**200 Years Ago Today: Dr. Nathan Smith was pioneering a surgery that saved Joseph Smith from an epidemic and blesses hundreds of thousands still today**

On August 3, the Joseph Smith Sr. Family Association will celebrate the 1st miracle of the restoration with **Joseph’s Miracle Run**; a 5K run at *This is the Place Heritage Park* in Salt Lake City. The public is invited to run or donate. Proceeds will fund a scholarship in Joseph’s name to Dartmouth Medical School, founded by Dr. Nathan Smith. For more info visit:

[www.JosephsMiracleRun.com](http://www.JosephsMiracleRun.com)

In the early 1800’s a typhus epidemic was raging across New England, killing thousands, especially children. In 1813 it had reached Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith’s family, and none of the children were spared. It almost took Sophronia’s life, but 7-year-old Joseph Jr. was hit the hardest. His mother relates that Joseph’s shoulder became inflamed and swollen, and when the doctor cut it open, it discharged a full quart of liquid—a tremendous amount for anyone, but Joseph was barely 4 feet tall. Immediately the pain shot down to his left leg where the disease was infesting his bone, causing a crushing bone disease called osteomyelitis.

One of America’s great pioneering surgeons, Dr. Nathan Smith, lived only a few miles from Joseph’s home. Dr. Smith had seen too much of the ravages of typhus and osteomyelitis. The only recourse was amputation; and if the child survived, he could never be more than a burden to his family. With one such boy, Dr. Smith told his assistant to throw himself over the boy so the boy couldn’t see what was happening. But the impact of the surgery was too much for even Dr. Smith, and he wept before taking up his saw. There must be a better way.

By 1813, Dr. Smith was pioneering an experimental surgery to remove the infested bone, but leave the wound exposed to allow the bone to gradually heal. He was the only one in America who could perform such an operation. Against the advice of other doctors, the Smith family allowed Dr. Smith to try this experiment on Joseph. He used no anesthetic, and the screams of pain were too much for Mother Smith to bear. The months-long aftermath was grueling as 14 shards of bone worked their way to the surface. But he saved the leg, and quite possibly the life of young Joseph. It took 3 years for Joseph to fully recover, but perhaps this ordeal steeled Joseph’s family for greater trials that would shortly come.

Dr. Smith’s ‘experimental surgery’ was so advanced that it wouldn’t become accepted as the standard practice for more than 100 years. What are the odds that the only surgeon in America was available to bless the Smith family with a treatment that was a century ahead of its time? The work that Dr. Smith pioneered benefits hundreds of thousands who suffer from osteomyelitis today, and many believe this to be the first miracle in the life of Joseph Smith.

Dr. Smith devoted his life to charity, founding four medical schools, including Dartmouth and Yale. As a token of gratitude, the Joseph Smith Sr. Family Association is sponsoring **Joseph’s Miracle Run**, a 5K family run at *This is the Place Heritage Park*, Salt Lake City on August 3. Proceeds will fund a scholarship in Joseph’s name at Dartmouth’s Medical School to honor Dr. Nathan Smith. To participate in the race or to donate, visit:

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