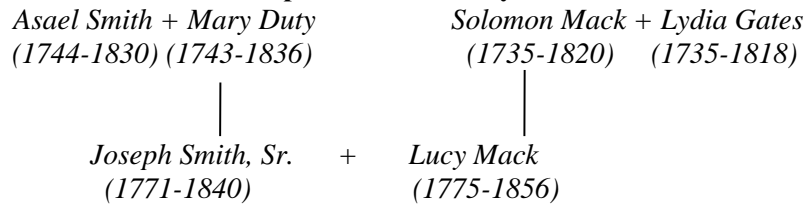


What is history? What is a witness? What is a testimony? What is a trusted source?

Joseph Smith Papers.org; <http://broadcast2.lds.org/ldradio/JosephSmithPapers/2011-07-0160-first-vision-part-1-importance-64k-eng.mp3>; <http://churchhistorylibrary.lds.org>; FAIR—<http://www.fairlds.org/>; BYU Studies; Encyclopedia of Mormonism, BookofMormonCentral.com; BYU Religious Study Center, Deseret Book; etc.

Joseph Smith’s Family



Unnamed Alvin Hyrum Sophronia Joseph Samuel Ephraim William Catherine Don Carlos Lucy
(1799-1824) (1800-44) (1803-76) (1805-44) (1808-44) (1810-10) (1811-93) (1812-92) (1816-41) (1821-82)

Emma Hales (1804-1879)

Alvin, Louisa+Thadius, Julia+Joseph Murdock, Joseph III, Fredrick, Alexander, Don Carlos, Unnamed Son, David Hyrum
(1828)(Twins-1831) (1831-1880)(1831-1832) (1832-1914)(1836-1862)(1838-1909)(1840-41) (1842) (1844-1904)

Smith Family Background

Joseph Smith’s culture and kin stimulated many of his questions about revelation. The social and religious background of Joseph Smith’s family had a significant impact on the direction of his questions and answers. His father, Joseph, Sr., led religious “services” each night and morning where the family read the scriptures, sang hymns and knelt in prayer morning and night (Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 37). During the winter of 1830-31 between twelve and twenty neighbors attended the devotionals. In his mother’s autobiography, Lucy Mack Smith recollected, “Whilst we worked with our hands we endeavored to remember the service of & the welfare of our souls” (Lavina Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 323, 34-38). She was “a model of domestic spirituality, a model drawn directly from her New England culture about proper behavior for pious women” (ibid., 17). The Smiths’ fifth son, William, remembered that his mother “made use of every means which her parental love could suggest, to get us engaged in seeking for our soul’s salvation” (Bushman, *Beginnings*, 39). In a brief autobiography Joseph Jr. wrote in 1832, only one sentence dealt with the first decade of his life, and it singled out his religious education at home: “[My] goodly parents spared no pains to instructing me in the Christian religion” (Jessee, *Writings*, 10). For young Joseph, worshipping God was a daily devotion.

Joseph Smith Sr. Divinely Inspired Dreams (two of the seven here)

1. “I seemed to be traveling in an open, barren field, and as I was traveling, I turned my eyes towards the east, the west, the north and the south, but could see nothing save dead, fallen timber. Not a vestige of life, either animal or vegetable, could be seen; besides, to render the scene still more dreary, the most death-like silence prevailed, no sound of anything animate could be heard in all the field. I was alone in this gloomy desert, with the exception of an attendant spirit, who kept constantly by my side. Of him I inquired the meaning of what I saw, and why I was thus traveling in such a dismal place. He answered thus: 'This field is the world, which now lieth inanimate and dumb, in regard to the true religion, or plan of salvation; but travel on, and by the wayside you will find on a certain log a box, the contents of which, if you eat thereof, will make you wise, and give unto you wisdom and understanding.' I carefully observed what was told me by my guide, and proceeding a short distance, I came to the box. I immediately took it up, and placed it under my left arm; then with eagerness I raised the lid, and began to taste of its contents; upon which all manner of beasts, horned cattle, and roaring animals, rose up on every side in the most threatening manner possible, tearing the earth, tossing their horns, and bellowing most terrifically all around me, and they finally came so close upon me, that I was compelled to drop the box and fly for my life. Yet, in the midst of all this I was perfectly happy, though I awoke trembling” (Lucy Smith, *History of Joseph Smith, Revised by Scott & Maurine Proctor*, 47).
2. “I came to a narrow path. This path I entered, and, when I had traveled a little way in it, I beheld a beautiful stream of water, which ran from the east to the west. Of this stream, I could see neither the source nor yet the mouth; but as far as my eyes could extend I could see a rope, running along the bank of it, about as high as a man could reach, and beyond

