

Episode 24

Legacy

PALMYRA

NARRATOR: The views and opinions expressed here are those of the guests and are not the official position of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[Background music]

NATHAN WRIGHT: One of the most remarkable aspects of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is its unique history. Throughout the world, great stories from faithful Church members have only added to that history. This program shares some of these incredible stories of faith, perseverance, hope and inspiration. You are listening to Legacy. I am your host, Nathan Wright.

We're visiting today with Don Enders who has worked many years in the Historic Sites program in the Church History Department, and for today's discussion will be focusing on archaeological research in and around Palmyra. And, of course, that means the Smith family residences. Don, welcome to Legacy.

DON ENDERS: Thank you.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Will you take a moment and share with our listeners your background in history and why you are lucky enough to be working with these amazing Church History and archaeological sites.

DON ENDERS I served a mission for the LDS Church 1961 to 1963 in New York and part of that time I was in Western New York and there just absorbed and fell in love with early Church History and the events which had become important in the restoration of the gospel.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Before we get into Palmyra, can you give us a quick history of the Joseph and Lucy Smith family and how they ended up in the Palmyra area.

DON ENDERS: The point of why Palmyra for the Smith family is a real good question. Lucy says in her history from 1845 that one day there at their home in Vermont, Joseph Sr. came in and sat down kind of quietly and contemplatively and said, "I'm going to plant once more and then if things don't work, we'll move off to Palmyra," which suggests that they had had plenty of discussion about going to western New York, and why Palmyra specifically is a little bit of a challenge to know, except what may have been stirring them in their own souls without them saying much about that. They did have an association with a fellow named Mr. Howard who seems to have been, well, he went with Joseph Smith Sr. to western New York, and the name Howard is a somewhat prevalent name in that area, so he may have had kinfolk and there may have been correspondence that was read back in Vermont from Mr. Howard and communicating with Joseph Sr. which may have led to thoughts about Palmyra. Because grain grew well, had a much longer growing season there than Vermont, so there was every reason to anticipate that the Smiths could end up going there. Of course, lots of Vermonters were headed out of that hill country with short

growing seasons and rough soil and rocky soil to deal with, and headed off to western New York and other places such as Ohio and etc. So many people were going there and the Smiths were, undoubtedly, just caught up as well in the fervor of a new place of location where they might better themselves.

NATHAN WRIGHT: What do we know about the family themselves; how many children did they have at this time?

DON ENDERS: In 1816 Joseph Sr. left to go to Palmyra to get some things squared away so that he could prepare for his family and have them come. Lucy and the children followed up. There is a kind of a note that appears in Lucy's history indicating that in January of 1817 she and the children arrived, and they had eight children. The youngest was just a few months old, and that would be Don Carlos.

NATHAN WRIGHT: So in Vermont they were land owners, is that right, and things became so difficult that they lost the farm, so to speak.

DON ENDERS: Before Joseph and Lucy met, Joseph Sr. owned half interest in a farm with his father. The Smiths also owned other property. What the acreage of that farm was, off the top of my head I'm not remembering, but yes, apparently he owned that ground and they were productive in that farming, but there were a number of things which happened that brought about the loss of that farm. Principally, it was their entering into merchandising and putting their full resources into that endeavor. There was a hefty economic downturn that didn't allow customers to pay. Joseph Sr. owed debts up to \$2,000 for items to stock this store in Randolph, and it just didn't work out and he ended up holding the bag for that, had to sell the farm at less value than what it was worth. I think he got \$800 out of a roughly \$1,200 farm or something like that. And then Lucy had received a wedding dowry of \$1,000 from her brother and his partner, and that \$1,000 plus the \$800 from the farm allowed them to pay off their debts to Boston merchants, left them landless. As Richard Bushman noted Mormon Historian says, they crossed the line from land ownership to land tenure. And that was somewhere around 1802, 1803 thereabouts. And from that time onward, through the rest of their residency in the New England area, they were land tenants; they did not own land. In fact, it is very doubtful that any of the children, including Alvin, would have really remembered the family living on their own farm, their own property. Alvin and Hyrum would have grown up helping their father to work out a challenging living from the hardscrabble soil of the hill country of Vermont and New Hampshire.

