



## **We Share... Blessings of Community**

In 1857, nearly three years before traveling to Amboy, Illinois with his mother to join the Reorganization, Joseph Smith III won election as Nauvoo Township justice of the peace. In this role, Joseph often came into contact with the many German immigrants who then called the community of Nauvoo home. He became concerned that they were being taken advantage of by Nauvoo's earlier settlers and he commented in his memoirs:

I drew their [the immigrants] deeds, their mortgages, their contracts, and when they were brought before me in civil suits I managed in many instances to secure settlement out of court whereby they were saved much trouble and expense. For all these services I had freely lowered the costs and fees when any were too poor to pay or could ill afford to, and in many cases made no charge at all . . . It did not suit me to see industrious citizens oppressed because of their lack of familiarity with our language or customs.

Joseph Smith III built community through compassion for and solidarity with the poor, marginalized, and oppressed. However, significant misunderstandings developed in the area after he joined with the Reorganization in 1860. Some remembered the violent conflicts in Nauvoo during the 1840s and believed history was about to repeat itself. They publicly opposed Joseph III's involvement in the church and as a result, were also opposed to his bid for re-election as justice of the peace. He won, despite this opposition. Joseph attributed his victory to the immigrants in the community. They turned out to vote for him as a way of expressing their thanks for the kindness he had shown them. Joseph III was a blessing to his community, but was also blessed by them.