lived it successfully.
Grandfather would not desert either family not even if it cost him his life,
yes, they followed the plan that tried their faith and ours,
we agree it took plenty of grit, to face the world, be misjudged, mocked,
and condemned by all nations, religions and men.
As sheriff of Davis County, Jonathan served for years,
he captured the outlaw and desperado bravely, without fear or much pay he served his people gladly.
He was stabbed three times in his back one night,
by ruffians while keeping order at a dance, his boots creaked with blood,
and marked his trail as lone handed he put them in jail ere home he went.
To him many people owe their lives, he was their family doctor,

he set their limbs, cured all their ills, delivered babies, what a wonderful grandfather.

He brewed his own herbs to make medicine, made all kinds of salves and plasters,
sewed clothing, boxed, wrestled, and told jokes by the score, and made people shout with laughter.

His wild hay farm, was where the famous Lagoon is no in play.

He was known from east to west, his gate was wide open for the caravan to enter in,
for it was here, they found a shelter, feed and rest.

They both were loved by old and young, people came from far and near,
to live with them and he cared for while Grandpa removed cancers from their face, limbs, and ears.

In short, he was a regular superman, this is no fable or fiction,
but a challenge to each of his sons of today, whatever their age, size or complexion.

They stood true and faithful to the end, upheld and cherished each other,
their love grew stronger year by year, as they fought life's battles together.

No praise is too great, no words can half tell all we owe to our grand, great, and great, great, grand parents,
for accepting the truth and establishing their home in Zion in these beautiful mountains.

If they could look down from the heavens today and view the scene before us,
look into our hearts and know our minds, would they rejoice and be happy?

Yes, for many are all doing their best and carry on, many of their sons,
eight-nine fought for our freedom on foreign shore,

in the air, and on the sea, that we might live and worship freely.

And now dear loved ones, each and all, take courage, have no fear,
we have an important work to do, we are all modern day pioneers.

Our temple doors are open wide, let us each one enter in,
and save ourselves by serving and doing work for our worthy kin.

When we meet in reunion over there, and hand in our report,
let us be prepared to look Nancy Jane and Jonathan in the eye, receive their blessing,
and not be empty handed or fall short of their expectations."