NATHAN WRIGHT: So what was Palmyra like when they arrived there?

DON ENDERS: Palmyra had been settled some 27 years before the Smiths arrived. It was settled principally by southern New Englanders; Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island folk. The Smiths were northern New Englanders. They were Vermonters. In Biblical sense, they were Galileans. They were, they spoke a little bit differently, their vocabulary, their colloquialism, they dressed differently, they were poor folk for the most part, they were unskilled craftsmen, they made their way by day labor. Whereas, opposed to the early settlers of Palmyra, at least the town fathers, they were southern New Englanders, who were moneyed people, they were able to buy their land outright, or at least scheduled to

make payments on land readily well. They were skilled craftsmen. It was from these people that the merchants and the professionals like the lawyers and doctors came. So they really, it was the Smiths going to Palmyra trying to fit into a culture that was somewhat long established and rooted in both social religious as well as economic matters, and the Smiths actually were on the perimeter of society because money spoke in those days, and they were poor as church mice when they arrived, and again, landless and those kinds of things. So it would be a challenge for them.

NATHAN WRIGHT: So as far as actually fitting in with the people in Palmyra, it was kind of difficult?

DON ENDERS: Well, it would be a challenge. They were welcomed, certainly they had friends, they established friends, they settled in the village for two years, living out on the west end of Main Street, among some people who were acquaintances and friends from then until the time the Smiths left the Palmyra Manchester area in late 1830, such as Dr. Gain Robison and family; they were friends and associates with him. They would have head-on struggles with such folks as the Beckwith who was a deacon in the Presbyterian church, Abner Cole whom young Joseph would have confrontation with for pirating portions of the Book of Mormon and publishing in his Palmyra Reflector was a neighbor. But yes, they lived out there in a little frame home trying to put money together to allow them to buy a farm because they knew that they couldn't go into something like merchandising, they didn't have the resources to do that. They had already lost their souls almost in that endeavor, and they knew that farming was probably the only way they could make a living, so they were trying to set money aside while they lived in the village so they could make a purchase of property as soon as possible.

NATHAN WRIGHT: When they arrived in Palmyra, had the Erie Canal started construction?

DON ENDERS: The Erie Canal had been under discussion for a lot of years. In 1817, the year that in January that Lucy arrives, a little bit later that year, the canal route was surveyed and it was decided on the northern route, which took the canal ultimately through Palmyra as well as all these other adjacent villages. So when they arrived, I do not think that it could have been said at that very moment that the canal is coming through here, although it was anticipated, but by later in the year of 1817, it was a reality, meaning that this survey route was accepted and this is the way the canal would come.

NATHAN WRIGHT: And so Joseph Sr. probably had no idea that it was going to happen and that probably didn't have a bearing on him in moving to Palmyra?

DON ENDERS: That would seem correct to me.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Tell me, concerning the Erie Canal, what difference did the building of the canal have on what the Prophet Joseph had to accomplish in that area?

DON ENDERS: Really good question. The Erie Canal, of course, brought in all of the farm produce and commercial efforts of the new northwest, those areas lying off towards the Mississippi River around the Great Lakes region, brought all of that produce into Buffalo, the western terminus of the Erie Canal, carried it across the 363 mile route to Albany, and then down the Hudson to New York City. The Erie Canal made New York and it became the Empire State as a consequence, and became the great industrial and commercial state of the

Union. And, of course, every village along the Erie Canal blossomed as a consequence. Palmyra went through quite an economic boom and the small little village of about 500 to which the Smiths had originally come would grow to close to 2,000 during the Smiths' residency. And that meant a lot of commercial effort. In fact, there were some 20 some toll places along the Erie Canal between Buffalo and Rochester, pardon me, between Buffalo and Albany, and Palmyra usually was up there in that 5 or 6 for collecting tolls for goods that came via the Erie Canal. But warehouses and commercial endeavor buildings were established in Palmyra along its Canal Street that flourished. In fact, the Erie Canal spawned some two dozen millionaires in Palmyra between the opening of the canal and 1825 in the Civil War. According to the town historian, that was more millionaires per capita per village than any other city along the route.

