
Don Carlos Smith

1816–1841

D&C 124:133

Of his brother Don Carlos Smith, the Prophet Joseph wrote, “[He] was one of the first to receive my testimony.”¹ Don Carlos entered baptismal waters on June 9, 1830. He journeyed to Kirtland with his family in obedience to the command to gather to Ohio. The day after arriving in Kirtland, a meeting was held in the Isaac Morley home. The Smiths were “very much fatigued from their journey, and during the meeting Don Carlos fell asleep in his chair, and after several had spoken he awoke and arose and bore as strong a testimony as I ever heard, of the truth of the work,” wrote James Rollins.²

At age nineteen, Don Carlos was ordained a high priest. He was appointed by his brother Joseph to be the first president of the high priests quorum. He was also asked to be the editor of the *Elders' Journal*, his first experience working in a printing office. He was successful in the print business until a blazing fire destroyed the office. When the mob element in Kirtland issued handbills accusing him of illegally solemnizing marriages, Don Carlos fled from the community.

In spring of 1838, he journeyed to Virginia and Pennsylvania, soliciting funds to help remove the Smith families out of Ohio to Missouri. With needed monies in hand, on May 7, 1838, Don Carlos and his extended family began their journey to Missouri. After a few days of travel, he said to his father, “This exposure is too bad, and I will not bear it any longer, the first place that I come to that looks comfortable, I shall drive up and go into

¹ History, 1838–1856, volume C-1 Addenda, 12. Joseph Smith Papers.

² James Rollins Autobiography, typescript, 2. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

the house, and do you follow me." His father agreed and at the nearest farmhouse, Don Carlos said to the owner,

I do not know but that I am trespassing, but I have with me an aged father, who is sick, besides my mother, and a number of women with small children. We have traveled two days and a half in this rain, and if we are compelled to go much further, we shall all of us die. If you will allow us to stay with you over night, we will pay you almost any price for our accommodation.³

The Smiths were given shelter and food.

After settling his family in Far West, Missouri, Don Carlos served a mission to Tennessee and Kentucky, soliciting funds so the Latter-day Saints in Daviess County, Missouri, could purchase property. When he returned to Far West, he learned that in "his absence, his wife and two little children were driven by the mob from his habitation, and she was compelled to carry her children three miles, through snow three inches deep, and wade through Grand river, which was waist deep, during the inclement weather."⁴

Don Carlos joined his family in Illinois. In the swamplands of Commerce, he was often called upon to "visit all the sick, exercise mighty faith, and administer to them in the name of Jesus Christ, commanding the destroyer to depart, and the people to arise and walk."⁵ Through the blessings of the Lord, he witnessed many miraculous healings.

Don Carlos played a prominent role in the city of Nauvoo. He was an editor of the *Times and Seasons*, president of the high priests quorum (see D&C 124:133), a member of the Nauvoo City Council, Brigadier General in the Nauvoo Legion, and a regent of the University of the City of Nauvoo.

As to his physical stature at that time, his sister Catherine said that "Don Carlos Smith was the handsomest man she ever saw when dressed in his uniform as an officer of the Nauvoo legion and riding his charger on parade."⁶ Norton Jacob shared her view and wrote, "There was a splendid military parade and review of the Nauvoo Legion. ...

³ Lucy Mack Smith, *History*, 1844–1845, Page [10], bk. 16. Joseph Smith Papers.

⁴ *History*, 1838–1856, volume C-1 Addenda, Document Transcript. Joseph Smith Papers.

⁵ *History*, 1838–1856, volume C-1 Addenda, 18. Joseph Smith Papers.

⁶ H. S. Salisbury, "Prophet's Sister," typescript, 1. Church History Library.

present in command [was] Brigadier Don Carlos Smith, a noble looking young man.”⁷ The Prophet Joseph gave a physical description of his brother: “He was six feet four inches high, was very straight and well made, had light hair, and was very strong and active. His usual weight when in health was two hundred pounds.” More importantly, the Prophet Joseph said that Don Carolos “was universally beloved by the Saints.”⁸

In 1840 he received a blessing from his father and was told, “You shall be great in the sight of the Lord, for he sees and knows the integrity of your heart, and you shall be blessed, all that know you shall bless you. Your wife and your children shall also be blessed, and you shall live to fulfill all that the Lord has sent you to do.”⁹ On the morning of August 7, 1841, Don Carlos died at age twenty-five. The cause of death was respiratory illness. He was buried with military honors. The Prophet Joseph wrote, “Don Carlos Smith was a noble boy, I never knew any fault in him. ... He was a lovely, a good-natured, a kind-hearted and a virtuous and a faithful upright child; and where his soul goes, let mine go also.”¹⁰

⁷ Norton Jacob Autobiography, typescript, 6. L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

⁸ Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:399.

⁹ Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–1845*, Page [6], bk. 18. Joseph Smith Papers.

¹⁰ *Reflections and Blessings*, 16 and 23 August 1842, 180. Joseph Smith Papers.