



The History of Joseph Smith By His Mother

Lucy Mack Smith

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This Zion's Camp Books special ebook edition has been formatted for ease of reading on Kindle and other ereading devices, with internal links to scriptures cited and footnotes. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together. From Joseph F. Smith's original introduction: The History of the Prophet Joseph Smith, originally entitled, "The History of Mother Smith, by Herself," was written at the dictation of Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet, by Mrs. Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, who acted as her amanuensis. It was taken from the words of Mother Smith and dictated from memory mostly, but she also made use of such historical memoranda of the events related as were within her reach. Of the original manuscript one copy was taken which was left with Lucy Smith, while the original was retained by the writer. This original, Mrs. Coray held in her possession until her arrival in Utah, when she subsequently deposited a copy of it with President Brigham Young. Lucy Smith died near Nauvoo, May 5, 1855, but years prior to this date some of her effects were left in the hands of her son, William Smith, among them being the manuscript copy of this history. From William (who was the last surviving brother of the Prophet, and whose death occurred at Osterdock, Clayton county, Iowa, November 13, 1893,) the document fell (surreptitiously it is declared by George A. Smith) into the hands of Isaac Sheen, who was at one time a member of the Church in Michigan. When in September, 1852, Apostle Orson Pratt went on a mission to England, he called on Mr. Sheen on his way East and being shown the manuscript copy, he purchased it for a certain sum of money, took it to Liverpool with him, where, without revision and without the consent or knowledge of President Young or any of the Twelve, it was published under his direction in 1853. It was afterwards discovered that the book contained errors, occasioned by its not being carefully compared with historical data. Some of the statements in the preface written by Elder Pratt were also in error; one especially that the book was mostly written in the lifetime of the Prophet, and that he had read it with approval, was incorrect, since it was written in 1845, the year following his martyrdom. For these reasons and others, mostly of a financial character, it was disapproved by President Young on August 23, 1865, and the edition was suppressed or destroyed. While some statements contained in the work were considered somewhat overdrawn—a circumstance easily accounted for when we remember the age of Mother Smith, the losses she had sustained in the death of a husband and four sons, and the consequent lapses of her memory—its many merits were fully recognized by the authorities, many of whom were greatly disappointed at the necessity of issuing the order to temporarily suppress its further circulation. Subsequently, a committee of revision was appointed by President Young consisting of President George A. Smith and Judge Elias Smith, cousins of the Prophet, men personally familiar with the family and thoroughly conversant with Church history. They were instructed carefully to revise and correct the original work throughout, which they did, reporting their labors to President Young to his entire satisfaction. The revised and only authentic copy thus prepared and reported upon was retained by President George A. Smith, and shortly after his death, September 1, 1875, it was committed into my keeping, where it has remained until now.

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