NATHAN WRIGHT: So its unlikely had the industry that the Erie Canal brought not happened, a guy like E.B. Grandin probably would not have shown up to a little village like Palmyra.

DON ENDERS: Well, E.B. Grandin's family had come up from Tom's River, New Jersey in the early 1800s and so he was there, but I think he could see the writing on the wall, if you will, that here is an economic potential and of course, a newspaper is the communication center and I think that the canal spawned considerable interest in him. I think that I am remembering correctly, but what was the Wayne Centinel purchased by E. B. Grandin from Pomeroy Tucker and John Gilbert had been earlier referred to as the Canal Advertiser, etc. There was every bit of speculation and thought that the canal would mean a great deal to Palmyra.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Thank you. Back to the Smith family. So they are now land tenants. They have 100 acres. How easy or hard of a life was this to them?

DON ENDERS: Maybe I'd just say at first, while they were in the village, their thoughts fermented and came to a resolution and they decided that they needed to purchase land if they could. But it was culturally the thing to do for parents to have the means to provide for their sons so that they could go into a business that would support a family when they reached marriageable age etc. So there was both consideration for what are we going to do for Alvin and what are we going to do for Hyrum. There was a merchant in Palmyra village whose name was Samuel Jennings. In fact, this little frame home out on west Main Street the Smiths rented from Samuel Jennings and they traded with him while they were in the village. Well, it just so happened that he owned the property south out of the village down Stafford Road at the town line. I don't have all the answers for that yet, but it was that property which they obtained and built the log house on, and then it was the 100 acres immediately across the town line in Manchester that they negotiated for and purchased his property to develop into a farm. And that actually became Alvin's farm. Hyrum, in time, according to William, a younger brother, actually began purchase of 80 acres on the north side of the line where the log home was situated, so the Smiths actually would have had two farms adjoining each other. Once there, there was the great task of bringing that land into productivity so they could plant crops and tap maple syrup and build their fences and raise livestock and become a capable family, a good capable farm family.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Now, you mentioned Manchester. This is something that has been a little confusing to me, this reference of Manchester and Palmyra so closely. Could you explain to me and our listeners what all that means?

DON ENDERS: Palmyra Village was located in the township of Palmyra. And two miles south out of the village of Palmyra, down Stafford Road, was the town line that separated Palmyra from Manchester Township. And it just so happened that this Jennings property was immediately on the Palmyra side, but its south line was the town line with Manchester. And so the Smiths wanted that property, which Hyrum would obtain, but the 100 acres on the other side of the Palmyra/Manchester town line would be what they would acquire for Alvin. And so that's Manchester in Manchester Township and Manchester Village is down the road another six miles from the farm.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Okay.

DON ENDERS: I hope that was stated well enough to clarify that for you good listeners.

NATHAN WRIGHT: So they come out to this land and the first home they build is what?

DON ENDERS: Prior to leaving the village, they, with the assistance from friends and neighbors, actually raised a log home. The data suggests to us when we did archaeological excavations as well as the historical research from documentation that it probably was a hewn log structure. It wasn't a cabin. Cabins are log structures that are likely to have earthen floors and makeshift windows and doors and a loft where you have access via a ladder or whatever. But this was a log home. In all of the contemporaries of the Smith family refer to this as a log home or a log house. So it's a structure that has permanent plank flooring, that it has a partition that separates the rooms, that it has a stairwell leading from the main level to the upper level, that it has a built-in fireplace with good, firm windows and door etc. So it was a seemingly well-built structure, probably measured, to the best of our knowledge, somewhere around 18 feet across from back wall to front wall, and then from the south wall where the fireplace of the kitchen was, to its north wall, probably somewhere in the neighborhood of 28 to 30 feet.

NATHAN WRIGHT: That doesn't sound like a cabin to me.

