

The Account of Amanda Smith at Hawn’s Mill



On October 30, 1838, Missouri mobs attacked a Latter-day Saint settlement known as Hawn’s Mill. The mob shot at men and boys who had entered a blacksmith shop to seek shelter and defend their people. Seventeen Latter-day Saints were killed in the attack, and more than a dozen were injured.

Among the injured was six-year-old Alma Smith, whose entire hip joint was gone after he had been shot. Alma’s mother, Amanda Barnes Smith, was distraught when she found him. She also mourned for her husband and her 10-year-old son, who were both killed in the attack.

With nobody available to help her, Amanda gathered her remaining children together and prayed for guidance. “Oh, my Heavenly Father,” she prayed, “Thou seest my poor wounded boy and knowest my inexperience. Oh, Heavenly Father, direct me what to do.”

As Amanda finished her prayer, she heard a voice direct her to mix ashes with water. She used the solution to wash Alma’s wound until it was clean. Next, Amanda felt prompted to take roots from an elm tree and grind them to a pulp. She put the pulp on Alma’s wound and wrapped it with linen.

“Now you lie like that, and don’t move,” she told her son, “and the Lord will make you another hip.”

Alma’s wound prevented Amanda and her family from evacuating after the attack. As weeks passed, the mob set a deadline for her and other remaining Saints to leave. Amanda’s fear increased as the deadline came. She hid in a bundle of cornstalks so she could pray aloud without being heard. She then heard a voice that repeated these words:

*The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I cannot desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!*

These words from the hymn “How Firm a Foundation” (*Hymns*, no. 85) helped Amanda feel a new sense of strength and courage.

Not long after, Amanda was outside when she heard her children screaming inside her house. She rushed to the house and saw Alma running around the room. “I’m well, Ma, I’m well!” he cried. Amanda and her children left Hawn’s Mill soon after.

(Quoted and summarized from *Saints*, vol. 1, *The Standard of Truth*, 1:347–50, 353–55, 378–79)