

THE FORUM

She stirred an ardent love in Joseph Smith III. Page 2.



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Hurrah! We're Open Again!

By Greg Clark

OK, it wasn't easy.

In fact, it was downright difficult, demanding, and draining.

But reopening the properties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation after more than two years off

because of the COVID-19 pandemic was a lot of other things, too. Things like fulfilling, blessed, and exciting.

"After several years of isolation, it was wonderful to be able to interact with the

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Liberty Hall has reopened its doors and is proving a big draw for students from nearby districts.

RV Association Delivers in Time of Need

By Greg Clark

Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from.... completion of their appointed rounds.

—US Postal Service, unofficial motto

In talking with Rollie Marolf, you get the feeling that he'd feel right at home in deliver-

ing the mail. Instead, he's among volunteers delivering critical aid to Community of Christ's historic sites.

And in helping the properties bounce back from a COVID-19-induced closure, they've faced all kinds of conditions.

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Joseph Smith III Carried an ‘Ardent Love’ for Emmeline Griswold Smith

By Wendy Eaton

In the August 1978 issue of *Restoration Trail Forum*, Carolyn Edwards wrote an article titled “The Women of Liberty Hall.” This article gives short biographies of the three women who were married to Joseph Smith III: Emmeline Griswold, Bertha Madison, and Ada Clark.

Carolyn closed her article with this quote: “Let us not forget these unique, talented, sensitive women that played an important role in the history of the Restoration.” I doubt I could have done much more than name these three significant women a few years ago, but when the historic sites were closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, I had time to research their stories. This is the first of a three-part series about the three women who knew Joseph best.

By far my favorite resource to dig through was *Autumn Leaves*, the church publication for youth and young adults that ran from 1888 to 1932. In one of the earliest issues, Joseph Smith III wrote an article titled “My Pleasantest Christmas Recollection.” He wrote:

“My pleasantest Christmas—recalled to mind after nearly forty years of sunshine and storm, winter and summer was one passed in the old homestead at Nauvoo, where I made my home with the wife of my youth from 1858 to 1866. It was our second or third Christmas together.”

Based on these sentences, I would place this story in 1858, when their first born, Emma Josepha, was about 17 months old. The family had been living in the Homestead about eight months. Emmeline’s mother and sister, Lucinda and Carrie Griswold, as well as some of her siblings, lived in Nauvoo, not far away. Joseph’s mother, stepfather, and brothers, Alex and David, lived just across the street, in the Mansion House. His brother, Frederick, was living on the family farm about two miles away.

The previous year, Joseph Smith III’s wife, Emmeline, had attempted to cook a turkey for Thanksgiving, to disastrous results. She refused to go through the ordeal again, but Joseph wanted her to try, so he got a turkey. Emma wanted to have her mother-in-law, Emma Smith, do the actual cooking. Joseph countered the suggestion again, wanting his wife to do it, but she could get advice if she wanted.

“(Emma) stipulated, however, for no guest except her mother and sister, and my mother and stepfather; so that she should not be shamed before outside parties, as she ‘knew it would be ruined as before.’”

Finally, in agreement Emma set to work, and gave it her best effort. The meal most likely was set in what we today call the Keeping Room. Joseph called it the parlor, dining room, and kitchen, all in one. With fretful tears in Emma’s eyes, Joseph set to carve the turkey. He wrote:

“The meal, the feast was a grand success. The tears of expectant mortification upon the housewifely cheeks changed to glistening drops of wifely comfort and joy, and the eyes shining with the sweets of triumph told me she was glad I had trusted my wife.”

Into his later years, Joseph would remember Emmeline with fondness. He



Image courtesy of Community of Christ Archives

recorded in his memoirs:

“As I have said, I loved my first wife with that ardent love usually cherished by young and domestically-inclined men for the companions they have chosen out of the world. In a little over twelve years of married happiness, her life was snuffed out and she was laid to rest near the flowing Mississippi in Nauvoo.”

Together, Emmeline and Joseph had five children, three of whom lived to adulthood.

Emmeline Griswold Smith

(March 12, 1838–March 25, 1869)

Emma Josepha (1857–1940)

Evelyn Rebecca (1859)

Carrie Lucinda (1861–1944)

Zaide Viola (1863–1891)

Joseph Arthur (1865–1866)

Kirtland Staff Rejoices with Reopening of Temple

By Greg Clark

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.

—2 Corinthians 9:11–12 NRSV

Roger Rose is feeling a lot of gratitude these days. How could he not?