DON ENDERS: Correct, it was a log home. And then it had almost equal square footage on the upper level which was, and we have contemporary sources that describe this structure, indicating that on the ground level there were two rooms. A kitchen keeping room and then a "best room" as it was described, which would have been like a parlor, probably where a bed was located. And then we know that Joseph Sr. and sons added an "L" to the back of the log home which would have been a bedroom, probably built, and the data suggests so, at the time that the Prophet's mother, Lucy, was expecting their last child, little Lucy, who would be born in July of 1821. The upper level access by a steep stairwell to the west of the fireplace, took folks up there and probably the first room at the head of the stairs belonged to the boys so the girls could have more privacy behind their door and partition to the north. So there were the two bedrooms upstairs, called chambers.

NATHAN WRIGHT: How long did they live in the log home before they moved, or I guess built the house?

DON ENDERS: They seemingly built the log home in 1819 and moved in. It could have been as early as 1818; however, a contemporary Pomeroy Tucker who is the foreman at the shop where the Book of Mormon was printed indicates it was 1818 in his history of Mormonism, *The Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism*, published in 1867. But they were there from 1818, 1819 through about 1825. In 1825 in the latter part of the year they moved into their frame home which they had commenced in 1822, but it was now ready for them to move into. And so Joseph Sr. and Lucy and the children lived in the frame home until spring of 1829, when they moved back into the log home. However, Hyrum had married in November of 1826 and he and his wife, Jerusha, moved into the log home. So it was only and maybe not even vacant, maybe the boys were even using it as a sleeping space occasionally. So Hyrum and Jerusha lived there from November 1826 on through 1830 and then Joseph Sr. and Lucy and the children moved back in the spring of 1829 into the log home with them bringing the number to about 11 people.

NATHAN WRIGHT: So, everything, the Restoration takes place, things start to happen, and they move away. What happens to these homes?

DON ENDERS: Yes, by 1829 the family was living in the frame home, which would have been down the road to the south, down Stafford Road about, oh, roughly 125 yards I think it is. It was a nice frame home. It was a New England style farmhouse where it's a very symmetrical house. You enter the front door and to the right is a room, which Lucy referred to as the sitting room. To the left of the entranceway was the parlor, which would have been a little more refined and nicer. Then in the back of the home was this long kitchen with pantry and little kitchen bedroom. And then upstairs during the time the Smiths lived there it was one large open space, accessed by a stairwell in the back southeast corner of the kitchen. So when the Smiths moved away, well actually, it belonged to someone else by this time, the frame home, the hundred acres. In 1825, not being able to finish paying for the property and the home, a fellow named Lemuel Durfee, a Quaker chap, whom the Smiths had, well, they were just new acquaintances of his, actually came and looked at the farm and decided it would be a very good investment because the Smiths had put a lot of effort into the farm; in fact, the value of the property in late 1825 was, I believe, somewhere around \$1,300. That suggests that the home and outbuildings, probably including the barn and fencing and orchards and garden and cultivated fields, you know, a lot of effort had gone into it and was a good farm. But Lemuel Durfee let the Smiths live on the farm after he purchased it. He let them live on the farm for approximately four years, through the last of 1825, 1826, 1827, 1828, and in the spring of 1829 when they moved back into the log home. When they leave the area in late 1830, the log home property seems not to have been a piece of ground that was readily purchased. We have the folks, Roswell Nichols and his wife, Mary (Mary is a daughter of Lemuel Durfee, the fellow that purchased it in 1825), they are living on the hundred acres in Manchester and taking care of the house. In fact, they added to the house a long "L" at the back of the house, as they called it, and in time some changes were brought to it. But the log home property seems not to have been used for a bit of time. It then began to be farmed some years later, but by the time of the Civil War, the log home was deteriorating rapidly, badly, Mother Nature getting to it, and about that time it was pulled in and burned and pushed into kind of the root cellar area, which the Smiths had dug, and so it was gone now and memory of it would pass with most people.

NATHAN WRIGHT: So tell me about some of the research and the archaeology diggings that you found here at the site.

