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Amanda Smith

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Abstract: A biographical essay of Amanda Smith, an early Latter-day Saint convert and a survivor of the Hawn's Mill Massacre, where she lost her husband and one of her sons to the mob.

of President Joseph Young, July 16, 1881, and of Levi W. Hancock, June 10, 1882, were filled by the ordination of Abraham H. Cannon as one of the Seven Presidents, Oct. 9, 1882, and Seymour B. Young, Oct. 16, 1882.

Elder John Van Cott died Feb. 18, 1883, and Christian Daniel Fjeldsted was called to fill the vacancy. He was ordained April 28, 1884, after his return from Scandinavia.

The demise of Elder Wm. W. Tay-

lor, Aug. 1, 1884, caused another vacancy, which was filled Oct. 7, 1884, by the ordination of John Morgan to be one of the Seven Presidents.

The council now stands as follows:

Henry Harriman,
Horace S. Eldredge,
Jacob Gates,
Abraham H. Cannon,
Seymour B. Young,
Christian D. Fjeldsted,
John Morgan.

AMANDA SMITH.

Amanda Smith, wife of Elder Warren Smith and a survivor of the Haun's Mill massacre, was born in Salem, Massachusetts, Feb. 22, 1809. While she was but a young girl she moved with her parents to Ohio, and married at the age of 18 years. She was a member of the Campbellite Church, together with Sidney Rigdon and others once prominent in that church, until she heard the fulness of the gospel preached. When 22 years of age she was baptized by Elder Orson Hyde into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1, 1831, the Church being then not quite one year old. Soon afterwards she moved to Kirtland, where she assisted in building the Temple, and in 1838, with her husband and family and many others, she was forced to leave that place, on account of mob violence. They wended their way to Missouri, leaving all their property, except what they could take in a wagon with two horses.

The following interesting narrative is from "The Women of Mormondom"

by Edward W. Tullidge, as written by Amanda Smith:

"We sold our beautiful home in Kirtland for a song, and traveled all summer to Missouri—our teams poor, and with hardly enough to keep body and soul together.

"We arrived in Caldwell County, near Haun's Mill, nine wagons of us in company. Two days before we arrived we were taken prisoners by an armed mob that had demanded every bit of ammunition and every weapon we had. We surrendered all. They knew it, for they searched our wagons.

"A few miles more brought us to Haun's Mill, where that awful scene of murder was enacted. My husband pitched his tent by a blacksmith shop.

"Brother David Evans made a treaty with the mob that they would not molest us. He came just before the massacre and called the company together and they knelt in prayer.

"I sat in my tent. Looking up I suddenly saw the mob coming—the same that took away our weapons. They came like so many demons or wild Indians.

"Before I could get to the blacksmith's shop door to alarm the brethren, who were at prayers, the bullets were whistling amongst them.

"I seized my two little girls and es-

caped across the mill-pond on a slab-walk. Another sister fled with me. Yet though we were women, with tender children, in flight for our lives, the demons poured volley after volley to kill us.

"A number of bullets entered my clothes, but I was not wounded. The sister, however, who was with me, cried out that she was hit. We had just reached the trunk of a fallen tree, over which I urged her, bidding her to shelter there where the bullets could not reach her, while I continued my flight to some bottom land.

"When the firing had ceased I went back to the scene of the massacre, for there were my husband and three sons, of whose fate I as yet knew nothing.

"As I returned I found the sister in a pool of blood where she had fainted, but she was only shot through the hand. Farther on was lying dead Brother McBride, an aged white-haired revolutionary soldier. His murderer had literally cut him to pieces with an old corn-cutter. His hands had been split down when he raised them in supplication for mercy. Then the monster cleft open his head with the same weapon, and the veteran who had fought for his country, in the glorious days of the past, was numbered with the martyrs.

"Passing on I came to a scene more terrible still to the mother and wife. Emerging from the blacksmith shop was my eldest son, bearing on his shoulders his little brother Alma.

"'Oh! my Alma is dead!' I cried, in anguish.

"'No, mother; I think Alma is not dead. But father and brother Sardius are killed!'"

"What an answer was this to appall me! My husband and son murdered; another little son seemingly mortally wounded; and perhaps before the dreadful night should pass the murderers would return and complete their work!