After all, he started a dream job this year as site director of the Kirtland Temple in Ohio. Even more, he's felt the blessing of a staff whose special efforts helped the Temple return to public life after being closed for more than two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, after a spring and summer that brought in more than 15,750 visitors by early August, "I think that the staff has been excited to get at the process of showing off the property."

Make no mistake; the journey to the May 1 reopening was hard. Updating video equipment took time. Volunteers endured problems with air-conditioning, plumbing, and lighting. And, of course, being closed for so long brought its own unique difficulties—and rust.

"We have learned," Rose said, "that some machines that sit for two years have difficulty working."

Still, Rose is grateful that "these are problems that have been taken care of by our staff in a timely manner...So, our opening has been very smooth. We have all pitched in where and when needed to fix things when they needed fixing."

The biggest blessing?

"This is a simple question to answer," Rose said. "I

must say that I have been very blessed to have an absolutely amazing volunteer staff!"

He listed them and their accomplishments, praising their efforts. Among them were Steve and Will Davidson, Nancy Cervi, Verona Gazzier, Myra Elliot, Graceland students who spent their spring break cleaning and working in the gardens, members of the Kirtland Congregation, town volunteers, and many more.

Then he came to the interns.

"What can I say? We have been so blessed to have five of the most wonderful young people from Graceland University. They learned the system of operations in a couple of days, jumped in, and started running the Visitors Center as if they had always been here. They are absolutely *top shelf* individuals. I could not ask for a better set of interns. I sincerely wish that they could stay. I will cry when they (leave)!"

The gratitude doesn't end there.

Rose also senses it in the Temple's visitors.

"I perceive that our guests are happy that we provide a valid, responsible, historical interpretation that includes or invites any and all of the Restoration faith traditions to be involved and welcomed in the Temple.

"I have heard guests say...they appreciate our honest and candid answers to their questions. They seem grateful to feel the friendship of Community of Christ in a relaxed environment where all people are invited to be our guests."

Because COVID doesn't appear to be going away, Rose and others are learning to deal with it, such as anticipating supply issues. That should make next season even better. And Rose's mindset of gratitude continues to set the tone.

"It is a blessing to serve here, with these friends. I am humbled to have the opportunity to work with them."



The Kirtland staff was ecstatic when the "closed" sign came down.

By Being Open, Liberty Hall Puts ‘Life into History’

By Greg Clark

Steve Smith loved his first stint in 2011–2012 as site director at Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa. So it was an understatement to say he was excited about returning in February 2020.

Instead, a month later that excitement nose-dived when the COVID-19 pandemic forced closure of the former home of Joseph Smith III. That move launched Steve Smith on an emotional roller coaster that continued this year with the reopening April 1.

Through it all, he found new blessings, seized new opportunities, and gained new appreciation for the value of Liberty Hall, one of several properties supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation.

“We got a lot done during the interim, but it was an up-and-down emotional trip,” Smith said. “To be finally able to open again is fantastic. Our staff (all volunteers) are energized and ready!”

“Being open again allows us to use all of the skills we have been trying to learn. It puts life back into history that

had become stunted. It gives us a reason for being.”

That “reason for being” clearly shows up in the site’s interaction with the surrounding community.

Liberty Hall reopened with the fanfare of a fund-raiser led by Gary Rees, who sold black-and-white, silk-screen images of the famed Victorian-era home. That evening featured a candlelight tour.

Shortly thereafter, outreach efforts continued with field trips by fifth-grade students from two school districts. The field trips focused on both Liberty Hall and the nearby Spurrier School, a one-room school once attended by several children from the Smith era.

Comments from district leaders showed the impact. From Lamoni:

“The kids very much enjoyed our visit. ...The schoolhouse was awesome and a great way to start the day. Thank you so much for...a fantastic morning!”

From the Central Decatur District: “Thank you so much for planning the field trip and having everything so well organized. You made it easy on us! ...I

have never taken my class on a field trip that was so well communicated, thought out, and planned out as Liberty Hall. My students enjoyed all of it. They liked seeing the different rooms in



Students are enjoying Liberty Hall.

the house and liked seeing the schoolhouse, as well. ...Thank you for having us, and we will probably see you again next year!”

The school districts weren’t the only ones appreciative; so was Smith. He praised the work of the RV Association, volunteers who make repairs and do maintenance at various church properties. They tackled numerous projects, such as replacing second-story storm windows and removing a rotting boardwalk between Liberty Hall and Spurrier School.

But some of Smith’s strongest praise was for another group.

“The biggest blessing from my perspective has been the development of new staff. ... They are a delightful, gifted, and dedicated group.