DON ENDERS: In 1982, the LDS Church Historical Department joined forces with BYU's Religious Studies Center to actually do an archaeological dig on the log home site. The reason that this site was known was because there was actually record of it in the old Palmyra town records where surveyors had actually gone down to the town line and commenced a survey in 1820. They were standing on the town line and they wrote in their log that "we're beginning this survey of Stafford Road and we're going to survey back into the village and our starting point happens to be x number of chains and links from the Joseph Smith dwelling house." That was the log home. So that really pinned the site down. There was also some infrared aerial photography done of the site, and over the farm site in that area that we found to be the log home, there were I think, some 14 potential sites, but it was only, out of those 14 sites, it was only at the log home site where there were actually artifacts, broken dishware and glassware and other things of that early 19th century period, the residency period of the Smiths, that manifest themselves. And so that coincided with the survey, so it pretty well definitely said, hey, folks, this is the place to dig. And so we got out there in June and established a zero point, if you will, a datum point, and then what the archaeologist does is place stakes in the ground every ten feet in a north direction and then also we did in a west direction, because the datum point was right up adjacent to the road so we did that western portion of what could potentially become a large grid. Then all of these 10-foot squares were given a number, and the archaeological team excavated each of those sites, layer by layer if you will, down through the rubble layers, and down into topsoil, in good soil, and then into the sterile soil which man had not penetrated. And all of the artifacts out of those squares were bagged and numbered so that they could be analyzed. And in the process of doing that archaeological work, the root cellar that was under the Smiths' kitchen manifest itself. Here it was. This is where the log home stood. Ah, it's wonderful. And lots of artifacts, broken dishware from the period, glass, buttons, a gold bead, brass straight pins that Lucy would have used in her textile work. A number of other artifacts manifest themselves, a military button of the period, those kinds of things, knives and forks and spoons, so it was really a nice bit of data to uncover, because properly assessed, these artifacts then can tell you something about the lifestyle of the family.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Like . . . tell me.

DON ENDERS: Well, one would be, during the War of 1812, when commercial shipment was interrupted by that war, dishware actually made in England was done a little bit differently. I mean, the glazes etc. So in the assessment there was the opportunity to look and see that. Well, what dishware might the Smiths have had in their marriage and early family life in New England and had brought with them? What might they have acquired once they arrived in New York? What about pieces like teacups etc. that might tell us something about their social life? Lucy was big into, she had a definite mindset of the peers that she wanted her family to be part of polite society, and acceptable society. And there was, if you've seen the Jane Austen movies and the nice bowing and scraping in England. Well, quite a bit of that transferred itself, flowed with the British Colonists to America even down to the middle class levels, and even some of the folks a little less fortunate economically, and

that tried to immerse themselves in polite society and culture. And so, you know, these artifacts helped to establish that. For example, there was the military button that I mentioned in our research on that. The state approved uniforms for militia in that 1820's period and even in the newspapers of that time, the button was illustrated, with its crossed musical instruments and a number of stars etc. And so there was the question, well, who in the Smith family may have been in the militia. Well, every young man from 18 to age 45 was responsible to the militia and would perform duty, and only those with extreme hardships could be exempt from that. And it appears that young Joseph, because of his leg situation, even into Palmyra was supposedly exempt from the militia. But each of his brothers, Alvin and Hyrum and Samuel likely would have been involved in the militia. But it just so happens that Sophronia, the oldest daughter, she married a young man named Calvin Stoddard who was a Lieutenant in the local militia. His brother was the Commanding Officer of the regiment in that area, and I have often pictured in my own mind some moonlit night Calvin escorting Sophronia back down to the home after a dance or party and he gives her a smooch on the cheek and she gets so excited she twists off his button that falls to the ground and we find it a hundred-some years later in an archaeological excavation. [Laughter] Well, of course, that's a daydream, but you know, it could have . . . well, most young men could not afford the militia garment of the time and it's likely that none of the Smiths and many other young men did not have military gear. But an officer who came from a family like Calvin Stoddard, from a family who was somewhat prosperous, probably could have afforded it.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Very good. Where are the artifacts now and are they available to see?

