

HISTORY OF THOMAS X SMITH

Thomas X Smith was born the 25th of December, 1828, at Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire, England. He was the seventh son in the family of nine born to George Smith and Patience Timpson. His father was an agricultural laborer and his mother was a school mistress. While still a young man he learned the profession of braiding straw for making fine hats. He brought some of the hats from England when he returned from a mission and gave them to his daughters and they were beautiful. He joined the L.D.S. Church 19 March, 1849, in Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire, England. After that his family, neighbors, and friends would not have anything to do with him. They lived on High Street in Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire, England. He married Margaret Gurney the 2 January 1851. One year later on the 5th of January, 1852, their eldest daughter Lucy, was born. In March of 1853, they left all behind to come to America. They were only able to take a few necessities of their earthly possessions. They came in a sailing vessel and had a hard rough trip on the water three months. They signed a note to the Church for their passage and paid it in full. They landed in New Orleans, then went on to St. Louis by boat, where they fitted out for a trip of fifteen hundred miles or more to Utah, crossing the plains by way of Omaha, Nebraska. They were in Capt. Brown's company of 60 or more ox teams.

On reaching the plains of Iowa near the present city of Keokuk on the 4th of July, 1853, at 3:00 a.m. Orson was born in a wagon. Their wagon and one other were permitted to halt for two days and ordered to proceed as rapidly as possible to overtake the train. For three months they rode in that wagon over plains, rivers and mountains to the uninhabited valleys of Utah. He had not had any experience in driving ox teams, so this was a trial for him. They were blessed and reached Salt Lake City, Utah, the 1st of October, 1853. Friends were very good to them and helped them a great deal.

They settled in Farmington where he procured an acre of land on which he built an adobe house 16 by 20 ft. with a fireplace in the west end. There was a door in the east and a window on the south side. There was a dirt floor and roof of boards. He cultivated the lot and raised a good garden after the first season. Food was scarce and they were forced to eat native greens and sego roots, and wild potatoes that were found in the bottom lands.

Uncle George Smith, his brother, and Aunt Catherine and their family of 3 children located about forty rods south and built a cabin there. Here for three years the struggle for existence was a real battle. Hatters by trade back in England and eight months of travel by land and sea, dropped them down in a wilderness with no experience in roughing it, was their situation. He learned to be quite an expert at driving oxen although he had never yoked a pair before. Now came the tug of war. It was do or die. They set out to work. A bake oven was the principle cooking utensil. It served as bread baker, meat and vegetable cooker, soups and mush also. All was done on an open fireplace. Flour was a luxury, so that the short and bran were mixed and often used as a substitute. Thus they managed to live, a living faith, a fixed purpose and a determination to succeed.

A Heaven born courage and with God's help they won out over all discouraging obstacles.

Then came the sad word that a U.S. Army was on its way to Utah to destroy the Mormons. Men were called to arms. Among them was Thomas X. They drilled as best they could. They hadn't any weapons with which to defend themselves. He acted as a scout during this time. They marched into Echo Canyon to prevent the army from entering the valley. Margaret and three children were left to shift for themselves but good neighbors were always ready to help. They were so kindly disposed. They took up the load and helped to see them through that period. When he returned from Echo Canyon his two children, Lucy and Orson walked up the street to meet him hand in hand, scantily clad, barefooted, but jubilant in spirit to meet their father, in high hopes of his having something for them. He kissed them, but what a disappointment. He was worse clad than they. Ragged shirt, pants and shoes, a powder horn held by a strap over one shoulder, a bullet pouch over the other, an old musket Kentucky rifle, no hat, long beard, a motley sight for a young child to behold, However, his family was thrilled to have him home.

Now came another change to meet which required additional faith and courage. Word came for all to move South as the army was coming. He took his little family and with Tom and Electy Hunt and all their belongings, were loaded into one wagon drawn by one ox and a cow, pig and chickens, and everything they owned except some books they had buried in the ground in a trunk. Away they went, not knowing where they were destined. The first camp was made in Salt Lake City, Some good friends invited them in out of the rain. As the children approached a good fire blazing across the room they saw what they thought was a great pan of biscuits. They rushed up in anticipation of getting one to appease their hunger only to find it to be a hearth made from sun dried bricks.