me was a low, but very pleasant valley, in which stood a tree such as I had never seen before. It was exceedingly handsome, insomuch that I looked upon it with wonder and admiration. Its beautiful branches spread themselves somewhat like an umbrella, and it bore a kind of fruit, in shape much like a chestnut bur, and as white as snow, or, if possible, whiter. I gazed upon the same with considerable interest, and as I was doing so, the burs or shells commenced opening and shedding their particles, or the fruit which they contained, which was of dazzling whiteness. I drew near and began to eat of it, and I found it delicious beyond description. As I was eating, I said in my heart, 'I cannot eat this alone, I must bring my wife and children, that they may partake with me.' Accordingly, I went and brought my family, which consisted of a wife and seven children, and we all commenced eating and praising God for this blessing. We were exceedingly happy, insomuch that our joy could not easily be expressed. While thus engaged, I beheld a spacious building standing opposite the valley which we were in, and it appeared to reach to the very heavens. It was full of doors and windows, and they were all filled with people, who were very finely dressed. When these people observed us in the low valley, under the tree, they pointed the finger of scorn at us, and treated us with all manner of disrespect and contempt. But their contumely we utterly disregarded. I presently turned to my guide and inquired of him the meaning of the fruit that was so delicious. He told me it was the pure love of God, shed abroad in the hearts of all those who love him, and keep his commandments. He then commanded me to go and bring the rest of my children. I told him that we were all there. 'No,' he replied, 'look yonder, you have two more, and you must bring them also.' Upon raising my eyes, I saw two small children, standing some distance off. I immediately went to them, and brought them to the tree; upon which they commenced eating with the rest, and we all rejoiced together. The more we ate, the more we seemed to desire, until we even got down upon our knees and scooped it up, eating it by double handfuls. After feasting in this manner a short time, I asked my guide what was the meaning of the spacious building which I saw. He replied, 'It is Babylon, it is Babylon, and it must fall. The people in the doors and windows are the inhabitants thereof, who scorn and despise the Saints of God because of their humility.' I soon awoke, clapping my hands together for joy" (48-50).

Time Line (adapted from Dean Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 625)

1805	Dec 23	Born at Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont to Joseph and Lucy
1811		Family moved to Lebanon, New Hampshire
1813		Contracted typhus fever; leg operation by Dartmouth Medical team
1816		Family moved to Palmyra, New York
1820	Spring	First Vision in the family Maple tree grove in Palmyra, NY
1823	Sept 21	First Moroni visitation
	Nov 19	Death of brother Alvin
1827	Jan 18	Married Emma Hale at Bainbridge, New York
	Sept 22	Obtained Book of Mormon plates
	Dec	Moved to Harmony, Pennsylvania
1828		116 pages of Book of Mormon lost
	June 15	Son Alvin born; died same day
1829	April 7	Oliver Cowdery begins as scribe in translation the Book of Mormon
	May 13	Aaronic Priesthood received
	June	Finished Book of Mormon translation
1830	March	Book of Mormon published
	April 6	Church organized
June		Visions of Moses revealed
	Dec	Writings of Moses revealed
1831	Jan	Moved to Kirtland, Ohio
	Spring	Commenced revision of the Bible
	April 30	Twins (Thaddeus + Louisa) born; lived only three hours
	May 9	Adopted Murdock twins, Joseph and Julia
	June 19	Started for Jackson County, Missouri
	July	Revelation designating site for city of Zion (D&C 57)
	Sept 12	Moved to Hiram, Ohio
	Dec	Preached in area of Kirtland-Ravenna, Ohio, to counteract effects of anti-articles in <i>Ohio Star</i>
1832	Jan 25	Sustained as president of High Priesthood at Amherst, Ohio, conference
	Feb 16	Revelation of post-mortal state of mankind (D&C 76)
	Mar 24	Tarred and feathered by mob at Hiram, Ohio
	Mar 29	Adopted son, Joseph Murdock died