DON ENDERS: The artifacts are here in Salt Lake at a storage area, and we periodically do take second and third and fourth looks at them because we want to try to understand the Smith family and there will be some ongoing looks at those. We're fortunate to have a network of very competent people out there in this country, out east, who I periodically am in touch with and I might send samples of ceramic ware, the dishware, or such things as military buttons or other things, and I might mention the gold bead. It was Dale Burge's son. Dale Burge was the director of the dig. Others of us worked under his direction. His son, in one of the squares, we screened everything, and this little gold bead showed up, and it was very fashionable for womenfolk to wear gold beads in those days. In fact, Lucy happens to mention that in 1830, I think it's along in probably early November to mid-November, that she and Joseph Sr. are home, Joseph Sr.'s ill, their little daughter Lucy is there, everyone else is gone. Joseph has married Emma and he is down at Harmony. Hyrum and his wife have gone down to Colesville, and William is probably off down to Cannon Dig serving an apprenticeship as a joiner and those kinds of things. And she looks out the window and she sees candlelight, lantern light, and a fellow comes demanding, knocks hard and opened the door and bulges and says, "Joseph Sr., you owe this note of \$14.00. You pay up or go to debtor's prison." And Joseph Sr. says, "well, I can give you \$7.00 tonight and will make arrangements tomorrow." "No, you must pay up, and the only way that I'll excuse the debt is if you burn up these Book of Mormons." This is in Lucy's history. Lucy says, "I took from my neck my strand of gold beads and offered them, because they were worth more than the debt, and he refused that." Well, is this little gold bead that came from the archaeological dig, is it part of Lucy's, how would it have gotten there, did she drop her strand at some time and they broke and one trickled

down between the joints of two floor boards and fell into the ground and remained there until we found it a hundred and some-odd years later, or could it have belonged to Sophronia, or whatever. But it's just, you know, part of the story, and that part of the story is a little bit documented.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Were there any other surprises during all of the archaeology and the research that you've done?

DON ENDERS: Well, there certainly were some interesting things that occurred as a result of the archaeological dig. One which we would say was the grand thing, and that was actually being able to say, "This is where the log home stood." And, the Smiths did what the Whitmers did over at their log home, and others probably did this as well, but visualize going on to the site, slightly before constructing the log home, that trenches were dug, something like, you know, maybe as much as a foot or so deep, and maybe a foot, foot and a half across, and then you fill these trenches with fist-size stone, and there was plenty of stone available in the cultivated fields from the glacial activity that had happened. And you place the stone in there, and then at the corners you place large stones and maybe in the interim space here and there, and then you place your first log, so the log sits up off the ground, maybe six or eight inches, something like that. But in the archaeological excavation, we found these trenches for all practical purposes, meaning a lot of plowing had been done and moved the stone back and forth, but based on the concentration of the stone and its denseness more toward the middle even though it had been pulled by the plows outward, you could actually, we were actually able to say, "This really appears to be where one of the corners was, where another corner was, where another corner was." And once having marked those corners, then we said, "Oh, now let's go out to the survey marker of the survey team who did their work in 1820 and see how close we come." And we'd had the town survey or come down and he found an original pin. Well, I'm not sure if it was one in 1820, but another one had been placed in its place, a non-corrosive pin, and it was out there, and we got him to come out and find that pin again and we were able to measure from that southeast corner out to that pin and we find that we were within inches of that survey statement, you know, made in their log.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Wow.

DON ENDERS: Other interesting data would be fragments of brick, which suggested that portions of the fireplace and chimney were of brick, maybe fill stone was used also, about hearth. We were fortunate to find considerable historical written data describing the home, so we feel that enough data came together to do a really good replication. Although, in the replication we did have to meet some other kinds of standards, such as headroom for visitors, roof slope to carry the snow off of the roof where the historical data suggests it was a low, smoky log structure, so it probably would have been a little different. We can't say for sure whether the logs were still rounded on the outside and on the inside, whether they were hewn, but because most of the structures that we dealt with, some 30 that were looked at between the White River Junction, and where the Smiths left in Vermont and came to western New York we looked at. Nearly all log homes happened to be hewn, and that gave us the details on the kind of notching that should be done at the corners, the kind of doors, the kind of trim, those kinds of things.

NATHAN WRIGHT: What can a visitor expect to find when they go to the sites there in Palmyra?

DON ENDERS: Well, what we try to do for the visitor, is recreate this site as historically accurate as possible. That's almost next to impossible, even to carry it to the degree that we've learned of simply because OSHA requires certain kinds of requirements.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Sure.

