

The First Vision

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11:06 AM

May 1916 -The Smith family had crop failure in Vermont due to changing weather patterns. Since they have done this for 3 years the Town Fathers' are supposed to take care of their family. They were sent out west (upstate NY). The safest way to travel was by water at that time, so they built the Erie Canal.

John Swift- land speculator who went to Revolutionary War Veterans and built Swift's Landing. Decided to name the landing after a woman- Palmyra. The first people to go west would be the single men. Joseph Smith Sr.'s first job in Palmyra was to go and be a locator of wells. Father Smith has a talent for this, which made him money during the day. At night he opened a "Cake & Beer shop" (the beer was more like Root Beer). He is so successful that he decides that instead of going back to get his family himself, he hires someone else to go get his family. He sees this as the way to stop being a renter. Caleb Howard was the name of the man who went to go get the family. This was the first person who is truly evil towards Joseph Smith Jr. When he tries to find a place on the wagon Caleb says he's not allowed to ride in the wagon and that he must walk. When Joseph's brothers volunteer to walk in Joseph's place Caleb whips them until they shut up. He picks up a couple of hitchhiking women and they try to make off with the wagons. Lucy Smith gets the wagon back and takes over the reins. She leaves Joseph behind on accident. It is snowing, and he gets totally lost and he says he gave himself up for dead. He says a stranger came, picks him up and carries him to Palmyra. When he gets to town he is reunited with his family, and the family's goal is to never move again. All of the family members try to get some kind of job, with all of the money going back to dad to buy a farm. Hyrum & Alvin become diggers of wells. Lucy Smith gets into home industry- painting oil tablecloths, molasses, etc. Joseph is Lucy's errand boy, tries to sell Mother Smith's goods. Only one person held back, Lucy, she wanted to have her private purse again.

There are four churches on the four corners:

- Methodists: Abner Snow (itinerant minister who could be re-assigned at any time)
- Congregationalists
- Baptists
- Presbyterian

Only the Presbyterians had an actual building for a church. The others were tents with platforms. Many people would go to the Presbyterian church because it was cold outside. You can only sit in the church if you've bought a bench. The only property the Smith's owned in Palmyra was a bench in the Presbyterian church that Lucy used her private purse to purchase.

In 1818 the family is finally able to purchase a farm. Their farm was on the border of Palmyra and Manchester, Manchester is where the woods are. The Palmyra side was where all of the farm part was. Father Smith has 100 acre farm. People are worried about the people going out west because there aren't preachers out there. Organized religions hire people to be "circuit riders" in the pop-up towns on the Erie canal. It became known as the "Burned Over District". In 1818 there are 200 families there are 8 churches. Joseph is drawn towards the Methodist church. Reverend George Lane is now the Methodist minister, who is generally renowned. His topic is "which church shall I join?" It is 11 miles outside of Palmyra, his main scripture is James 1:5. Think about it, Upstate NY... it's COLD in early spring! Think snow, no leaves, Joseph in a coat. Hello? You've lived there, you know what it's like in Upstate in early April! Probably where he was the more wilderness-y, dangerous part of the family farm.

Joseph Smith History- Franklin D. Richards (mission president in England). 1851- missionaries want a pamphlet. President Richards has his trunk that contains his "pearls of great price". He had articles that he had cut out from LDS newspapers. He had the book of Moses, the 1838 version of Joseph Smith's first vision, not knowing that there were accounts written in 1832, 1835, 1838 & 1841.

Joseph has also described the vision as being a "pillar of fire" (same as Moses & Lehi). Told first "thy sins are forgiven thee" (same as Enos). The fire spreads all around, but consumes nothing (remember... he's in a forest... fire not such a great plan).

When he says that Presbyterianism isn't true, he's not talking about the religion he is leaning towards, but what his mom has invested in.