They were on the move the next morning on their way to somewhere. On this journey in some unaccountable manner the pig and Orson fell out of the wagon. The pig was missed and they went back to find it and found them both together. After three days of travel they reached Clover Creek, Utah County, and on Cheney's ranch they pitched their teepee for the winter of '56 and '57. They had left houses all along the way filled with combustible material ready to set fire to by a squad of men left for that purpose, providing the soldiers undertook to take possession, or destroy in any manner any of the buildings. They marched through without halting or breaking ranks to a place in Cedar Valley, forty miles south of Salt Lake City. They camped and called it Camp Floyd. At this place they stayed until the Civil War broke out, when they disbanded, some going to the South and some going to the Northern armies. They came with a vow to destroy the Mormons and as a curse they left to be destroyed in that fratricidal war, and left us with a blessing of teams, wagons, merchandise of all kinds. There were foodstuffs and other needful things.

After a hard and cold winter word came that the Smiths could return to their home, which they did as soon as possible. They found their place as they had left it although wet got into the books and spoiled them. It was quite a loss. Their neighbors were the Earls,

Mannings, Gleasons, Wellings, Letheads, Hunts, Rogers, Smiths, their uncle and his family, the Clarks, Steeds, Hesses, Leonards, Broadbents, Wilcoxes, Elises, Williams, and Morgans. They were all fine people and full of faith and helpfulness.

So passed the year of 1857. Many of those men, including Thomas X, formed a brass band and made music for the town. William Knowles was a moving leader for the musically inclined, especially the children, and many good times were enjoyed in music, and drama under his leadership. Thus another winter was spent.

In the spring of 1859, Thomas X went north to Logan, Cache County, with others. Here he built a log house, came back to Farmington, took his family, which numbered six altogether—Thomas X, Margaret, Lucy, Orson, James, and Thomas. James fell in the fire and was badly burned and died. Thomas X and George took the little coffin under their arms to the cemetery and buried it. There was no other ceremony. Thomas Edwin had a similar accident, but survived it, but the shock affected his heart ever afterwards until he died at 16 years old.

The Smith house stood on the west side of what is known as the George Ferrell Block. To reach Logan they had to travel north through Ogden, Brigham City, Deweyville, over the Collingston Hill, into Cache Valley by way of Mendon and Wellsville, around by Hyrum, Millville, and Providence. It was all wilderness then. They forded all the streams and the Logan River, near where the River Heights bridge was later put. It was the north branch of the river and the larger of the two. They arrived at their home in the fall of 1859. It was chinked or plastered. The wagon box was placed on the east end of the house for a bedroom for the children, and thus they all passed a severe winter. The snow fell 3 feet deep on the level. Their faith was strong and God did make the back for the burden.

From this home the children began going to school, which was located on the J. R. Edwards lot on Center and Second West Street. It was a log house 36 by 18 ft. The teacher was John B. Thatcher at first and later a Mr. Savage and Aaron DeWitt and Richard Evans.

After living on the Farrell Block for three years, Thomas X moved his family onto the corner of Second North and First East, one and one fourth acres in size was his lot. Here he built another log house 16 by 18 ft. A door was on the west, a window on the south, and it was fenced with four pole fence. They built stables and sheds covered with willows and straw. The neighbors were Charles Hurst on the West, Charles Barrett on the east, Robert Chambers on the north, and Neile Mickelson on the south with John Dahle closest one of them all.

Now they had plenty of food. The land was rich and crops abundant when they could harvest them. The grasshopper pest and the cricket pest were terrible. They would hatch out every spring for a number of years, so thick that the children were out every day to keep them from devouring the crops. They drove them into trenches and threw dirt on them and destroyed them in every way. When they could fly they kept them in the air

with sheets, caps, and other things, so they could not rest and eat the crops. Rollers were placed across the canals which ran by flutter wheel water power that ground them, especially the ones 2 x 1 inches large. They were driven into canals and crushed by two rollers, one above and one below. Another way was to place straw in piles around the farm, when straw was available, and they would gather on that in the evening to keep off the cool ground by the millions, and then they would burn them. By these simple means and great diligence they managed to save food and seed grain during the years of the hopper war. Finally they died off and left the country. Both pests became extinct, so that they have never wrought the great destruction that they did then.

Here they found the Indian in all his primitiveness. Cache Valley was a paradise for them. There were fish in abundance in all the streams. Elk, moose, deer, and some buffalo came straying into the valley. A few deaths by the Indians were recorded. The wise leaders, patient and friendly handling of them, feeding them when they were hungry, at last won them over in Cache Valley. Thomas X was certainly one of these. Two or three children were stolen from the whites in this valley. Indians would come into Logan by the thousand and demand food and the people would donate oxen, kill and cook them and feed them. They said the pioneers were living on their land and eating their fish and game and they should be fed. They did until they became extinct or gathered onto reservations as a remnant of their greatness—conquered, subdued, and broken, before the onward march of a greater and more powerful civilization. Thomas X never had any real trouble with them. He learned to love them and pity their plight. He always defended them and settled their difficulties. He said, “If you will just make an Indian your friend he will always be one,” and this he proved over and over again. There were Washike, Sagwich, and Arimo chiefs. Thomas X was always kind to them and saved the people many times by his influence among them. They greatly respected him. There were Bannocks, Shoshones, Utahs, Piutes, Pieads, Blackfeet, Bloods, Idahoes, Navahoes, Nez Perce and many more tribes.