"But I could not weep then. The fountain of tears was dry; the heart overburdened with its calamity, and

all the mother's sense absorbed in its anxiety for the precious boy which God alone could save by his miraculous aid.

"The entire hip joint of my wounded boy had been shot away. Flesh, hip bone, joint and all had been ploughed out from the muzzle of the gun, which the ruffian placed to the child's hip through the logs of the shop and deliberately fired.

"We laid little Alma on a bed in our tent and I examined the wound. It was a ghastly sight. I knew not what to do. It was night now.

"There were none left from that terrible scene, throughout that long, dark night, but about half a dozen bereaved and lamenting women, and the children. Eighteen or nineteen, all grown men excepting my murdered boy and another about the same age, were dead or dying; several more of the men were wounded, hiding away, whose groans through the night too well disclosed their hiding places, while the rest of the men had fled, at the moment of the massacre, to save their lives.

"The women were sobbing, in the greatest anguish of spirit; the children were crying loudly with fear and grief at the loss of fathers and brothers; the dogs howled over their dead masters and the cattle were terrified with the scent of the blood of the murdered.

"Yet was I there, all that long, dreadful night, with my dead and my wounded, and none but God, as our physician and help.

"'Oh, my Heavenly Father,' I cried, 'what shall I do? Thou seest my poor, wounded boy and knowest my inexperience. Oh, Heavenly Father, direct me what to do!'"

"And then I was directed as by a voice speaking to me.

"The ashes of our fire was still smouldering. We had been burning the bark of the shag-bark hickory; I was directed to take those ashes and make a lye and put a cloth saturated with it right into the wound. It hurt, but little Alma was too near dead to heed it much. Again and again I

saturated the cloth and put it into the hole from which the hip joint had been ploughed, and each time mashed flesh and splinters of bone came away with the cloth; and the wound became as white as chicken's flesh.

"Having done as directed, I again prayed to the Lord and was again instructed as distinctly as though a physician had been standing by speaking to me.

"Near by was a slippery-elm tree. From this I was told to make a slippery-elm poultice and fill the wound with it.

"My eldest boy was sent to get the slippery-elm from the roots, the poultice was made, and the wound, which took fully a quarter of a yard of linen to cover, so large was it, was properly dressed.

"It was then I found vent to my feelings in tears, and resigned myself to the anguish of the hour. And all that night we, a few poor, stricken women, were thus left there with our dead and wounded. All through the night we heard the groans of the dying. Once in the dark we crawled over the heap of dead in the blacksmith's shop to try to help or soothe the sufferers' wants; once we followed the cries of a wounded brother who hid in some bushes from the murderers, and relieved him all we could.

"It has passed from my memory whether he was dead in the morning or whether he recovered.

"Next morning brother Joseph Young came to the scene of the massacre.

"'What shall be done with the dead?' he inquired, in horror and deep trouble.

"There was no time to bury them, for the mob was coming on us. Neither were there left men to dig the graves. All the men, excepting the two or three who had so narrowly escaped, were dead or wounded. It had been no battle, but a massacre indeed.

"'Do anything, Brother Joseph,' I said. 'rather than leave their bodies to the fiends who have killed them.'

"There was a deep, dry well close by. Into this the bodies had to be hurried, eighteen or nineteen in number.

"No funeral service could be performed, nor could they be buried with customary decency. The lives of those who in terror performed the last duty to the dead were in jeopardy. Every moment we expected to be fired upon by the fiends who we supposed were lying in ambush waiting the first opportunity to dispatch the remaining few who had escaped the slaughter of the preceding day. So in the hurry and terror of the moment some were thrown into the well head downwards and some feet downwards.

"But when it came to the burial of my murdered boy Sardius, Brother Joseph Young, who was assisting to carry him on a board to the well, laid down the corpse and declared that he could not throw that boy into this horrible grave.

"All the way on the journey, that summer, Joseph had played with the interesting lad who had been so cruelly murdered. It was too much for one whose nature was so tender as Uncle Joseph's and whose sympathies by this time were quite overwrought. He could not perform that last office. My murdered son was left unburied.

"'Oh, they have left my Sardius unburied in the sun!' I cried, and ran and got a sheet and covered his body.

"There he lay until the next day, and then I, his mother, assisted by his elder brother, had to throw him into the well. Straw and earth were thrown into this rude vault to cover the dead.