“Volunteers are our life! We have no paid staff!”

Now, several months since the reopening, the emotional roller coaster might have slowed a bit, but Smith still views the site with passion.

“Liberty Hall is a treasure. It has a rich history and represents the development of Lamoni—the church’s most successful surviving geographic Zion project and home of Graceland University.”



RVA workers helped replace a walkway between Liberty Hall and Spurrier School.

Volunteers Make Nauvoo's Reopening a Smash



By Greg Clark

The doubts were there.

Maybe some worries, concerns, and even fears. But hope was there, too.

The staff at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, wasn't sure what it would face when it reopened this spring.

Turns out that the fretting was wasted energy. Hope prevailed.

"The reopening at Nauvoo went really well," said Christin Mackay, the site director. "After being closed for over two years, we weren't sure exactly what to expect. But visitors were excited to visit, and we were ready for them."

The extended closure, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, did bring some changes.

"We are taking as much precaution as possible to prevent a COVID problem," Mackay said. "Our staff members wear masks indoors. We've got all of the doors open and fans going in the Red Brick Store in order to bring in as much fresh air as possible."

"Most of the tour takes place outside. We want visitors and staff to have a good experience at the site."

And they're doing just that. It didn't take long for guests

—individuals, groups, church caravans, and more—to start arriving.

Some came because it been too long since they'd walked the same grounds that church leaders such as Joseph Smith Jr. walked. Others came because they wanted to seize the opportunity to tour a famous place after being cooped up for more than two years. And others came because a visit to the site represented an opportunity to deepen their understanding of church heritage and history.

Still, the reopening would not have been such a smash if not for the efforts of volunteers.

"The Community of Christ RV Association showed up en masse to help get the site ready to reopen," Mackay explained. "Thank you RVA!"

Other volunteers help guide tours, keep the grounds spiffy, perform maintenance, and more.

"It is critically important that we have volunteers and interns," Mackay said. "We are grateful for our volunteers... but we are very short on volunteers. We need folks to volunteer from two weeks to a year at a time in order to keep the site running."

And now, there can be no doubts: "We've learned," Mackay said, "that visitors were excited to see us open again."

Open

Continued from page 1

general public again,” said Apostle Lachlan Mackay, director of historic sites for the church. “We were quickly reminded how much we love to tell the story.”

And the volunteers and staff members at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois; Kirtland Temple in Ohio; and Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa, were quickly reminded how important the historic sites are to church members and visitors.

Guests flocked to the sites. Some came to learn more about their church heritage. Some came to deepen their discipleship. And yes, some probably came simply because they could. After being cooped up for more than two years, many folks were glad to be able to travel again.

“Between the ongoing pandemic and the cancellation of the Palmyra, New York, pageant, we had significant concerns that our visitor numbers would be down significantly,” Mackay said. “That turned out not to be the case. We are still working on the numbers, but it appears that we were close to matching pre-pandemic visitor counts.”

Along the way, workers at each site learned a few things. Mackay offered an example.

“Although it was exhausting for staff and not sustainable, I learned that we could operate the Nauvoo site efficiently despite a significant shortage of staff and volunteers.”

The workers also learned to develop new routines, many in response to the lingering pandemic.

“Almost all of our interpretation was done outside,” Mackay said, “and when we entered buildings, the doors were kept open to maximize fresh air.”

Staff members installed air purifiers, upgraded filters, and changed HVAC settings to pull in more outside air.

Such diligence enabled guests to see the buildings and walk the Nauvoo streets where Joseph Smith Jr. once



strolled. They visited the famed Temple in Kirtland, and saw the home where Joseph Smith III lived in Lamoni.

And as glad as they were to be there, Mackay was glad to see them.

“I very much appreciate the ongoing financial support that [the foundation] is providing to the church, and I am thrilled at the numerous educational opportunities the foundation is providing to all those interested in church history.”

Now, as the historic sites move through fall and toward their winter closure, leaders already are making plans for next year. Chief on the list of needs: more volunteers. Meanwhile, leaders are savoring the moment of being open again.

“I most enjoyed the opportunity to talk church history again,” Mackay said. “Opportunities to do so during the last two years were few and far between.”

With the long-awaited reopening this spring, the historic sites in Nauvoo (above), Kirtland, and elsewhere bloomed with foliage and visitors.



RVA

Continued from page 1

"We get cold sometimes, wet sometimes, hot sometimes," said Rollie, president of the Community of Christ RV Association. "But the work gives us a purpose. We know we are a benefit to others."