All these things, with roads to build, canals to make, meeting and school houses to build, fencing of lots of farms all kept the people busy both day and night. Thomas X was a real leader and constantly on the go. His own and public work took all his time and attention. He was City Alderman for a number of years and then City Judge for years. He was prominent in every move for building up the new commonwealth. In 1865 Logan City was divided into four ecclesiastical wards and he was made Bishop of the Fourth Ward, and held that honored position for 46 years, until he died at age 78. He was honored and beloved by all who knew him. His family shared everything he did. What a heritage he left in faith, courage, determination, love for God’s truths, honesty, integrity, and loyalty to principles. It is a responsibility upon his descendants to see each one do his part as nobly as he did his. May their lives reflect credit on him and his labors.

He was just 21 years old when he came to America. Margaret was 20. Their folks didn’t go to see them off after they joined the Church.

He was called to fill a mission in 1880 to England. While there his dear wife Margaret died leaving him with a large family, eleven children. In 1869 he married as a second

wife Ann Howe in the Salt Lake Endowment House. To this union there were also eleven children born. He was a congenial companion; he never complained or hurt anyone knowingly.

They were like every pioneer man and woman, a great giant in strength. His testimony was truly burned into his soul, that he would have surely laid down his life for the Gospel. He helped build the temple and acted on the school board, and was justice of the peace.

He never said to his ward members, "Go and do this or that," but, "Come, let us do these things." He was loved by his ward members, his families and grandchildren, and all who knew him. He was respected by them all.

He died the 1st of January, 1906, in Logan, Utah. His ward members placed a large granite stone on his grave as a token of their love for him. He left a large posterity. They were his wealth. May they ever follow in his path of great faith, honesty, integrity, love for his fellowmen, and energy, kindness, thoughtfulness, and consideration to all.

At the time of his death he had three wives and sixteen living children, fifty-four grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren. He was the last and youngest of his family and closed his earthly labors in the last hour of the day and month and year of 1906, December 31st. He never sought great honors or public acclaim, but was content to go through life a worker, a helper of the needy and disheartened, a good Samaritan, never giving up hope or getting discouraged, but always looking at the brighter side of things and helping others to do so.

One could not close his life without paying tribute to his lovely families. They had to make their way and did so happily and helped him in every way they could. They followed in his footsteps and helped everyone who needed it, and always cheered those who touched their lives. Their lovely homes were truly institutions that stood for the finest this life offers.

(This history was probably written by Margaret Jane Carpenter Smith Watson, oldest child of Orson Gurney Smith)

A LETTER WRITTEN TO THOMAS X SMITH FROM THE CHILDREN (By his son Orson)

Dear and Honored Father:

It is but little that words can do, to express the feelings of the heart, and is by no means satisfying to us, on this your 72nd birthday. It would have been most pleasing to us to have met in a family reunion and there in deeds and words and actions, shown more deeply our appreciation for so noble and good ancestor. We congratulate you on attaining so great an age, and such perfect health. That God blessed you we cannot

doubt. We have not known much of our ancestry, but that little learned, places them high in our esteem, and estimation, and stamps them as God's elect.

Your faith has been enduring, unshaken through inclement seasons when, to be clad only sparsely was a luxury; unshaken through adversity and made perfect through trial and suffering. It has endured through separation from kindred and home. Changed conditions, from the factory and farm, in the wilderness and desert, throughout that ever memorable journey over a tractless plain of a thousand miles and its trials and dangers. When the savages threatened destruction by their tomahawk and torch, and the grasshoppers threatened starvation by their consuming every green thing, yet your faith lived on, as if to more thoroughly stamp it as a guiding star of your hope. You have come and gone at the call of God's Holy Priesthood, at the sacrifice of every earthly care; obeyed every known law of God, and parted with youth's early loved companion while complying with these duties. Would that we could reward you while yet alive, for such a legacy as this—you could not leave us greater riches. Our healthy constitutions, our introductions to the Gospel, our location in this beautiful land and our glorious opportunities of the ever coming future, originate in you. If we do not appreciate and grasp them it is no fault of yours. We esteem them of far more value than anything else in this world. It is a beacon of light that will ever shine out as our guiding star, and our generations will call thee blessed, down to the last. Let your heart be comforted, for through you this life in the near or distant future you leave your posterity wealthy. A wealth of example in honesty, faith, kindness and patience, and these endureth forever.