"Among the wounded who recovered were Isaac Laney, Nathaniel K. Knight, Mr. Yokum, two brothers by the name of Myers, Tarlton Lewis, Mr. Haun and several others besides Miss Mary Stedwell, who was shot through the hand while fleeing with me, and who, fainting, fell over the log into which the mob shot upwards of twenty balls.

"The crawling of my boys under the bellows in the blacksmith's shop where the tragedy occurred, is an incident familiar to all our people. Alma's hip was shot away while thus hiding. Sardius was discovered after the massacre by the monsters who came in to dispoil the bodies. The eldest, Willard, was not discovered. In cold blood, one Glaze, of Carroll County, presented a rifle near the head of Sardius and literally blew off the upper part of it, leaving the skull empty and dry while the brains and hair of the murdered boy were scattered around and on the walls.

"At this, one of the men, more merciful than the rest, observed:

"'It was a d—d shame to kill those little boys.'

"'D—n the difference!' retorted the other; 'nits make lice!'

"My son, who escaped, also says that the mobocrat William Mann took from my husband's feet, before he was dead, a pair of new boots. From his hiding place, the boy saw the ruffian drag his father across the shop in the act of pulling off his boot.

"'Oh! you hurt me!' groaned my husband. But the murderer dragged him back again, pulling off the other boot; 'and there,' says the boy, 'my father fell over dead.'

"Afterwards this William Mann showed the boots on his own feet, in Far West, saying: 'Here is a pair of boots that I pulled off before the d—d Mormon was done kicking!'

"The murderer Glaze also boasted over the country, as a heroic deed, the blowing off the head of my young son.

"But to return to Alma, and how the Lord helped me to save his life.

"I removed the wounded boy to a house, some distance off, the next day, and dressed his hip; the Lord directing me as before. I was reminded that in my husband's trunk there was a bottle of balsam. This I poured into the wound, greatly soothing Alma's pain.

"'Alma, my child,' I said, 'you believe that the Lord made your hip?'

"'Yes, mother.'

"'Well, the Lord can make something there in the place of your hip, don't you believe he can, Alma?'

"'Do you think that the Lord can, mother?' inquired the child, in his simplicity.

"'Yes, my son,' I replied, 'he has showed it all to me in a vision.'

"Then I laid him comfortably on his face, and said: 'Now you lay like that, and don't move, and the Lord will make you another hip.'

"So Alma laid on his face for five weeks, until he was entirely recovered—a flexible gristle having grown in place of the missing joint and socket, which remains to this day a marvel to physicians.

"On the day that he walked again I was out of the house fetching a bucket of water, when I heard screams from the children. Running back, in affright, I entered, and there was Alma on the floor, dancing around, and the children screaming in astonishment and joy.

"It is now nearly forty years ago, but Alma has never been the least crippled during his life, and he has traveled quite a long period of the time as a missionary of the gospel and a living miracle of the power of God.

"I cannot leave the tragic story without relating some incidents of those five weeks when I was a prisoner with my wounded boy in Missouri, near the scene of the massacre, unable to obey the order of extermination.

"All the Mormons in the neighborhood had fled out of the State, excepting a few families of the bereaved women and children who had gathered at the house of Brother David Evans, two miles from the scene of the massacre. To this house Alma had been carried after that fatal night.

"In our utter desolation, what could we women do but pray? Prayer was our only source of comfort; our Heavenly Father our only helper. None but he could save and deliver us.

"One day a mobber came from the mill with the captain's fiat:

"The captain says if you women don't stop your d—d praying he will send down a posse and kill every d—d one of you!"

"And he might as well have done it, as to stop us poor women praying in that hour of our great calamity.

"Our prayers were hushed in terror. We dared not let our voices be heard in the house in supplication. I could pray in my bed or in silence, but I could not live thus long. This godless silence was more intolerable than had been that night of the massacre.

"I could bear it no longer. I pined to hear once more my own voice in petition to my Heavenly Father.

"I stole down into a corn-field, and crawled into a stout of corn. It was as the temple of the Lord to me at that moment. I prayed aloud and most fervently.

