

Polygamy and Mormon Church Leaders
John Smith
September 22, 1832 – November 6, 1911

As is usually the case with all things in Mormon polygamy, events, names and recorded history tend to get a bit confusing at times and this is one of those times. The Mormon people hold tight to the tradition of naming kids after their predecessors, using nicknames, or rearranging the order of someone's name to differentiate one person from another. While all this sounds somewhat normal in comparison to other families around the world, their purpose of doing so was, and still is in modern-day polygamy, less than innocent.

[Hyrum Smith's young family](#) was no stranger to grief. By the time he and his brother were killed at the Carthage jail in June 1844, he'd already buried his wife Jerusha, and their daughter Mary.

John Smith, the third child of [Hyrum and Jerusha](#), was raised to fall in line with the Mormon tradition of polygamy, and worship the new god his uncle Joseph had introduced to the world in 1830. Other than being born into the family he was, there's really nothing remarkable about this man's life. The one common sad denominator between John and his family is how he worshiped and promulgated a false gospel that testified of a false god.

After losing his mother at the age of five, he and his surviving siblings began their new lives under the care of Mary Fielding, [Hyrum's](#) second polygamous wife.

He lived in a typical polygamous home until his father's death, leaving him orphaned at the age of eleven. At that point [John](#) was 'chosen' to help with the Mormon's trek west to Utah and placed in the Overland Travel Company with Heber C. Kimball's family who led him and others to their final destination in Utah.

Nine years after his arrival of the Wasatch Front, [John](#) would marry his first wife Helen in 1853, and his second wife Nancy, three years later in early 1857.

Smith was given the prestigious title in Mormondom of [Presiding Patriarch of LDS Church](#), and served in that position from 1855 until his death in 1911. He was chosen for the position after the death of another John Smith who happened to be his grandfather's brother. That John Smith went by the name 'Uncle John'.

Smith kept himself busy in life by serving a mission to Scandinavia from 1862 – 1864, and guiding international converts in wagon trains to Utah, as well as serving as interpreter for those coming in from Scandinavia. [LDS Biographical Encyclopedia 1:183-186](#)

The same info on this man is recycled from one website to another with the exception of Find-a-Grave which doesn't list any children with his second wife, Nancy.

		Wife / Age @ Marriage (Smith's Age)	Marriage Date	Kids	Other Info	Wife's Marital Status
1		Helen Maria Fisher - 18 (21)	11/25/1853	9	Born 9/20/1835 PA Died 9/3/1907 Utah From 10/1854 to 10/1872 Helen had 9 kids with John Smith. Earlylds.com reports she was preceded in death by 4 of her 9 children.	Single
2		Nancy Melissa Lemmon - 24 (25)	2/18/1857	1	Born 9/6/1833 Died 3/29/1915 Utah She had <u>1</u> son w/ Smith , he's not listed on Find-a-Grave. Earlylds.com reports their son died at 9 yrs.	Single