

Things I can Remember about my Father

Thomas X. Smith

by Marie Smith Kimball

Thomas X. Smith, my father, was born December 25, 1829 at Eaton Bray, Bedfordshire England. On September 27, 1850 at the age of twenty-one he married Margaret Gurney. When the young couple joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints their family told them to leave and never return. Many years later Thomas did return to England while on a church mission. He wanted to see his parents but they refused to see him. My father later told me that he had once been offered a large sum of money by his family, if he would renounce the Mormon Church. He refused to give it up.

He was loved by all and respected by many. The story is told by Dr. Joel E. Ricks, a professor at the Utah State Agricultural College, that Noble Warrum, a young Indian attorney, had come to Salt Lake City with his bride to practice his profession. The antagonism was so intense between the Mormon and the anti-Mormon groups that it disgusted the young lawyer, who decided to return to the Midwest. Before leaving Utah, he promised his bride a weeks vacation in beautiful Logan Canyon. While enjoying camping near the inspiring Logan River, they were invited to join a supper party of Logan people who had camped nearby. In the Logan group was Bishop Thomas X. Smith. During the conversation that ensued, Mr. Warrum told why they had come to Utah and why they intended to return home.

"Why don't you stay in Logan and work on our newspaper?" asked Bishop Smith. "I understand they need an experienced editorial writer."

"But," suggested Mr. Warrum, "I'm not a Mormon and they wouldn't want me."

"Well, of course, we are Mormons, but what difference does that make?" asked Bishop Smith. "You'll find that we will never interfere with your religious belief." That was the beginning of a most pleasant association lasting more than six decades between the Indian attorney and the people of Utah. He went to work for the Logan "Nation". Father who was a member of the Cache County Republicans along with James T. Hammond, Charles W. Nibley, Joel Ricks, W.W. Maughan, and Thomas Morgan supported the effects of

In 1853 the young couple, Thomas X. and Margaret left for America on a sailing vessel. After six weeks of stormy weather the ship landed at New Orleans. They traveled by boat up to St. Louis. There they fitted a wagon, joined the John Brown Company composed of sixty teams, and started the journey of over fifteen hundre miles to Utah. On reaching the plains of Iowa,, Orson, the oldest son, was born in the wagon. The little family stopped for two days, then proceeded as rapidly as possible to over take the company.

For three months they traveled over the plains, rivers and mountains to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, settling first in Farmington in Sept. 1853. Father secured one acre of land on which he built an adobe house 16' X 20'. It had a fireplace, one door, a window, a roof and a dirt floor. The land was then cultivated. Rain made the first season abundant in garden produce. Until the garden matured they lived on native greens, seggroot, and wild potatoes. Father's brother Uncle George Smith and Catherine Smith lived on the same lot. For three years they all struggled for existence.

Being hatters by trade back in England, they were ill-equipped for the rough life. Father had never put a yoke on an ox in his life but in time he became an expert. Thus they survived the first three with the help of God.

Then came the word that Johnson's army was coming to destroy the Normons. Men were called to Arms. Father was among the ones called. They drilled as best they could. Then they marched twenty-seven miles to Echo Canyon, there to prevent the army from entering the valley. They left behind their wives and children to shift for themselves. However, good neighbors were ready to help while the young men were gone.

Father returned from Echo Canyon a pitiful sight, wearing, a ragged shirt, shoes with holes in them, and torn pants. He had a powder horn slung over one shoulder, and a bullet pouch over the other. He carried an old mussel loader, Kentucky rifle, no hat, and had a long beard. He was truely a sight for his children to see, but they were glad for his safe return.

Then he was ordered south with his little family, a pig and a few chickens in a wagon drawn by one ox and a cow. They traveled for three days to Utah County. On the Cheney's ranch father pitched

a teepee made like that of the Indians. There they stayed the winter of 1856-and-1857. It was a hard winter with deep snow. The cattle died from cold and insufficient food. When spring came the word came that the family could go home. So they left as soon as possible. The little family was glad to get to the shelter of their Farmington home.

In 1857-58 the neighbors formed a band. Father was a member. They played music for the town. William Knowles was the leader. They enjoyed music,^{did} drama and had many good times.

In 1859 Father went alone north to Logan. There he built a log house. He returned for his family, who now numbered six.

A sad accident happened to to the family when James fell into a fire and was burned to death. Father and his brother George Smith made the coffin and buried the body.

The family arrived in Logan in the fall of 1859. It was cold that winter. Father put the wagon box on the east end of the house for a bed for the children. They stuffed all the cracks as best they could to keep the cold out. The snow was three feet deep on the level ground with continual zero weather. In the spring they had plenty of food; the land was rich and the crops abundant. Then the grasshoppers came. The earth looked like a living crawling mass. Men, women, and children were out every day driving them into trenches and up in the air so that they could not eat the crops.

At this time there were hundreds of Indians in this valley. Father always fed them and was kind to them. In return he was always loved by them.

There was plenty of work to do to keep the people busy in the new settlement, roads to build, canals to make, meeting and school houses to build and fencing of lots and farms. Father was a real leader, and was constantly on the go. His public work took all of his time and attention.

He was city alderman for a number of years, and city judge for sixteen years. In 1865 Logan City divided into four wards. Father was made Bishop of the Fourth ward, and held that position for 46 years. He was honored and respected by all who knew him. He went on a mission to England. Margaret died while he was there. He baptized one of the first people in Logan. He married Annie Masters Howe in 1868. She was born in Cadefield Warwick England on November 29, 1850. Father and mother were married in the en-

dowment house in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah.

Before coming to America Annie's family and herself were converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints by Apostol Moses Thatcher. When she came to America she lived with the Thatcher family for six months before she went with her family to American Fork, Utah to pioneer that area. Her father, Thomas Howe lived to be 96. He loved to dance and always danced with the young girls. Her mother died at the age of sixty seven.

At a public meeting held at Logan September 8, 1869 (in consequence of the great destruction of the crops the last three or four years by grasshoppers, blackbirds, cattle, etc. and also the prospect of an abundance of grasshoppers the next season) it was resolved that the people should convert the farming land in Logan into a co-operative farm for the term of one year, and that as much of the land as might be necessary for the raising of fall wheat, should be selected in one body, so that each man's portion or crop of wheat might join with his neighbors. President William B. Preston was elected President of the enterprise and Thomas X. Smith, Benjamin N. Lewis, Henry Ballard and B. Wolfenstein his assistants to carry the above resolution into effect.

Cache Valley was first organized into the church-wide United order on May 2, 1874, when Brigham Young, Jr. was elected President; second vice-president G.L. Farrell, Secretary: Orson Smith, and Thomas X. Smith was elected treasurer.

Thomas X. Smith died on January 1, 1901 at Logan, Cache County, Utah. He was the father of twenty-two children.