DON ENDERS: We've tried to furnish the structures with period furniture and replicas to the best of our ability. But when visitors go into, say, the log home, as well as to the frame home, or the barn, or etc., there is, you know, 30-50% of the space has to be given to the visitor. So you can't have chairs and tables and things in the way. So you actually exclude furnishings that likely would have been there, simply because you need to create space for the visitor to come in and stand and look and move about and contemplate the structure. But we do strive to make it as real as possible.

NATHAN WRIGHT: How has this project affected your understanding of Joseph Smith and the Restoration?

DON ENDERS: That's maybe the key question of all, is that the study from document sources and archaeologically speaking of both the property on the Palmyra side of the town line, the log home site, as well as the frame home, really have added a lot of understanding. We think about the Smiths' family's residency at the town line area in Palmyra and on the Manchester side. It bears witness of things that they say. For example, when I mentioned the value of the property in 1825 at the time they lose the farm, being \$1,100 dollars or so did I say?

NATHAN WRIGHT: \$1,300 I think you said.

DON ENDERS: Yes, around \$1,300. That it suggests that their statements about how much land they cleared, they indicate that they cleared 60 acres of the 100 acres, that they put in cultivation some 30 acres, that they planted a large orchard, that they built the frame home, and that they had out buildings, that they dug wells, that they'd tapped maple trees for the sap to make sugar. I think that those kinds of statements by the Smith family are confirmed in the data that we've been able to find. That contemporaries, for example, say yes, the Smiths produced about 1,000 pounds annually of maple sugar product. They describe the home, it's a log home, it's not a cabin. The orchard is noted. Fencing was done. So those things bear witness to the Smith family's effort to establish a good and productive farm. Also, it leaves questions in the air, such as, how competent were the Smith family as farmers when season by season, if you will, harvest season by harvest season, they actually were not able to meet the payments on the farm. What caused that? Was it weather, what was it? Other people were able, you know, to retain their farms. Although, we do find that the land agent whom the Smiths purchased the Manchester 100 acres from, that would have been Alvin's farm where they built the frame home and out buildings and orchards and fenced and all that and did this \$1,300 plus of development. That land agent whom they negotiated with passed away in 1822 in July. He was not replaced for about two years, so in 1824 when another fellow comes, a Mr. Greenwood, he actually represents the landowner who lived in New York City, although deceased, but his wife and children had commitment to the land and owned it, when he came to kind of

clean house, and bring people up to date; see, there were not just the Smiths, but there were a number of people who had purchased land from him—he owned 3,000 acres and the Smiths just purchased 100 and others purchased acreage like that, so there were a number of these farms; well, not only the Smith family, but I believe it was eight, possibly nine others also failed to measure up and meet their payments and actually, like the Smith family, lost their farms. But there were those who did meet the payments. So, you know, some things are a little bit hard to read at the moment. We're trying to look at those from the documentary data, tax records, etc. etc. and figure those things out. But they do, the sources do validate, written sources and archaeological, quite a bit about what the Smiths say they attempted to do and what they achieved.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Wasn't there a quote from William Smith some years later when people asked whether his family were hard workers or lazy. Can you remind me of that?

DON ENDERS: There were at least a couple of those. One editor asked him in an interview, "Some of your neighbors say that you were lazy. What about it?" William says, "Lazy? You figure out what it would take to clear 60 acres of the heaviest timber I ever saw, trees that couldn't be conveniently cut down, and you tell me if we were lazy." It's estimated that every acre produced somewhere around 100-110 trees per acre. But we're talking about trees from little saplings right on up to trees that are three and four feet through. Some few may have been, there were probably trees on the Smith farm, that hundred acre piece, that may have been five feet, maybe even two or three or so others that were even larger than that. But it was not an easy task with the tools and agricultural practices of the time to clear 60 acres. But they ultimately did it. Normally, what would happen, is new landholders would go onto their property and they would girdle the trees. That would be cut a strip of bark all the way around.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Just let them die.