Nobody knows that better than Apostle Lach Mackay, director of the church's historic sites.

"I can't overstate the ongoing importance of the Community of Christ RV Association to the historic sites. As maintenance staff has been reduced due to financial constraints, the RVA has picked up significant slack. Without their generous donation of time and talent, we would not have been able to open safely.

"I am so very grateful for the support they provide us and can't imagine trying to operate the historic sites without their help."

The time and talent come from members, most of them retired, whose homes are spread across the nation. For a few weeks each year, they join in doing repairs, upkeep, cleaning, and new projects for church properties such as campgrounds and the historic sites.

As the name might indicate, many go from site to site in recreational vehicles. But that's not a requirement for helping. The number of people who go to events varies. Some sites, such as Heritage Plaza in Independence, Missouri, or Liberty Hall in Lamoni, Iowa, might have just a few workers. But earlier this year at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo, Illinois, 28 men and women hammered, cleaned, painted, and more.

"The group was with us for two weeks at the end of April, beginning of

Call the RVA

To learn more about the Community of Christ RV Association:

- * Call Rollie Marolf at 785-207-1359.
- * Call Woody Wilson at (918) 257-0455.
- * Visit CofChrstrva.org.



May," said Christin Mackay, site director in Nauvoo. "They were able to plant, paint, weed, clean, and repair all around the site. We are so appreciative of their efforts!"

Added Lach: "In addition to dozens of small projects in Nauvoo, they...made numerous COVID-related improvements to our HVAC systems....By the time they were done, the site looked magnificent!"

At Liberty Hall, Site Director Steve Smith gushed with praise.

"The RVA, along with our local maintenance volunteer staff, did an amazing amount of work for us. ...Our local group took out the old boardwalk (between Liberty Hall and Spurrier School) and began preparation of the ground for its replacement. The RVA then came and, with the help of our local volunteers, created the new walk in only two days! It was amazing. They are a wonderful group."

Closure at all the sites spanned more than two years. And because COVID-19 is still around, problems confronted the RVA members.

"We worked to get more air circulation in the Mansion House and

Red Brick Store upstairs," Rollie said of Nauvoo. "They have tours going through there so they wanted to get more air circulating. Same thing in the Homestead."

Workers took in stride extra cleaning and landscaping, said Woody Wilson, a crew chief.

"I think everybody was really happy to get back in the swing of things. You really miss it. There are eight to ten couples who are active just about all the time, and we'll have new people come and join us.

"We have a lot of fun. It's not just work. We'll work six to seven hours a day, eat in the evening, and play board games and cards. We have a lot of camaraderie. We become a different community. It's always fun."

The sense of community extends beyond the RVA members. Local volunteers pitch in, and this year an unexpected visitor provided extra help.

"A gentleman from Utah was supposed to work in the Mormons' temple, but it was closed, so he volunteered himself to work on our sites," Rollie

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Volunteers Needed

To volunteer at a historic site supported by the Community of Christ Historic Sites Foundation, call Lachlan Mackay at (217) 453-2246 or email him at lmackay@CofChrist.org.

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P.O. Box 338
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RVA

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said. "He and his wife came and ate dinner with us a couple of nights at the Nauvoo House. He actually then went on a tour with Lach. It was really cool that he came down and helped us out."

RVA members, who are planning a trip to the Kirtland Temple in Ohio next August, have done millions of dollars of work since starting in 1998. They do it

for several reasons.

"We get some gratification," Rollie said. "I think the fellowship is a big deal. We've developed friendships (that transcend work). We work hard and play hard."

Rollie and Woody both said RVA members were more than ready to return to work.

"People missed it so much that they were anxious to come back," Woody said. "Once we were given the go-ahead, they were eager."

But there are sacrifices. Some members will spend several weeks on projects. And they all travel on their own nickel. Rollie said this year the members who worked at Nauvoo totaled their round-trip mileage: 11,510 miles.

Still, Woody said members receive many benefits.

"I enjoy it. I enjoy fixing stuff, doing things, and going places. You feel like you're making a difference, and it's worthwhile...You take us away...and the church would have to come up with a lot of money, because there's nobody else to do it. I feel it's an obligation to keep it going for future generations."

Help Support the Alma Blair Internship Program

Since the 1970s, young adults from all over the world have served as summer interns and fellows at the Kirtland Temple and Joseph Smith Historic Site.

They've deepened their understanding of church history and acquired skills in historical interpretation, public speaking, and team management.

It is truly a life-changing experience. We would love to expand the internship program to become a year-round experience for young adults.

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