

# John Johnson Farm

Hiram, Ohio, United States of America

The John Johnson Farm served as headquarters for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for approximately six months between September 1831 and March 1832. Also, in an upper room of the house, several significant revelations were received including Doctrine and Covenants Section 76, the vision of the three degrees of glory.

The Prophet Joseph continued his work of the translation of the bible while living here, and the John Johnson Farm was where the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon were dragged from the house and tarred and feathered on March 24, 1832.<sup>1</sup> Five days later, Joseph and Emma's adopted son, Joseph Murdock, died due to complications resulting from exposure.

The Johnson's were converted in the Spring of 1831 with the healing of John's wife Elsa from rheumatism in her shoulder.<sup>2</sup> Two of the Johnson's sons, Luke and Lyman Johnson became members of the original Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and their daughter, Marinda, married Orson Hyde.

The Johnson's fell away from the Church in 1837, although Luke returned to the faith and traveled with the Saints to Utah.<sup>3</sup> Father Johnson died in 1843 in Kirtland where he is buried.

In 1956, the farm was purchased by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and now serves as a welfare farm for the Church.

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951), 1: 263 - 264.

<sup>2</sup> Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black, eds., *The Prophet Joseph: Essays on the Life and Mission of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988), 163.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Easton Black, *Who's Who in the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 156 - 157



The John Johnson Farm  
Photo Courtesy of Alexander L. Baugh

## THE TAR AND FEATHERING OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

“On the 24th of March, the twins before mentioned, which had been sick of the measles for some time, caused us to be broken of our rest in taking care of them, especially my wife.

In the evening I told her she had better retire to rest with one of the children, and I would watch with the sicker child. In the night she told me I had better lie down on the trundle bed, and I did so, and was soon after awakened by her screaming murder, when I found myself going out of the door, in the hands of about a dozen men; some of whose hands were in my hair, and some had hold of my shirt, drawers and limbs.

The foot of the trundle bed was towards the door, leaving only room enough for the door to swing open. My wife heard a gentle tapping on the windows which she then took no particular notice of (but which was unquestionably designed for ascertaining whether or not we were all asleep), and soon after the mob burst open the door and surrounded the bed in an instant, and, as I said, the first I knew I was going out of the door in the hands of an infuriated mob.



I made a desperate struggle, as I was forced out, to extricate myself, but only cleared one leg, with which I made a pass at one man, and he fell on the door steps. I was immediately overpowered again; and they swore by G - -, they would kill me if I did not be still, which quieted me. As they passed around the house with me, the fellow that I kicked came to me and thrust his hand, all covered with blood, into my face and with an exulting hoarse laugh, muttered "Ge, gee, G—d—ye, I'll fix ye."

They then seized me by the throat and held on till I lost my breath. After I came to, as they passed along with me, about thirty rods from the house, I saw Elder Rigdon stretched out on the ground, whither they had dragged him by his heels. I supposed he was dead.

I began to plead with them, saying, "You will have mercy and spare my life, I hope." To which they replied, "G—d—ye, call on yer God for help, we'll show ye no mercy;" and the people began to show themselves in every direction; one coming from the orchard had a plank; and I expected they would kill me, and carry me off on the plank.

They then turned to the right, and went on about thirty rods further; about sixty rods from the house, and thirty from where I saw Elder Rigdon, into the meadow, where they stopped, and one said, "Simonds, Simonds," (meaning, I supposed, Simonds Ryder,) "pull up his drawers, pull up his drawers, he will take cold." Another replied: "Ain't ye going to kill 'im? ain't ye going to kill 'im?" when a group of mobbers collected a little way off, and said: "Simonds, Simonds, come here;" and "Simonds" charged those who had hold of me to keep me from touching the ground (as they had done all the time), lest I should get a spring upon them.

They held a council, and as I could occasionally overhear a word, I supposed it was to know whether or not it was best to kill me. They returned after a while, when I learned that they had concluded not to kill me, but to beat and scratch me well, tear off my shirt and drawers, and leave

me naked. One cried, "Simonds, Simonds, where's the tar bucket?" "I don't know," answered one, "where 'tis, Eli's left it." They ran back and fetched the bucket of tar, when one exclaimed, with an oath, "Let us tar up his mouth;" and they tried to force the tar-paddle into my mouth; I twisted my head around, so that they could not; and they cried out, "G—d—ye, hold up yer head and let us give ye some tar." They then tried to force a vial into my mouth, and broke it in my teeth.

All my clothes were torn off me except my shirt collar; and one man fell on me and scratched my body with his nails like a mad cat, and then muttered out: "G—d—ye, that's the way the Holy Ghost falls on folks!"

They then left me, and I attempted to rise, but fell again; I pulled the tar away from my lips, so that I could breathe more freely, and after a while I began to recover, and raised myself up, whereupon I saw two lights. I made my way towards one of them, and found it was Father Johnson's.

When I came to the door I was naked, and the tar made me look as if I were covered with blood, and when my wife saw me she thought I was all crushed to pieces, and fainted. During the affray abroad, the sisters of the neighborhood had collected at my room. I called for a blanket, they threw me one and shut the door; I wrapped it around me and went in.

In the meantime, Brother John Poorman heard an outcry across the corn field, and running that way met Father Johnson, who had been fastened in his house at the commencement of the assault, by having his door barred by the mob, but on calling his wife to bring his gun, saying he would blow a hoe through the door, the mob fled, and Father Johnson, seizing a club, ran after the party that had Elder Rigdon, and knocked down one man, and raised his club to level another, exclaiming, "What are you doing here?" when they left Elder Rigdon and turned upon Father Johnson, who, turning to run toward his own house, met Brother Poorman coming out of the corn field; each supposing the other to be a mobber, and encounter

ensued, and Poorman gave Johnson a severe blow on the left shoulder with a stick or stone, which brought him to the ground.

Poorman ran immediately towards Father Johnson's, and arriving while I was waiting for the blanket, exclaimed, "I'm afraid I've killed him." Killed who? asked one; when Poorman hastily related the circumstances of the encounter near the corn field, and went into the shed and hid himself. Father Johnson soon recovered so as to come to the house, when the whole mystery was quickly solved concerning the difficulty between him and Poorman, who, on learning the facts, joyfully came from his hiding place.

My friends spent the night in scraping and removing the tar, and washing and cleansing my body; so that by morning I was ready to be clothed again.

This being the Sabbath morning, the people assembled for meeting at the usual hour of worship, and among them came also the mobbers; viz.: Simonds Ryder, a Campbellite preacher and leader of the mob; one McClentic, who had his hands in my hair; one Streeter, son of a Campbellite minister; and Felatiah Allen, Esq., who gave the mob a barrel of whiskey to raise their spirits. Besides these named, there were many others in the mob.

With my flesh all scarified and defaced, I preached to the congregation as usual, and in the afternoon of the same day baptized three individuals."

## SOURCES

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951), 1:263-264.

## VISITOR INFORMATION

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### *Address:*

6203 Pioneer Trail  
Hiram, Ohio 44234

### *Hours of Operation:*

Monday - Saturday

- 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Sunday

- 11:30 AM to 7:00 PM

*Note: During the winter, closes at 5:00 PM*

### *Admission:*

Free

## FURTHER READING RESOURCES

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Keith Perkins, "A House Divided: The John Johnson Family," *Ensign*, (February 1979), 54.

Mark L. Staker, "Remembering Hiram, Ohio," *Ensign*, (October 2002), 32.