We trust that your days may be many yet on earth, to bless us with your presence and council. And to fully assure you that these are the sentiments of our heart, we subscribe ourselves,

Your loving children

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH AND FUNERAL SERVICES OF THOMAS X
SMITH AS WAS PUBLISHED IN THE LOGAN JOURNAL

HIS DEVOTION OF THE CAUSE OF CHRIST A MARKED FEATURE OF HIS CAREER. Few men of this community, or any other for that matter have been more useful, faithful citizens than the late Thomas X Smith. He was not one who sought great honors or public acclaim, but was content to go through life as a worker, a helper of the needy and the disheartened—a good Samaritan—never giving up hope or getting discouraged, but always looking at the brighter side of things and helping others to do so.

The greater part of his life was devotion to the service of his fellowmen, largely in an ecclesiastical way, of course, but never the less a public service. He never got rich at it either, accumulating but a scanty store of this world's goods, despite his great industry. He did a great and good work and those who knew him feel that his reward is sure.

Bishop Smith was the son of George and Patience Timpson Smith, and was born at Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire, England on December 25, 1828. He became a member of the Church on March 13, 1849, and emigrated to Utah in 1854 (1853) He crossed the plains in John Brown's company (Appleton M. Harmon Company), and reached Salt Lake City October 1, 1854, (1853). For six years thereafter he lived at Farmington. He went out into Echo Canyon as a scout, when the trouble occurred there, and later, when danger seemed imminent, he moved to Payson.

In the summer of 1860 (1859) he came to Cache Valley. He built a house here in Logan and moved his family into the valley in November of that year (spring of 1860). He was called to act as Bishop on April 16, 1861, and for nearly 46 years he held that position, discharging its many duties to the satisfaction of all. He filled many other positions, such as member on the City Council, the Board of Education, City Judge. He also filled a mission to England, his first wife dying while he was away.

Always an industrious and practical man, he did much in a material way to help build up this section. He was one of those who helped to dig the canals, build the roads and bridges, and develop the natural resources of the county. He was the youngest and last of the family and closed his earthly labors in the last hour of the day, month, and year of 1906. He was the father of twenty-two children, 16 of whom survived. He had 62 grandchildren, 52 of whom are living and nine great-grand children. Two wives survive him.

REPORT OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR THOMAS X SMITH

Thomas X Smith was buried yesterday, the funeral services being held in the tabernacle. A great throng of people assembled to pay their respects to the departed leader, the whole lower floor being filled, while many were in the galleries. The tabernacle choir was present and rendered appropriate and very beautiful music. President Charles Hart offered the opening prayer and Elder Thomas Morgan, who was associated with the deceased in the Fourth Ward Bishopric for nearly 30 years was the first speaker. He was very much affected. He said he felt he had suffered a personal bereavement in the death of Bishop Smith. He said he had been intimately acquainted with him for over forty years and knew him to be a man of sterling qualities. His soul was wrapped up in the work of God, the welfare of the gospel being always his first concern.

Thomas A Smith was about as good a man as one could find anywhere. His family was devoted to him, a fact that brought the greatest satisfaction and pleasure to him during his illness.

Elder Thomassen, the other counselor in the bishopric mentioned that Elder Morgan had spoken his sentiments exactly. No man could know Thomas X Smith and not respect and love him.

President Isaac Smith said he knew the deceased as a man of integrity and faithfulness. His first thought was of the gospel. "If I can make as good a record as Bishop Thomas X Smith made," said the speaker, "then indeed shall I be grateful." He was always obedient to the authorities of the Church and as nearly perfect as any man could be.

Apostle John Henry Smith said he knew of no higher attainment in this world than a condition of that of the deceased. He sacrificed all for the gospel's sake, labored unceasingly all his life to promote its welfare and now has gone to a great reward. To have honored the gospel of Jesus Christ all one's days is certainly a grand and complete triumph. He is a Patriarch by the right of God's promises, a blesser of his race, and he leaves his family the richest heritage human kind can know. The speaker invoked the blessing of God upon the family, urging its members to emulate the example of the departed leader.

Bishop Newbold added a few words of praises and then thanked all the friends of the family for the assistance rendered, and the respect shown the deceased. After a selection by the choir, President William Budge pronounced the benediction.