DON ENDERS: That cut the flow of nutrients up through the tree and they would shed their leaves quickly and the sun could penetrate the ground then, and then they could kind of with rakes, whatever they could, maybe break up the ground a little bit. Often they just broadcast seed out on the top of the soil and then maybe with a large branch, pull some soil over it and would get their first crop. It would take, usually a dozen years before those trees, they could actually get them all down and, well, they would dry them for a season or two or three, and when they were ready, they would burn those trees, they would bring brush and stuff it around them. You can just imagine that a forest of maybe 30 acres, if you will, at a given time being under fire, and those flames shooting skyward. It must have been a spectacular sight. But they would burn their trees, they would work at the root systems. Unlike Hollywood, they wouldn't normally dig up the stumps. That would be too time consuming to try to work at pulling up stumps. You worked around them and you burned at them and you chopped at them, and you let them rot for the most part. Because if you take an ox and you're fortunate to have a chain and you can get these stumps pulled up, what does it do? It just terribly destroys the soil and pulls up the sub soil. Folks didn't do that very often, unless the stump was in the way of where they wanted a building, like a barn or a cooper shop, or something like that. All the indications are that the Smiths were hard-working and labored diligently. 90% or better of Americans were farmers. But there is this constant movement west, west, west, because a lot of these

folks just didn't have the good sense, the really key sense to know how to do it well. And they were honorable and good people, many of these people, and so just how the Smiths tie into that framework, we're trying to understand.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Perhaps just not great managers of what they were trying to do.

DON ENDERS: Well, well stated. **Orlando Saunders** who owned the farm on the northeast corner of the Smith farm, wonderful neighbor, he said that the Smiths had worked for him many a day and they were good workers, and they were honest people, and they were kind people that Joseph Sr. and Lucy helped doctor his father up until his passing, whatever. And he went through of these positives about the Smith family. Then he mentioned one thing that some folks may take negatively, but I suggest it's just a truism that he'd add to, and he said, (whisperingly) "But they weren't very good managers." So, you know, Martin Harris, he was considered, a number of sources referred to him as a smart farmer. He knew what to plant and where to plant and when to plant, but then there is also the point that the Smiths were trying to make a living by day labor. How much time could they give their farm? And yet, you know, the record shows that they did very well with it. But just how well they did with crops is another thing. Unfortunately, they didn't meet the payments and the lost the farm.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Is there anything else you would like to share with us about these amazing historic sites in Palmyra?

DON ENDERS: Well, how about a point about the frame home? They moved into this wonderful home, they put a lot of labor to it, and spent a lot of time developing this farm. And then they lose the farm. And then they live on it as renters for this period. And Oliver Cowdery comes and he teaches school, and he boards with the Smiths. He becomes very close to them. He becomes close enough that he calls Lucy and Joseph Sr. mother and father. In this frame home, Oliver Cowdery has an experience where he has sought God to know about this work that Joseph Smith Jr. is doing, and the Spirit of the Lord manifests to him that the work that Joseph Smith is doing is Divine. And Oliver's desire to go and assist Joseph grows and he can hardly maintain himself until the school session is over so that he can go there. And shortly before he and Samuel leave to go down there, he's in the home at a given time, and Lucy records this in her account where she says, "Oliver, look around you on all this handiwork that our son Alvin prescribed and his father and his brothers have tried to bring to a completion as he requested." And she says, "I am willing to give up all of this for the sake of Christ and Salvation." What I have come to sense that Lucy was saying, is that not only is she willing to give up the faults and veneer of a polite society per se, and there is a lot of good in that society, but she sees the drawbacks from it, and that her pursuit of that has been less than good. So she's willing to give up that aspect of it, but she is also willing to give up her own failures in being caught away, in pushing to build this frame home before the land is even paid for. And she realizes that there's good common sense to be made, and I think that as a consequence she, with the loss of the farm and with Alvin's death, she's done a lot of thinking, and I think she comes to appreciate that "I am willing to give up all of this; the outside world plus try to do my best with my own failures and give them up for the sake of Christ and Salvation."

[Music playing]

So I think the frame home is somewhat symbolic of Lucy's pursuit and commitment to religious truth.

NATHAN WRIGHT: Thank you. We've been visiting with Don Enders today, part of the Historic Sites Program of the Church History Department. Don, thank you very much for being with us.

DON ENDERS: Nice to be with you.