

ARCHIVES

## Artifacts in history exhibit recall events of martyrdom

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### Updated

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12:00 AM MST

A few familiar artifacts associated with the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith – and some surprises – will be featured in the new Church history exhibit opening this spring at the Museum of Church History and Art.

On public display for the first time in the exhibition gallery will be a powder horn carried by a member of the Carthage mob and the walking stick used by Elder John Taylor to defend himself. More familiar objects to be included are the pistols of the Prophet and Patriarch, the original plaster death masks taken of the martyrs, and the vest-pocket watch that saved John Taylor's life.

The powder horn is inscribed "Warsaw Regulators." That, according to the object's donor, R. Don Oscarson, Fox Point, Wis., places it in the hands of a mobber, since "regulators" is a term referring to a vigilante group. The official militia, he said, would have been called "regulars," not "regulators."

Oscarson acquired the horn from a gun collector in Carthage more than 16 years ago. The collector had previously traded for it from another man. What caught Oscarson's attention was a crude inscription scratched onto the horn, noting that it had seen service in a significant local action: "... Joseph Smith, kilt at Carthage, June 27, 1844." The horn will be shown alongside the weapons used in defense against the mob: John Taylor's cane, Joseph Smith's pepperbox pistol, and Hyrum Smith's handgun.

The cane had been left behind by Stephen Markham, who had gone to get medicine for an ill Willard Richards. When Elder Taylor grabbed Markham's knotted hickory-wood walking stick, Willard Richards reached for Taylor's own cane. The two men used them to knock aside the guns forced through a partially opened door. It is the Markham cane, obtained by the museum six years ago from a grandson, Henry E. Taylor Jr., via his daughter, Sarah Ellen Adams, that will be displayed.

Joseph Smith's six-cylinder percussion-cap pepperbox was brought into the jail the morning of June 27 by Cyrus Wheelock. Hyrum Smith had a single-barrel pistol provided by John S. Fullmer. These two guns have been in Church possession for many years.

Equally familiar to Church members is John Taylor's watch. For decades it was one of the most popular items sought out at the old Bureau of Information on Temple Square.

Elder Taylor was wearing the watch in his vest pocket. Not long after Hyrum Smith was fatally shot, Elder Taylor rushed to the window, thinking he would jump to safety. Hit first from behind, he fell forward on the window sill and was struck from outside the jail with a ball that smashed the watch and threw him back into the room. The watch stopped – the hour, minute, second hands reading 5:16:26.

The hands are now missing from the watch, but the impact point of the ball is clearly visible.

The death masks of the two martyred brothers were made soon after their deaths. Philo Dibble and Harry Brown made other copies later (a set is in the Church collection), and the Brown family retained the original face masks until they were purchased by Wilford C. Wood. Displayed for many years in his private museum in Woods Cross, Utah, they were donated last month to the Church by the Wood family.

Interpretation of these historic artifacts will be enhanced by other objects relating to the martyrdom. Included in the exhibit will be two 1971 oil paintings by Gary E. Smith, the Times and Seasons July 2 report of the mobbing, a key and lock from the jail, Frederick Piercy's 1853 lithograph of the building, the letter written by Willard Richards to report the deaths, and facsimiles of other letters and journal entries.

#### PODCAST

## Episode 60: Sunday School general presidency on ‘Come, Follow Me’ 2022 on the Old Testament

By Sarah Jane Weaver

Updated

7 DEC 2021

1:06 PM MST

In October 2018, [President Russell M. Nelson](#) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced [a new home-centered, Church-supported integrated gospel curriculum](#) known as “[Come, Follow Me](#).” He promised that the plan would “[unleash the power of families](#).”