"When I emerged from the corn a voice spoke to me. It was a voice as plain as I ever heard one. It was no silent, strong impression of the spirit, but a *voice*, repeating a verse of the Saints' hymn:

"That soul who on Jesus hath leaned for
repose
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to
shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"

"From that moment I had no more fear. I felt that nothing could hurt me. Soon after this the mob sent us word that unless we were all out of the State by a certain day we should be killed.

"The day came, and at evening came fifty armed men to execute the sentence.

"I met them at the door. They demanded of me why I was not gone? I bade them enter and see their own work. They crowded into my room and I showed them my wounded boy. They came, party after party, until all had seen my excuse. Then they quarreled among themselves and came near fighting.

"At last they went away, all but two. These I thought were detailed to kill us. Then the two returned.

"Madam,' said one, 'have you any meat in the house?'

"No,' was my reply.

"Could you dress a fat hog if one was laid at your door?'

"I think we could!' was my answer.

"And then they went and caught a fat hog from a herd which had belonged to a now exiled brother, killed it and dragged it to my door, and departed.

"These men, who had come to murder us, left on the threshold of our door a meat offering to atone for their repented intention.

"Yet even when my son was well I could not leave the State, now accursed indeed to the Saints.

The mob had taken my horses, as they had the drove of horses, and the beeves, and the hogs, and wagons, and the tents, of the murdered and exiled.

"So I went down into Daviess County (ten miles) to Captain Comstock, and demanded of him my horses. There was one of them in his yard. He said I could have it if I paid five dollars for its keep. I told him I had no money.

"I did not fear the captain of the mob, for I had the Lord's promise that nothing should hurt me. But his wife swore that the mobbers were fools for not killing the women and children as well as the men—declaring that we would 'breed up a pack ten times worse than the first.'

"I left without the captain's permission to take my horse, or giving pay for its keep; but I went into his yard and took it, and returned to our refuge unmolested.

"Learning that my other horse was at the mill, I next yoked up a pair of steers to a sled and went and demanded it also.

"Comstock was there at the mill. He gave me the horse, and then asked if I had any flour.

"No; we have had none for weeks.'

"He then gave me about fifty pounds of flour and some beef, and filled a can with honey.

"But the mill, and the slaughtered beeves which hung plentifully on its walls, and the stock of flour and honey, and abundant spoil besides, had all belonged to the murdered or exiled Saints.

"Yet was I thus providentially, by the very murderers and mobocrats themselves, helped out of the State of Missouri.

"The Lord had kept his word. The soul who on Jesus had leaned for succor had not been forsaken even in this terrible hour of massacre, and in that infamous extermination of the 'Mormons' from Missouri in the years 1838-39.

"One incident more, as a fitting close.

"Over that rude grave—that well—where the martyrs slept, where my murdered husband and boy were entombed, the mobbers of Missouri, with an exquisite fiendishness, which no savages could have conceived, had constructed a rude privy. This they constantly used, with a delight which demons might have envied, if demons are more wicked and horribly beastly than were they."

It was in the depth of winter that Amanda Smith thus was compelled to leave the State of Missouri in an open wagon, and she had to travel

hundreds of miles through snow, frost, mud and storms, with no help but that of an eleven years old boy, with three other children, and one of them the wounded lad, suffering untold hardships. She next located in Illinois, where Nauvoo afterwards was built, and from that city she was again driven by mob violence a few years later. She came to Utah in 1850, and resided continuously in Salt Lake City, until a few months before her death, when she, having become too feeble to live alone, went to Richmond, Cache County, to live with her daughter, Alvira Hendricks, where she died June 30, 1886, being 77 years 4 months and 8 days old. The cause of death was paralysis, superinduced by old age. She passed quietly away, surrounded by children, many relatives and friends. She was the mother of eight children, six of whom were living at the time of her death, and had 67 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren.

Amanda Smith was beloved by all who knew her good works and sterling qualities. She was ever unflinching and firm in her faith in the gospel, and rejoiced to see her children emulate her good works.

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☞ Agreeable to expressed desire of several parties, we will make a special effort to complete the Church Chronology, with alphabetical index, this season. This will necessarily exclude considerable other reading matter for the time being, but we feel assured that it will prove most satisfactory to the subscribers at the close of the volume.

Agents for the RECORD are wanted in Kane, Garfield, Iron, Beaver, Piute, Sevier, Millard, Juab and Tooele Counties, Utah; also in Idaho, Arizona and New Mexico.