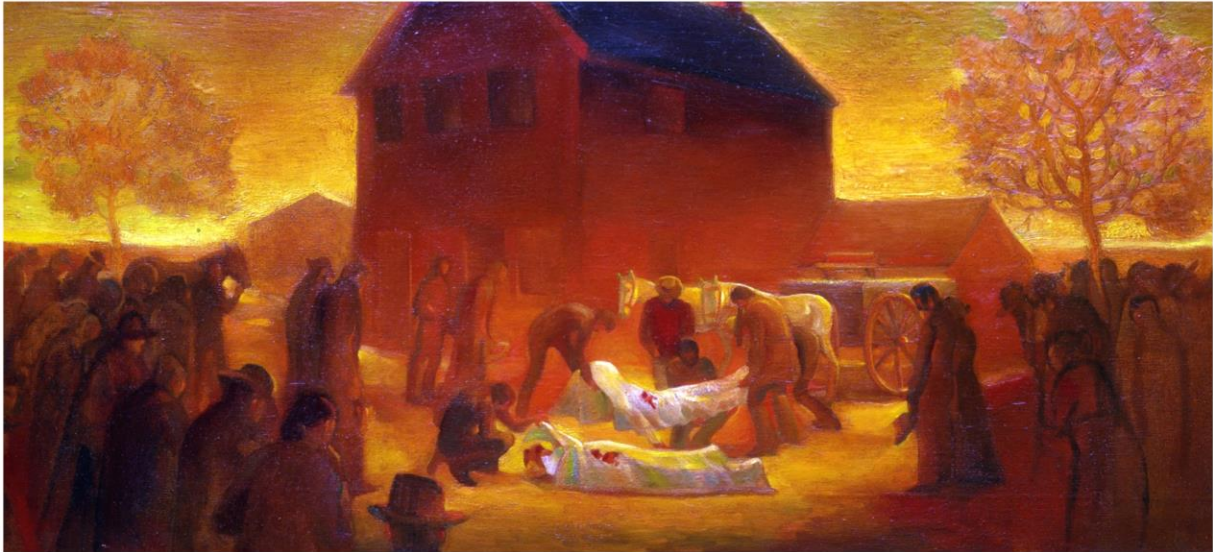


“My Heart Seemed Crushed”



The martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, in June 1844, was the most emotionally devastating event in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Today we talk about its impact on the church, but what about the families who were impacted? How did it affect the Smith family? Martha Ann Smith Harris was the youngest daughter of Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith. She shares the following account of those days:

I was three years old when my dear father was taken from the bosom of his family and from his friends. When he bid them the last farewell and gave them the last farewell kiss. I remember well the night that he was murdered. I had the measles, I had taken cold and it had settled on my lungs, I could not speak above my breath. I begged of my dear mother to lie down to rest, but she walked the floor all night. She never lay down to rest once. She would read the Bible awhile then walk again, until the day began to dawn.

There was a knock on the door. Mother asked who was there and the answer was “George Grant.” She opened the door and asked, “What is the news?” He gave answer that Joseph and Hyrum were both murdered! My poor mother stepped back calmly exclaiming, “It cannot be” He gave answer, “Yes, it is true.”

She fell back against the cupboard and Brother Grant helped her to a chair. The news flew like wildfire through the house. Those cries of agony that went through the soul of everyone were terrible. The anguish and sorrow that was felt can easier be felt than described. It will never be forgotten by those who were called to pass through it.... I can remember many little things of my beloved father's death.

How sad and sorrowful my mother would look. She scarcely ever smiled. If we could get her to laugh we thought we had accomplished quite a feat. I never saw her more than smile. Oh how I loved my mother; I feared to displease her. I would rather burn my hand than vex my mother. I can see the sorrowful look now. Those years were the severe trial of my life. I felt that I did not care to live any longer; my heart seemed crushed. I was not old enough at the time of my father's death to fully realize it, as I did the loss of my mother. I felt the world was a blank after my mother's death. Many times I felt the keen want of a loving mother to comfort me in trials that I had to pass through. It was a sore bereavement which I felt that I could never wear out with time."



Thus is a glimpse into the impact on the Smith children of the loss of Joseph and Hyrum.

Source:

Letter written by Martha Ann Smith Harris March 21, 1881 and available at <https://suponline.org/2020/12/pioneer-stories/mary-ann-smith/> and <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KWNN-XB8>

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