

JOSEPH SR. AND LUCY MACK SMITH

A Monument to their Family



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Artist Statement

In his Book, Joseph Smith's New England Heritage, Richard L. Anderson, a renowned historian, states that "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints began with a family." This is significant because in Mormon theology the cultivation of family relationships is of supreme importance. We believe that family relationships including that of husband and wife are meant to be continued beyond the grave. My Senior Project has been to design a monument to the Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family.

While visiting Joseph Smith Jr.'s birthplace in 2005, I was impressed by the great strength and unity demonstrated by the Smiths as they faced hardship after hardship. Their struggles ranged from financial setbacks and crop killing frosts to outright religious persecution.

Throughout these struggles the Smiths remained dedicated to each other. The monument I have designed is my attempt to memorialize their devotion to and their sacrifices for their family and their faith. It is designed to be installed at the Joseph Smith birthplace in Sharon, Vermont. I have attempted to portray the Smith family at the time they lived in there. I believe that it was during these early years that they were unknowingly prepared for the challenges that lied ahead. It was during this period that they built their family on a foundation of hard work and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was this foundation that would support them through all there struggles, and it is that same foundation that can support us through ours.

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Site



The Joseph Smith Birthplace, located in Sharon, Vermont, is one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited. I designed this monument to be located on the hillside overlooking the Joseph Smith Monument already located at the Joseph Smith Birthplace. The Sculptures of Joseph Sr. and Lucy are moving forward, filled with hope. From their location on the hillside they overlook not only their farm but also the future. A future filled with struggle, but also great joy. It was in their home that their son Joseph Smith Jr., as well as their other children, were first taught the principles of the gospel. Little did they know that their growing family was being prepared to participate in one of the most important events in history: The Restoration of the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The visitor to the monument is invited to participate with the Smith Parents and view the Monument honoring the life and work of the Prophet Joseph. Benches are included in the Architectural elements for visitors to sit and take in the beautiful scenery and ponder the significance of the site.



Location with Proposed Monument Superimposed

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Architectural Model



While Viewing the Smith Family Monument from the steps of the Joseph Smith Monument, the gesture of the figures of Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack unite with the curve of the Architecture behind them to form a circle. This Symbol of eternity is also echoed in the curve of Joseph Sr.'s sickle and the intertwining circle patterns found in the architecture. While I have not yet developed the relief sculpture behind the figures, I plan on continuing that symbolism within the relief. The center of the relief, as well as the whole monument, will be a candle illuminating Joseph Sr.'s Bible as his family listens to him read the scriptures at the end of the day. This candle represents the Savior and where he should be in families: The center.

When viewing the monument from the front, the figures of Joseph and Lucy visually become part of the architecture. They become the pillars which support and protect their growing family and symbolize the important role that parents play in providing for and supporting their family.

Architectural Model Display



24"x24"x9"

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Sculpture



While planning my senior thesis, I determined fairly quickly that doing full size figures was out of the question. This due to the relatively small time I had to complete them. The compromise that I came up with was to do life size portraits and 1/3 life size figures.

Doing the life sized portraits allowed me the opportunity to really study the character of each of these two remarkable individuals. It was also quite a challenge, as there is very little reference material available. The model I used for Lucy is a fellow student who is from Vermont and whose eyes bear a striking resemblance to the engraving done of Lucy shortly before her death. For Joseph Smith Sr., I used the death masks of his sons, Joseph and Hyrum, and photos of his brother John.

While developing a believable family resemblance was important to me, in the end my goal was to capture their personality and character. I tried to capture the kind, gentle and hard working father. With Lucy, I tried to show the diligent, persistent and faithful mother. I tried to reflect these same attitudes in the scale models as well.

Joseph Smith Sr.



Life Size

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Joseph Smith Sr.



Joseph Smith Sr.



Lucy Mack Smith



Life Size

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Lucy Mack Smith



Lucy Mack Smith



Joseph Smith Sr.

Scale Model



30" Tall

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Joseph Smith Sr.

Scale Model



Lucy Mack Smith

Scale Model



28" Tall

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Lucy Mack Smith

Scale Model



About the Artist



Mike Call Currently resides in East Lyme, CT with his wife and two daughters. He will Be graduating with his B.F.A. in sculpture from the Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, a unique institution dedicated to a traditional approach to figurative art. Before moving to the East Coast, Mike studied drawing and painting at Ricks College/ BYU-Idaho. He then interned with renowned sculptor, Edward J. Fraughton for a year before moving to Connecticut.

He was recently awarded the First Place Walter Hancock Prize from the National Sculpture Society in their annual competition for emerging artists.

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